It is possible for us now to turn our attention to the limitations which have prevented Nigeria from playing a very effective role in OAU. Also, it is possible to discuss the factors that have hindered OAU in achieving the objectives it had set for itself.

Nigeria has aspired to play leadership role in Africa. This has been particularly the case during the period under study, 1970-1983; more particularly during 1975-83 under the leadership of Murtala Mohammed and Obasanjo. The desire to play this role has a certain legitimacy which is the result of the history of the African continent and Nigeria's size and potential. In the course of the modern phase of world history Africa has the unique distinction of being the most exploited and most humiliated continent. European colonialism, imperialism and racialism have combined together to create the most brutal and shameful regimes there. Africa was the last of the continents to be decolonized, and is still the only continent where vestiges of colonialism survive. It has been the worst victim of European racialism and, racialism still survives in South Africa in the form of apartheid, its most hated and brutal version. And in the process of industrialization the world over Africa still remains a backwater, even though it is

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quite rich in natural and mineral resources. In fact here too, far from benefitting from the industrial development Africa has been its major victim. It is in this historical framework that we must understand the rise of Pan-Africanism and the passionate concern of African to unite and reassert the independence; dignity and well being of the black man. It is therefore not surprising that a country like Nigeria, should enshrine this concern in its constitution: "the state shall promote African unity, as well as total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international cooperation conducive to the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states, and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestation..." (Art. 19 Chapter III). It is this obligation enshrined in its constitution that has impelled Nigeria to work for the liberation, unity and economic development of Africa. The size and the resources of Nigeria have placed her in a position to play this role effectively. In the early phase of its independence from 1960-1970, Nigeria did not play this leadership role for


Note: The Constitution since the military take over in December 1983, has remained suspended in part.
reasons that have been discussed in Chapter I, as also the reasons why she began to play that role after 1970 and more particularly between 1975 and 1983. It would be proper to mention the scope of this leadership role. It has been Nigeria's objective to strengthen peace in Africa and equip the continent with a structure that can advance the cause of Pan-Africanism. Peace would prevent external intervention and internal strife, which would help Africa to carry on development activities for the welfare of the Africans. All this would help Africans to shape their own destiny and in the process make them politically, economically and culturally independent in the true sense; and colonialism, racialism, foreign domination and neo-colonialism would come to an end.

Nigeria has succeeded in this objective only partially. So in this chapter attempt is made to spell out the limitations and implications inherent in this leadership role. The limitations and implications are both internal and external. Internal limitations relate to the problem that exist within Nigeria. The external limitations are both African and non-African. But the internal and external limitations are also inter-related.

THE INTERNAL LIMITATIONS

The internal limitations are primarily the political instability, the continued military rule, and the absence of
mature political institutions or ideology that can overcome the internal destabilizing forces.

The foremost amongst the internal limitations has been the domestic political instability which she has not yet overgrown and been forced to face from time to time. This manifests itself in coups and counter-coups, which has damaged its reputation among other African states and the world at large. To this, we can conclusively say that, the presence of the military rule until date underlines the existing political instability in the country. Out of her more than thirty years of political independence and sovereignty, the military has ruled for nearly twenty-two years. This long period of military rule has stunted political development of the Nigerian state. It has thus made it impossible for her to make mistakes and learn their lessons from them. The economic implications of this are that investors became afraid to invest being not so sure how long a government may last, and whether the new government in power shall be in a position to honour the obligations of its predecessor. The fear of nationalization and, the freezing of their assets is also present in their minds as they deliberate over the question of investing.


Domestic disorder, the cause of political instability arises from so many quarters ranging from transfer of power, sharing of the nation's revenue due to the dependence of the states on the federal government, tribalism, ethnicity, absence of a common language, to religious dichotomy due to the heterogeneity of the society, all which help in compounding ethnic problems.

The development gap between the South and the North equally adds to the prevailing internal instabilities, which enhances the limitations and problems of the country. Equally lamentable is the extent to which, the core tribes (Ibo, Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani) to a great extent feel neglected, dispossessed; and the level of impotency felt in the sharing and distribution of power and public goods by one group or the other, underscores the effect and impact which it will have on the leadership role in Africa. Lack of timely action to assuage such feelings has resulted in crisis, violent clashes and, or other internal disorders. These conflicts have stretched Nigeria's security. The outcome has either been rebellion and civil war, assassinations, and even military coups, etc. Thus, the


creation of a viable political environment that could help the authority of the state structures and foster the shared national interests and of the masses has become an enormous challenge to the Federal government of Nigeria, which becomes a constraint in her pursuance of leadership role.

The absence of an ideology in the state is another limitation in the sense that, in Nigeria, politics is usually organized on the ethno-regional basis which, go a long way to hamper and erode the national sentiment as it promotes tribalism and ethnicism. The presence of an ideology should have helped in creating the bond of oneness and national unity. Intriguing is the fact that both the military and the civilian governments have failed to produce any ideology of national integration and unity for the country.

The importance of an ideology for the development of a country cannot be overestimated and underplayed. In the light of this, it has become a must for Nigeria to galvanize the heterogeneous society for a purposeful national economic, political and cultural development of the country. Its absence has prevented Nigeria from properly articulating her national interests and leadership role effectively. This could be deduced from her non-assertive foreign policy.

6. Presently, due to the organization of politics on the ethno-regional basis, the military constituted two political parties in an effort to overcome its harmful effects to the country in the process of returning the country to a civil rule by 1st January 1993.
during the first decade of its independence. And, at the same time, it has prevented her from assuming the leadership of Africa. "Despite pleas by many Africans to exert herself more forcefully in the affairs of the continent, in a way commensurate with her population and natural resources, she had played a low-key role that was often interpreted, if not as outright leadership amnesia, then certainly as passivity". The only ideology it has known has been that of nationalism geared against a colonial power which helped in fighting and winning its independence and sovereignty but is out-dated as it has not helped her to effectively tackle the rigorous and at times cumbersome complicated international relations for its development. The nature of the ruling elite is such that, they are conservative and imbued with western culture, are pro-west without any inclination for radicalism and assertiveness in their policies. They stand for status quoism and are sectionalists and tribalistically minded group.

THE EXTERNAL AFRICAN LIMITATIONS

The external African limitations are those arising out of Nigeria's relations with other African countries, particularly its neighbours. They constitute mainly the fear of domination by Nigeria, the problems of illegal immigration into Nigeria and the implication arising out of OAU's objectives of achieving economic unity of Africa.

I. FEAR OF DOMINATION BY NIGERIA

We are aware that one of the constraints on Nigerian leadership and foreign policy has been the perception of Nigeria's role in OAU by other African countries. According to Okoi Arikpo, the then External Affairs Minister, "Nigeria feels it is in a frightening position, in relation to other smaller African countries. Nigeria's great size is understandably a cause of concern to its neighbours; it explains French support for Biafra, since for its own real politik because France wished to see the dismemberment of Africa's giant as did Nigeria's immediate neighbours if only, in their case, to make them feel more comfortable. And this suspicion by the small of the large - a perennial problem in foreign relations - is the main reason why Nigeria, with real sensitivity to its neighbours' susceptibilities has adopted a low profile foreign policy".

But with a mature and virile ECOWAS and the confidence building measures the Nigerian government is pursuing as a result of her new foreign policy philosophy, it is hoped that, the suspicion of the so-called hegemonistic tendency of Nigeria by her neighbours and other ECOWAS Member States would come to an end.

A related implication arises from the reaction of some African states and their leaders who would resist Nigeria's modernizing role as it might dislodge their power bases.

through awareness which its actions might generate. This is because, most of the African leaders, will do anything possible to retain their power bases. Even if, it means eliminating the opposition since they abhor changes and stick to the position of \textit{status-quo}, vis-a-vis their control of power in the state. Moreover, African States resents ascribing a leadership position to a particular state in the continent.

The neo-colonialists obviously support such African states since Nigeria's role is tended mainly to reduce their existing influence in Africa. France and its links in Africa have been mentioned including her intentions towards Nigeria. The activities of Cote d'Ivorie in this direction easily comes to mind as a willing hand. Senegal, Cameroon, etc. have been other collaborators as far as France and its dominance in Africa is concerned. To break this tie which is aimed at the continued dependence of these African states on the neo-colonialists would be greatly resisted by those concerned. Some of these African leaders and states owe their continued presence in office to the support and patronage of these neo-colonialists to subserve their economic and political interests. They in this way try all the possible weapons at their disposal to checkmate

Nigeria's role in the continent. These activities might be overt or covert as the case may be.

II. THE QUESTION OF ALIEN IMMIGRATION

Another implication is the political will required to deal with the unwanted illegal aliens in their thousands in 1979/80 and again in 1983/84 that have crossed over to the country for the unavailable job opportunities due to the removal of the barriers against the free migration of people amongst the ECOWAS States. The Federal government of Nigeria during the first term of the Second Republic civilian administration shut its doors against the illegal aliens in 1983 by repatriating and declaring them unwanted. The affected countries of origin of these migrants denounced the government actions which they claimed was against the spirit of Pan-Africanism and the ECOWAS treaty. It was not possible again, therefore, for the government to do the same without facing a wholesale condemnation by other African states. It is interesting to note here that, the then government was also denounced for taking such a rash decision by other well-meaning Nigerians as they claimed, was politically motivated and against not only the interest and prestige of the country but, equally


against the ideals of Pan-Africanism. Obviously, no amount of diplomatic niceties on the part of Nigeria could prevent retaliatory act from the aggrieved African states. But Nigeria has her own valid reasons. With the increased number of un-regulated aliens' influx into the country in search of non-available jobs, the unemployment problem would be accentuated. Nigeria is not yet economically independent so also are the ECOWAS and other African states. With the elimination of all the barriers against free movement of the people of the ECOWAS treaty, migration of the labour force had increased the chances of the continuation of the socio-economic problems that came with the oil boom like, unemployment, the breakdown of law and order; and social problems like juvenile delinquency and prostitution, etc.

III. LIMITATION OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF AFRICA

Another limitation of Nigeria's role in OAU are the implication arising out of the economic integration of the African countries capital for its economic activities. It becomes economically aligned and what follows is interference both in internal and external affairs. Moreover, to make economic union of Africa viable for all, Nigeria's economy must be developed beyond the stage of infancy, thereby enabling it to compete favourably in the African and international markets. Otherwise, it would have to bear the burden of "the hewers of stones and drawers of water" because of the diminished welfare and development
activities, as, its economy is still dependent on imports of machinery as well as raw materials and, not in a position to offer a competitive and alternative market.

It is a known fact that, free trade, the abolition of tariffs, and customs barriers between nations would lead to greater efficiency and specialization in the international economy. It would generate a lot of income resulting in an enhanced level of economic welfare for these nations. This role of Nigeria is therefore a herculian task that needs to be handled carefully. Otherwise, its economic implications would be disastrous that it may lead to a state of perpetually stunted economic growth that shall remain dependent on foreign capital for survival.

There is yet another implication arising out of the expansion of Nigeria's economic influence beyond its borders. While building a network of communication links with neighbouring states, and investing in some projects in them etc., she may one day be accused of being an imperialist power. Nigeria believes in developing road network of communications for easy movement of the people and commodities, bringing about closer association, and interactions of the peoples of the region encompassing territorial limitations. This, in turn, is supposed to bring about a better understanding and cooperation and eliminate disharmony, suspicion and hatred, giving way to
peace, unity and stability within the environment. It is for these reasons that Nigeria has taken active part in the development of the Trans-African Highways. Writing about the interests of Nigeria in undertaking this venture, Arnold wrote, that,

"Nigeria has a major vested interest in improving the over-land communications facilities of the region, for its own chronic port congestion difficulties, led in 1975 to an exploration of the possibilities of imports coming into Ghana or Benin and then crossland to Nigeria. In any case, Nigeria is the starting - or finishing point for two of Africa's planned major new highways : the Trans-Saharan Highway and the Trans-African Highway and both these will have an important impact upon ECOWAS".

Thus, these countries may feel that it wanted to dominate, terrorize and recolonize them especially within the ECOWAS. Equally, the desire to export its goods to other African states might distort the structure of its industries and give a wrong signal to its development and purpose.

In this way, the country might be tempted to overproduce certain goods and commodities, because exporting the commodities will yield more revenue. The tendency would be to export as many items as possible by producing them in large quantities instead of putting a ceiling on what needed to be produced and exported. Moreover, this could lead to

standardization and fall in quality of goods. Not only that, there may be a feeling of hostility towards Nigerian goods as a protest against the domination of their domestic markets. As a result, the much dreaded economic embargo may be imposed on it when no agreement or compromise over policy issue is reached.

Another implication arises as a result of the boomeranging effect of manpower aids to other states. Because, beyond a certain threshold, people, in other African nations - the recipients of these aids might start feeling the presence of Nigerians in their mix in such a way that, it may breed resentment against the Nigerians. And, in a situation whereby the benefactory government decides to hark to the pressure and demands of his people even though unjustifiable as it may be, they might decide to bring to an end whatever initiated the presence of Nigerians. The negative aspect of it is, the expulsion from these countries. It happened in Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, etc. This leads to serious economic, political, social and security problems for Nigeria. That is why, Nigeria must endeavour to pursue the path of consensus and where necessary, neutrality over certain economic, political, and other issues of the continent to enable it win more friends to its side. The ideals of Pan Africanism should be uppermost in her mind and dealings which shall ensure and sustain the existence of the OAU as a viable vehicle for
ameliorating African interests for the good of all.

Another limitation is the fact that "She is a new comer into the sweep stakes game of leadership politics. And she has two rivals to contend with: Senegal (under Senghor), as a philosophical leader of the French speaking states and (2) Algeria, as the ideological aspirant to the Third World leadership role. Throughout her years of independence Nigeria has shown no zeal for either philosophy or ideology. Therefore, she must wage her battle on a territory where she is more sure of her potential, that is, on the plane of economic and human resources. With her present economic capacity she has more leverage in the leadership game than any other country in the continent".

IV. EXTERNAL NON-AFRICAN LIMITATIONS

These limitations arise out of Nigeria's economic dependence on the western countries, and the neo-colonial interests of the former colonial powers, who have strong economic and strategic interests in Africa and have been staunch supporters of the racist regime of South Africa and the anti-Arab Israel. Nigeria cannot go too far in opposing them because they can exercise tremendous economic pressure on her. For example, the USA accounts for 65% out of the

* Note: Senghor is no longer in office. He relinquished his post when he voluntarily retired from the high office few years ago.

13. Wayas, n. 6, p. 44.
80% of Nigeria's oil revenue, and is in a position to manipulate the oil prices to hurt Nigeria. Nigeria, since 1982 has had to import food grains till present from USA. She also needs technological know-how for mechanized agricultural production - a prerequisite for food self-sufficiency. Similarly, Nigeria's trade with EEC and NATO countries is also controlled by these countries. Apart from this, these western countries up till now have been the major donors of aid to Nigeria, and also control the purse strings of the World Bank and IMF and other lending institutions. All this certainly limits Nigeria from performing its role in OAU whenever it goes against their interests.

In addition to these economic pressures Nigeria, like other African countries, has been also a victim of the neo­colonial intervention and destabilization activities like sabotage, fomenting internal unrest, engineering border conflicts, assassinations and coups.

Nigeria and other African states, being economically weak and politically instable, have been vulnerable to external intervention. This situation is worsened by the fact that, the continent is strategically the weakest of all. With the exception of the Indian Ocean littoral states 14. African Business Magazine (London), no. 84, August 1985, p. 73. 15. Claude Ake, A Political Economy of Africa (Harlow, Essex: Longman Group Limited, 1981), pp. 114-116.
(Kenya, Ethiopia etc.) and, South Africa and the "Cape of Good Hope" where most of the western water ways pass, all the continental states are immensely dependent on either the western capitalist states and or, the former socialist countries for markets of their raw materials. Unfortunately, it is quite unbelievable that inter-African trade is quite negligible in proportion when compared to their extra-continental trade. Regrettably too, their trade relations are much less than 3 per cent of their total international trade.

This unfortunate environment has forced the African states to remain at the mercy of their over-sea trading partners because, as it stands, they have no control over the price they receive for their raw materials and, also, there is no control by them over the price of the finished goods and commodities which they import from these countries.

Thus to subserve their economic and political interests the neo-colonialists not only support and patronize puppet governments in Africa, as referred to before but also carry out overt and covert destabilization operations like


breeding unrest, sabotage, assassination of inconvenient leaders in countries that try to resist them.

One of the direct means of interference may be the undermining or sabotage of the government policy through a wrong advice or instructions to their proteges in the government in the form of alternative options to a particular issue, which cryptically, is meant to weaken that governments policy objectives. This so-called sound advice if thoroughly examined, might be found to be lacking in some areas, and therefore expected to favour these vested interests as it was aimed at circumventing the desired results of the policy. For example, "a number of African heads of state were named as CIA paid agents... Morocco, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Gabon could be persuaded to supply African troops to act on behalf of western interests in Western Sahara or Shaba province in Zaire...." While, these same countries oppose the idea of setting up an African Military High Command which would have been sent to these troubled areas instead.

Engineering domestic unrest is another weapon in the catalogue of their numerous activities. And Nigeria being such a fragile society with its characteristic heterogeneous communities has been a fertile soil for such a proxy war.

The secession of the Eastern region in 1967 and the role of the French government in the civil war that ensued lends credence to this. And, "where the colonialists did not succeed in creating a conflict of interest between leaders and led they managed to weaken the links between grass root activities and the national leaders. This was effected through the application of coercion and the exacerbation of ethnic differences and rivalries. The civil war that is at present ravaging Angola is a testimony to the devastating impact of the colonial strategy".

Assassination of political leaders and the promotion of inter-state conflicts through border skirmishes or the tacit and clandestine support of extremist elements across the border forms some of the activities of the neo-colonialist powers to destabilize governments. And in the words of Anatoly Gromyko:

* The Angolan Civil War has been resolved after the peace accord reached and signed last year (May 1991) between the government and the UNITA rebel leader. Thus, ending the 16 year war fuelled by cold war tensions that killed 350,000 people and reduced this oil rich nation to desperate poverty.

"... the events of recent years show that tactics such as inflaming inter-tribal, national, and inter-state hostilities, encouraging separatist, chauvinistic, and expansionist ideas and movements in every way, provoking border conflicts, supporting reactionary governments, destabilizing progressive regimes, drawing African states into aggressive military blocs, and so on...."

Assassinations have been conducted either by paid mercenaries (which could trigger off chains of events as a result of the pandemonium that might erupt as a follow up action of the murder) or through military coups, Murtala Mohammed, Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, etc., have been the victims of such killings at one time or the other.

The promotions of border conflicts has been possible especially as Nigerian and other African borders were the artificial creation of the imperialist powers without regard to contiguity. The support given to the extremist groups across the border is another means of destabilization used by neo-colonialist powers.

All these create situations in which threat of secession becomes real particularly in societies like the Nigerian comprising many tribes and communities with diverse

20. Gromyko, n. 9, p. 191.

culture and religious believers. There are many examples. There is the Eritrean demand for a separate homeland in Ethiopia. There is also the case of Christians in the Southern Sudan against the muslim north. Such demands are equally prevailing in Angola, Mozambique, Uganda etc. Nigeria witnessed it in the 1967-70 civil war.

"The new weapon at the disposal of the neo-colonialists presently therefore is no longer the 'bible and the flag'. But destabilization and armaments".

In 1958, President Nkrumah of Ghana had asserted that, "...the imperialists of today endeavour to achieve their ends not merely by military means, but by economic penetration, cultural assimilation, ideological domination, psychological infiltration, and subversive activities even to the point of inspiring and promoting assassination and


23. Note that, the government of Mozambique and the rightist Romano guerilla group signed a formal ceasefire on October 4 1992 to end their 16-year-old civil war. The Accord was signed in a public ceremony by Mozambique President, Mr. Joaquim Chissano, and rebel leader, Mr. Alfonso Dhlalama. It was the culmination of two years of protracted negotiations and two days of round-the-clock bargaining.

The Third All African Peoples Solidarity Conference in Cairo at the end of March 1961 in a resolution on the activities of neo-colonialism had declared it to be the greatest threat to African countries that were already independent or approaching independence, and said that, "...the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which became the victims of an indirect subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means".  

LIMITATIONS OF OAU

OAU is one of the non-state actors whose activities, opinions, positions and policies affect and influence its immediate neighbourhood and the international environment. In its African context, it has played a great role in determining a certain course of action that has enhanced the socio-economic and political development of the continent. Its continual existence has helped in the erasing the degrading term which referred to its existence as "a dark continent". The Pan African body can be favourably compared with any other non-state actor anywhere in the world today. It is more active than the League of


Arab States and the Organization of American States (OAS). Nevertheless, despite the achievements it has made since its inception, there are certain limitations which have hampered OAU from performing a more effective role in Africa. It is to these impediments that we turn our attention now.

Many limitations of OAU are institutional, but primarily the limitations of OAU arise out of the continent's political instability, its economic underdevelopment, its culture and heterogeneity, its colonial past, all of which combine together to make Africa the most problem-ridden continent in the world.

I. INSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS

One of the major limitation of the organization is its financial handicap. This is attributable to the poverty of its member states who are unable to pay their annual dues and contributions to the various agencies for its effectiveness. One disturbing feature is that these member states annually pay up their fees to the UN and other international bodies to which they belong. Their failure to beef up the finances of the organization has given a big setback to its effective performance. However, the regularity with which the member states pay their UN dues and their fault in paying to OAU shows their lack of sufficient confidence in OAU.
About the poor financial state of affairs of OAU, President Babangida of Nigeria was right when he said that,

"The OAU which in recent times has found itself rather weakened due to the failure of some member states to fulfil their financial obligation towards the organization. I wish to reassure you, Mr. President, that inspite of these difficulties which we must all collectively hasten to remove, Nigeria retains her unflinching faith in the noble objectives for which the OAU was set up. In a situation where our continent is beset by many problems such as droughts, desertification, famine, hunger, poverty and fratricidal conflicts often fanned by external forces, Nigeria believed that the OAU remains the best forum to seek solutions to African problems. Experience has indeed taught us that extra-African interests are perpetually at work in the continent and would rather see us persist in conflicts and instability, hence the overriding need for member countries to unite and demonstrate sufficient faith in the OAU since the much desired economic development of our continent can only be achieved in an atmosphere of peace and stability, we must look more towards the OAU for the settlement of our differences in the true brotherly African spirit".

Nevertheless, in terms of the poverty of its members, we can say that in 1979 Africa's median GNP in constant figure is lower than $ 400 million. Uptil date, it is believed that, over $ 25 million is outstanding in regular

contributions from members. "Besides being a poor resource organization, the African Institution exists in an international system where it has the lowest power quotient without the capability and or will to check the intervention of the super-powers in its region". The political problem of the association in view of the seating of Sahroui Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), and Morocco's boycott as a result of the recognitions by thirty member states of SADR is quite intriguing from such a founding member of the organization.

In matters of finance, the Interim Secretary-General of the OAU has expressed certain fears regarding the realization of OAU's budget arrears, because not more than forty per cent of its annual budget had been paid by members since its inception. According to him, only five members had fully paid their contributions, ten had made part payment, while thirty five were yet to pay their 1983-84 annual contributions. It was also believed that, the arrears by member-states could amount to $ 27 million.

Thus, the continental body for most of the time had been short of funds. The situation is so bad that, in 1981, the ten Secretary-General, Edem Kodjo had spelt out the problem pointing out that "the cumulative total of arrears

is $ 25 million compared with an annual budget of some $ 20 million". The 1983 budget of the organization was $ 19.5 million. At that time, the OAU Consultative Committee had asked the Council of Ministers to suspend the voting rights of member states whose contributions were in arrears for more than two years. But no action was taken because, OAU would not have been able to form a quorum for its meetings. Thus, the financial incapacity of the association due to non-fulfilment by members of their financial obligations, despite the fact that they meet their financial responsibilities to the UN and other organizations, have come in the way of its effective performance. Such ambiguity has helped in stultifying the uniqueness of the Pan African body. Doubts about its credibility, usefulness and, effectiveness have been created in the minds of the people the world over.

Next there are limitations arising out of the inherent weakness of the Charter, especially the clause that talks of the "non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state, and for its inalienable right to independent

29. Ibid., p. 21.
existence". This clause gives the member states the right and liberty to do whatever seems good to them, whether or not it is against domestic and international opinions, and human and peoples' rights. In such a situation, no one is expected to interfere no matter how well intentioned. This makes a mockery of the good intentions of the organization for the welfare of the African people. Thus, tyrannical and dictatorial regimes thrive in the continent without any one calling them to question for their activities.

Even the forthright African states who were willing to intervene in certain cases and situations could not do so due to this constraint resulting from the charter as well as the cultural differences and ideological divisions prevailing in the continent.

This hindrance emanating from the non-interference clause of the charter constitutes a great obstacle not only in the expected performance of the African organization but also for states like Nigeria and others in the continent which would have desired to put an end to these in-human and degrading activities in sister African states that bring

31. For more details, see Article III, Clause two and three of the OAU Charter; See also U.O.Umezurike, "The Democratic Jurisdiction Clause in the OAU Charter", African Affairs, 78, 1979, pp. 197-209.

disrespect to the Africans as a whole. Take the example of the violations in Uganda, Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea. The OAU wanted to intervene in such countries to defend human rights and preserve other international norms that were being violated. But it could not do so, due to this non-interference clause of the charter. The issue of human rights had been discussed in OAU right back in 1963 with the inception of the organization and the problem of apartheid and racism with the importance attached to it.

Further, the Charter confers member-states with rights without any corresponding duties or obligations. Also it does not make its decisions binding and mandatory on members. At the same time, OAU did not create any body or forum like a disciplinary committee which could discipline and call to question any defaulting member. The Charter also did not make the resolutions of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government, which is the Supreme Organ of the body, legally binding on member states. Members are therefore left at will to either obey, accept the orders, decrees and acts of the union or reject them.

* For example, Malawi, Lesotho, Zambia, Botswana, Ivory Coast, etc., due to their economic expediency did not break diplomatic or other relations with South Africa despite the OAU's resolutions to the contrary. Moreover, Zaire republic, had reopened diplomatic relation with Israel few years ago in violation of the OAU resolutions also to the chagrin of other member states.
In line with this problem is the limitation arising out of the failure of members to follow all the clauses of the Charter of the OAU and remain totally loyal and committed to the principles upon which the organization was established. For example, some members have not kept to the letter and spirit of section two of the Charter regarding the question of the non-interference in the internal affairs of the member states. It is the non-compliance of it that has led to the flaring up of border disputes or domestic political unrest in the continent: The Libyan interference in Chad in 1982/1983, for example, or the Nigerian civil war which led to the recognition of the Biafran regime by four member states of the OAU (Ivory Coast, Gabon, Zambia and Tanzania) as stated earlier. The contemptuous behaviour of members therefore has the potential of immensely weakening the organization and reduces its effectiveness. This also accounts for the scant respect paid to it and what it stood for. Moreover, this has also led to political assassination, sabotage, and direct interference in the internal matters of others.

Another example is that between Uganda and Tanzania whereby Milton Obote (the then Ugandan President) was ousted in a military coup by Idi Amin. His overthrow led to an inter-state dispute between Uganda and Tanzania for the mere fact that the Tanzanian President was a friend of Obote.

* 'Effectiveness' here stands for the production of the expected results.
It, therefore, refused to accord recognition to the new military regime in Uganda.

Another limitation is the non-binding nature of the resolutions of the OAU on member states. This is one of the hindrances arising out of the institutional problem whereby the charter confers rights without imposing obligations on member states. The OAU resolution, for example, can not be imposed on member states that violates the Charter. This has its root in the emphasis on sovereignty and equality of states. The implication of this is that, some member states pay negligible attention to the African body. They do what they like and desire without regard for the resolutions or the principles of the body as stated earlier. For example, the members like Ivory Coast, Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia, etc. due to their economic and trade compulsions have maintained trading links and other economic relations with the South African government in total disregard and violation of the resolutions of the organization prohibiting that. Thus, the leadership of these states only think in terms of their own selfish interests rather than the larger interests of the continent as a whole. In this way, they encourage the racist regime in its stubbornness in total disregard of the Africans and the world at large that had come heavily on South Africa.

and in support of all the sanctions imposed on it. This affects the effective functioning of the organization.

Added to the above are some organizational problems. The Council of Ministers prepares for the conference of the Assembly, implements the decisions of the Assembly and, Coordinates Inter-African Cooperation (see Article XII). But regrettably, the Council ordinarily meets twice a year and is not in continuous session. As a result it can not ensure the effective implementation of decisions.

The Secretary-General of OAU is always one without any political role (Article XVII). He/She cannot play a constructive role in the coordination of the OAU activities because he/she is only an administrative officer who does not attend the meetings of the Assembly, or the Council of Ministers, and the Commissions even as an ex-officio member. For this reason, he is not fully aware of the goings-on in the meetings of the organization. Thus his presence is not felt or known when he has no say in the set up. This is unlike the position of the UN Secretary-General on which this post in OAU was modelled.

Yet another limitation is that concerning the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration established by a separate protocol by the Assembly of Heads

of State and Government in Cairo in July 1964. The protocol having thirty-three articles is divided into six parts dealing with its structure and functions. As it stands, the commission is not a judicial body and therefore has no powers to apply sanctions. As a result it cannot settle disputes and command respect and obedience from the disputants. This does not augur well for the Continental Institution. As a body that operates within the spirit of the charter, it only encourages cooperation amongst the warring groups. And, it is a known fact that it has not successfully undertaken any dispute as shown in appendix eight. In the heels of this follows the lack of defined responsibilities for the specialized committees set up, which leads to overlapping and duplication of functions. All these shortcomings, hamper and affect the functioning of the organization.

In addition to these institutional problems peculiar to the organization there are other limitations on its functioning.

I. **POLITICAL INSTABILITY**

One important problem facing OAU is the existence of political instabilities in the continent. Africa has become a hotbed of coups and political unrests which are widespread. This has immensely endangered the performance of the organization in relation to its functions. Many
heads of state and government have found it difficult to attend the annual meetings of the Heads of State and government due mainly to political unrest in their states and the fear that, they might be overthrown while attending the meetings, as happened to Gowon in 1975.

Some of the political problems facing the association emanate from varying nature of disputes amongst member states in the form of political association, inciting and supporting political unrest in a sister state; and persistent frontier problems in the continent; especially, that existing between Ethiopia and Somalia which had eluded settlement over the years. Though deescalation of tensions between the two had taken place but the border problem is yet to be over. Thus, despite its too many achievements, the organization has woefully failed in the settlement of 35 border disputes. This is surprising in view of the pledge by the member states to respect the existing borders as left behind the time of national independence from the colonial rule. The frontier issue continues to be a source

*Note that, the drought-stricken Somalia fell into anarchy in January 1991 when President Mohammed Siad Barre was forced from power. Fighting soon broke out between rival Somali warlords Mohammed Farah Aideed and self declared President Ali Mahdi Mohammed.


of tension in the continent despite the efforts of the organization. This problem has been utilized by the interventionist powers to interfere in the internal affairs of Africa. So, the domestic unrest and, the inter-state disputes amongst member states greatly impede its performance in relation to its obligations.

Conflicting ties with the major powers also impose a limitation on the good functioning of the organization. It is an off-shoot of their ideological differences. Ironically, while some of them have proclaimed themselves as non-aligned states, openly or secretly, they have entered into one military and economic pact or the other. Their activities or position on any given issue are therefore determined largely by what goes well with their mentors in the west or the east. For example, the imbroglio that the organization had to face regarding the issue of which Angolan liberation movement was to be recognized in 1975 by member states were as a result of their conflicting ties with the major powers. Zaire, Kenya, Ivory Coast, etc., had favoured the UNITA group in relations to the USA directives, others opposed it due to the merits of the issues involved like Nigeria or their adherence to socialist ideology. This arises mainly due to the dependent nature of their economies, as said earlier. On their part, these powers do not allow these African leaders and states to pursue independent political and economic policies.
Moreover, since they are averse to seeing African states diversifying their links and or, embark upon self-reliant economic policies and programmes, basically, any state or leader that ventures into that or pursues inward-looking policies and activities, may have to pay the price for such ventures. The consequences may be loss of their lives or their political power. Those who did, paid dearly for their actions. Nkrumah of Ghana, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Modibo Keita of Mali, Murtala Mohammed of Nigeria etc. are glaring examples.

II. CULTURAL HETEROGENEITY

Next is the limitation created by linguistic and cultural differences. Colonialism in Africa brought with it the differing cultures and linguistic differences of these colonial states which were imposed on African states. And on independence they had to adopt these cultures and languages also. The British, the French, the Portuguese, the Arabs all brought in different cultures and languages to Africa. The continent is divided into three notable linguistic parallels derived from the colonial past. The notables or major ones are, the English-speaking states with British cultural backgrounds and maintaining some alliances.

37. Wayas, n. 6, pp. 40-43.

* For example, Benin Republic, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Central African Republic, Niger, Togo, Upper Volta before and after independence had adopted French language and culture. The major influence on them was the French assimilation policy.
with it. The second is the French speaking ones who are more conservative and aligned than others due to the negative influences of the French assimilation philosophy. They are also heavily dependent on France so much so that they got their currencies tied to the French Franc to enable it to attain world recognition in the international market. This positively speaking was to their disadvantage. But unfortunately, the French government carried out its economic policies without due regard to their interests as a result of this tie-up. The third is the Arabic language group which cuts across the continental states encompassing the traditional and geographical North Africa with its attendant autocracy and conservatism where it exists. Finally, we have other minor ones like the Portuguese and the Spanish speaking states. Superimposed on these are the religious divisions into Muslims, Christians and Animists. The total effect of this is bottlenecks in the operations of the OAU with much expenditure from the scarce resources of the Union on translations, publications etc., which should have been minimal if it were a homogeneous entity.

Similar to this is the problem due to what is regarded as the Arab-Black African factor in the association. This had led to a dangerous dichotomy in the Pan African body.


It has greatly contributed to its weaknesses and problems. The Black Africans believed that the Arab-Africans are more concerned and, devote more of their time, attentions, and energy to Pan-Arabism and Arab-League than to Pan-Africanism and its cause. And that the concept of Pan-Arabism influences their outlook, hence their devotion to the Middle East impasse than to the African cause. The Arab member states have denied this allegation and termed it as another handiwork of African unity baiters who would not mind stooping so low to denigrate and wreck the organization for their selfish interests. This period of suspicion has divided the Africans despite the new found cordiality that started since the 1970s as and its enormous contribution to the weaknesses of the OAU must be underlined.

Another issue worthy of mention here is the misunderstanding arising out of the leadership tussles amongst black African states of the African Union for leadership continentally and internationally. All these in no small measure affect and damage the image of the organization especially the inconsistencies and disharmony amongst the member states in their commitment to the organization.

40. Joseph Wayas, n. 6, pp. 43-44.
41. Adda B. Bozeman, n. 32, p. 45.
Another limitation is the varying levels of economic development of the member states which breeds conflict. This economic disparity has its origin in their colonial experiences. The colonialists then were only interested in making the African states as one crop export countries keeping them as their peripheries and perpetually dependent on them. This resulted in haphazard and one export crop oriented economy which these states are still struggling to correct. Finally, the natural imbalance in the deposits of mineral resources whereby some states are poor while others are rich contributes to this situation also. Connected with this are certain limitations on the economic integration of the continent. The aim of OAU in relation to the economic integration of Africa has been quite satisfactory, and is whole heartedly welcomed by all the African states of OAU. The functional cooperation taking place in the West African sub-region with the formation of the ECOWAS in 1975; the expected coming together in like- manner by other sub-regions, and, the construction of the Trans-African Highway with its many benefits would all help towards the realization of economic integration of Africa by the year 2000. Unfortunately, the expectations of an economic integration are still an illusion beset with a lot of impediments. The African states as mentioned earlier have still remained economic satellites of their former colonial masters with 90 per cent of their total trade with countries outside the continent. Some African states especially the
French speaking nations have given preferential treatment to the countries of the EEC while, other states like Togo, Nigeriz and Ghana have operated import restrictions without any preferential bias. Furthermore, some of these African states operate various quota systems with the EEC states, and, when these EEC states have exhausted their normal quotas, they often resort to the use of global quotas, thus enjoying double preferential treatment. The result of this has been the discrimination against the products of countries not associated with the EEC and not belonging to the Franc Zone.

This has been detrimental to progressive efforts for a better life of all peoples of Africa. Generally therefore, so far, the actions of the African states in the economic sphere have not been directed towards their declarations in favour of economic integration. Until OAU is able to provide adequate capital development for the member states as well as market for their products; until non-discriminatory duties and quota are resorted to by the African states of the union; the hope of economic integration and expansion of African economy becomes futile.

Another weakness of the OAU, has its roots in the groupings formed by the member states before its foundation. We must state here that, this grouping was not a conscious one. It came about not because of only differing paths to
African unity; foreign and economic policy, and varying approaches to the Congo problem exacerbated by the partisan and shortcomings of the UN Peace Keeping Force. But, due to policy differences over the Congo issue. This unfortunate issue thus created many unenviable occurrences or crisis ranging from the division of the continent into two or three groups, assassinations, subversions, frontier disputes, to near bloc alliances leading to the enshrining in the organization's Charter of non-aligned principles. This has been a bad augury for the African regional system as, it obviously hinders the unity of states, cooperation and development of the continent as a whole.

This ugly condition has led finally to the ideological division of the continent into two. This ideological polarization culminated into antagonisms necessitating the intervention of the two blocs into the continent which was aimed at strengthening what they conceived to be their strategic positions and interests in the continent. Basically, it implies that, the extended thaw situation in Africa amongst them had given room to the intensification of cold war relations.


44. I. William Zartment, n. 37, pp. 577-80.
According to Jansen, "This split had diminished Africa's prestige and injured its interests at the United Nations and in international gatherings, it had also led to attempts at subversion and assassination and to the revival or exacerbation of frontier disputes". The beneficiaries of this avoidable developments were the superpowers, their coteries in Africa, the arms dealers and manufacturers in and outside these states.

It is in realization of this prevailing danger that the African states had cautioned themselves against these their actions which have threatened to make their conflicts part of the larger east-west struggle. In this way, they were able to request the western nations to address themselves to the problems of apartheid and racism in South Africa. They have at the same time told the USSR and its allies not to stay more than their welcome. So, all these groupings and ideological differences have greatly affected the working of the OAU and its effectiveness.

III. NEO-COLONIALISM

Added to this is the problem of dependency and developing nature of the economy of the African states.

There is no one state in the continent which is not


47. Alee. n. 14, pp. 110-111.
dependent on the outside powers for their sustenance economically and otherwise. This forces the member states to look towards the developed nations of both the east and west. This has been due to the growing poverty of these states which has rendered them impotent before the donor states and made them appendages or satellites of the industrialized nations. Hence the metropolitan periphery syndrome nature of relationship between the developed countries and Africa. Ivory Coast, Zaïre, Cameroon, Kenya, are conspicuous examples. Through this relationship, these peripheral states are tutored and directed on what to do and act in any given situation. For example, this was evident from the directives given to the OAU Member states in early 1976 as stated earlier by Nixon Administration to recognize the UNITA group of the Angolan Liberation Movement which it was supporting at that time instead of the MPLA that was broad-based and represented the interest of all Angolans. It was to the credit of the OAU Member states that the USA desire was defeated as it was meant to serve their own interests rather than that of the Angolans in particular and Africans in general.

This prevailing environment enables the neo-colonialists to indirectly or directly interfere in both the internal and external concerns of these states.

Regrettably, this interference gets extended to both the affairs and activities of the OAU and Africa. Thus, they most often dominate in the businesses of the organization as they are able to pressurize their satellite states into following a particular cause of action that goes in their favour. This remote control of African union by the extra-continental powers greatly hampers the working and effectiveness of the organization and to the detriment of the continent. The situation has worsened each day due to the increasing economic difficulties of these states, which they cannot overcome without the help from these developed western states. This prevailing situation has further increased the dependency and indebtedness of the African states which in turn, has created and increased the socio-economic and political problems like, domestic instabilities, dissidence, etc. This economic decay, unemployment, political fragmentation and growing economic disparities, etc. have led to foreign interventions in the affairs of these states as stated above. This configuration has sapped the time, energy, and finance of the member states, and the OAU in particular in an attempt to find a lasting solution to these problems. In the long-run, the Pan-African union has been the loser as "Political emancipation has of course provided a chance to the Africans to govern themselves and shape their own destiny, it has

also helped them to emerge from the status of a subject race. But, ironically, in the process, "they seem to be busy in grappling with the end results of colonial rule rather than in charting a new course of socio-economic development". Because, imperialism and colonialism brought with it these problems for the continent and the African states. Then there are the difficulties caused by the activities of the neo-colonialists, the super-powers, and the former colonial masters. This has been made easier due to the existing power vacuum in the continent particularly with the demise of such radical leaders like Nkrumah of Ghana, Nasser of Egypt, Keita of Mali, Murtala Mohammed of Nigeria, and the towering fatherly figure of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia (The Lion of Judea).

These self-seeking groups in their varying degrees exploit the weakness and helplessness of the African states with promises of benefits and rewards. At times, direct interference in the internal affairs of these countries take place as mentioned earlier. In some cases, it is the multinational organizations that operate indirectly inside most of these countries with their network of agencies. The USA for example makes use of its international agency like the CIA to carry out her clandestine operations against African countries. The neo-colonialists in their quest for

economic advantages and strategic positions, bid these poor states to engineer dissidence in the targeted states. By creating internal chaos, the path is cleared for their direct intervention as it was in Angola, Zaire, the Horn of Africa, etc. Covert and overt activities are also used as was the case in the Congo crisis of the 1960s with the use of the UN Peace Keeping Force. At times, mercenaries have been used as was witnessed in the Benin Republic, Sychelles, Gambia etc. at different times. Assassinations and direct military interventions have also been resorted to. Most of the time, they have been used to continue propping up the dictatorial governments or change of leadership as was the case in Chad, Central African Republic, Zaire etc.

According to Satish Kumar, "Their (African) strategic location on the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, and their enormous mineral wealth made them the coveted objects of super power rivalry... But the extreme underdevelopment of new independent African states, their political instability, military weakness, and factional infighting, coupled with continued interference of former colonial powers in local politics, created strategic uncertainties which the super powers thought they could ignore only at

All this goes to show how African states have been used and manipulated due to the conditions in which they saw themselves. The open interference in the affairs of the OAU and Africa by the USA, France and others are all too well known. For example, it is no secret to the world that, the US Administration under Nixon in early 1976, wrote letters to African States and OAU to accord recognition to the UNITA group of the Angolan Liberation Movement which they were supporting. This came as a result of the problems created in the wake of accreditation and seating in the OAU of the legitimate Angolan representatives. The disorder and imbroglio which this recognition generated amongst members as a result of the differences this created is now a history. Thus, the instances of international intervention in the internal affairs of Africa by neo-colonialists and super-powers are too many to recount here. The atmosphere was further vitiated by their cold war antics. For example, in the area of receiving aids, the USSR warns against receiving aid from the western countries, because "it could be imperialism or neo-colonialism via grants and loans to control African countries, and destroy their newly won independence. America, on the other hand, warns against communism being introduced by the Soviet Union via aid and

cultural agreements to smother the freedom of Africa. China now warns against accepting aid from the Soviet Union because the Russians are whites, and are allies of the American imperialists to exploit Africans. Russia warns against China as an apostle of revolution and America warns against subversion by both the USSR and China. While certain events have justified some of these warnings; others have been baseless, but obviously, they have generally created an environment ripe with mistrust towards one another. Whatever be the case, the major concern in Africa today is how to overcome their dependence and backwardness while not denying the fact that majority of the states are yet to actually identify whom their real friends or enemies are.

IV. THE ABSENCE OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Another limitation of OAU has been the inability of individual states and the organization to defend themselves against neo-colonial interference, military interventions, sabotage, assassination, or aggression. The question of setting up African High command for the defence of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of African states has become unrealistic though it has been hailed as an accepted ideal by most of the African nations without any concrete steps to achieve it. The incapacity of

The total failure of having a coherent military high command in Africa until now, despite its importance to the continent, is one of the weaknesses of the OAU Defence Commission in putting forward a realistic formula for its inception to the Assembly of Heads of States and Government. Despite the support given to the Liberation Movements in South Africa, the organization is still facing the problems of bringing independence to this territory. And, if colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid and racism have to be eliminated, it must endeavour to set up an African High Command which would take over the problem of tackling these evils from the OAU and ensure their total liquidation throughout the continent. Even if the issue of apartheid and racism is solved as now expected, African Military High
Command is still valid in case of any inter-state disputes that may arise in future. Tony Menterio in a paper presented at a conference on "CIA and World Peace" held at Yale University in April 1975, endeavoured to adumbrate the CIA covert operations in the whole of Africa. According to him, these CIA activities started with the independence of Ghana in 1957. They include: (a) the overthrow of the government of Congo in 1961; (b) the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in 1961; (c) the invasion of Congo by South Africa, Rhodesia, West German, and anti-Castro Cuban mercenaries organized by the CIA; (d) The overthrow of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's government in Ghana and the installation of a military regime in 1966; (e) Organization of the mercenaries in 1967-69 to aid the secessionists of Biafra in their effort to split the Nigerian Federal Republic; (f) the aid given in 1968 for the overthrow of the government of Modibo Keita of Mali; (g) the support given for the assassination of Amilcar Cabral, the leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands; (h) The large scale support given to the FNLA and the UNITA in Angola in 1975, against the MPLA which finally emerged victorious and formed the government in the aftermath of the civil war etc. Their success shows the inability of the African nations to defend themselves against such acts of aggression, singly or collectively.