THE ILLUSION OF THE POST-COLONIAL STATE

Governance and Security Challenges in Africa

W. ALADE FAWOLE

The Illusion of the Post-Colonial State

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Preface

Is Africa Post-Colonial, Neo-Colonial, or Post-Colonized?

The reigning and perhaps the most enduring orthodoxy, widely accepted among Political Science scholars and popular within the broad Social Science community, is that Africa is a post-colonial society, made up of fifty-four independent and sovereign states which are members of the global community of nation-states. Their membership of the United Nations is cited as evidence of this. This widespread notion has survived more than half a century and is hardly questioned because it is thought that once any colonial enclave or territory is granted flag independence by its colonial master, parades the basic institutions such as a government, bureaucracy, security apparatus and other instruments for maintaining a modicum of law and order, and begins to manifest the outward appearances of statehood, it automatically becomes a "post-colonial" state. What this means, in effect, is that such a territorial entity, from that moment of the grant of flag independence, ceases to be a "colonial" state but has transitioned into a "post-colonial" one. Frederick Cooper even believes that once independence was given, Africa went "from colonies to Third World."[1] It is undoubtedly a logical assumption, except that in Africa things just are not what they seem. Is Africa a "post-colonial" society or a "post-colonized" one? The notion of a "post-colonized" as opposed to merely "post-colonial" is borrowed from Pius Adesanmi.[2] In his view, the colonized is by far morally and ethically superior to the post-colonized in that while the former easily saw through and rejected all the lies and subterfuges of the colonialists, and made valiant efforts to achieve decolonization and emancipation, the latter to which power was transferred have in more than fifty years failed to add value to society nor even move it forward. Instead, they are more tied to the lies of their former masters, a far more dangerous development than actual colonial domination. The African elites that run the affairs of most of the independent territorial states have sold out to their

former colonial overlords, and African states are therefore hardly more than Nkrumah's conception of new-colonial societies.

Africa has lived this big lie of being a post-colony for more than fifty years, but it is hollow and unsustainable given the circumstances in which the so-called independent and sovereign nation-states of the African continent have often found themselves, their powerlessness and virtual irrelevance in the global scheme of things. The African state is so regarded as a state, going by the simple definition of the state supplied by Francis Fukuyama, only to the extent that it parades "a central authority that can exercise a monopoly of legitimate force over its territory to keep the peace and enforce the law."[3] But in reality it lacks the real institutions that generally characterize the modern state of the Westphalian tradition. Instead, it remains fundamentally patrimonialist, with no formalized ways of doing things except as they are dictated by the rulers, and a pervasive absence of the rule of law and accountability. A number of them cannot even fulfill the most elementary requirement of exercising monopoly of legitimate force over their entire territory to qualify for the status of a real state.

In general, the state in Africa is a weak state, to the extent that it suffers a severe deficit of those cardinal elements of the Westphalian state. Though they all parade central governments, most of them in reality lack legitimacy and are hardly more than rickety colonial artifacts handed down to the Africans to see if they could make them into modern states in the real sense of the definition. Because they are almost totally alien to the people, even the political systems and democratic institutions of the Western world that were handed over to them, or imposed on them, as was the case in many instances, could not be domesticated much less properly adapted for local governance. "These democratic institutions," as Irina Filatova has noted, "were imposed on African societies in the same fashion as colonial institutions."[4] Unfortunately, as it turned out, not only are the local inheritors of state power themselves not seriously interested in or concerned with state-building per se, but even with the best of intentions their efforts were diabolically vitiated and compromised by unrelenting external interferences from the original metropolitan powers who continue to depend on the resources of the continent. France, for example, not only based troops in several of its former colonies but also reportedly used them at least thirty-four times between 1963 and 1997 to physically intervene in the domestic affairs of these states in support of pro-French governments.[5] It is doubtful if there is any more diabolical involvement in post-colonial Africa than that. But as sinister as the French appeared in their dealings with Africa, other major powers, mostly the British and Americans, have their share of intrusive and destructive involvements on the continent, as will be shown later in this volume.

Since the 1960s decade when most of them were gifted flag independence by their respective former colonial overlords, African states have hardly been more than mere caricatures of the Westphalian state, hollow shells which, according to Kwame Nkrumah, merely parade the outward trappings of sovereignty but which in reality remain little more than real colonies. What this assertion implies is that, judging by their situations and circumstances, the entities we today regard as states in Africa may be states to a substantial degree but certainly not quite post-colonial! As I have asserted elsewhere, "[A]lthough Britain and France physically disengaged from the continent, they cleverly left behind a string of political, economic, bureaucratic, military, social and other institutions and structures with which the former colonies remained securely bound to the metropolitan powers in a subordinate relationship."[6] So-called independent African states remained firmly in the grip of foreign powers which employed these institutions and structures for remote control.

Many African states are backward today because the so-called grant of political independence was, *ab initio*, never intended to enable them evolve beyond mere "neocolonial" enclaves to be exploited and ravaged by the former colonial countries and their Western allies. More often than not, independence was granted on terms and conditions that were intended to tie them securely and enslave them, with political power deliberately transferred to those who could be trusted to do the bidding and protect the interests of the departing colonial powers. In the case of the British, the colonial officials carefully ensured that the local African elites that would collect political power from them as they departed were those they could trust, not the "hot-headed" or radically inclined ones who would not be amenable to foreign control. Such West African nationalists that the British found sufficiently trustworthy "to watch their back" were also gifted imperial British honors and titles in recognition of this.[7]

For the purpose of ensuring that their selfish interests would continue to be protected even long after they had formally left the colonies, the departing colonial powers deliberately and cleverly entangled the so-called new states in a series of intricate, often one-sided and unequal, political, economic and military-defense agreements. France, in particular, concluded defense assistance agreements with virtually all its former colonies which permitted it even as a foreign power to have and operate military bases and station its troops in several of them. The British attempted to do the same with Nigeria, their most prized African possession, through the ill-fated Anglo-Nigerian Defense Pact which Nigerians popularly repudiated and had to be abrogated in January 1962. Having thus legally secured the permission of the newly independent countries to base troops on their soil, France routinely employed these troops to intervene in the internal social and political crises in many of

its former colonies, as the cases of Gabon, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, and Central African Republic show.

Because of the stifling influence of the former overlords in the internal affairs of these countries, many of the political instabilities and socio-economic crises that had been latent bubbled to the surface, with such devastating consequences that the first set of post-independence governments, like dominoes, began to implode one after another, many succumbing to military putsches that were masterminded by the military forces they had inherited from the colonialists, and others becoming one-party states under the most ruthless autocratic rulers, all of these in less than half a decade into their sovereign existence. The first set of civilian governments were overthrown in quick succession, in Algeria (June 1965), DR Congo (November 1965), Togo (January 1963), Benin Republic (formerly Dahomey) (October 1963), Central African Republic (1965), Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) (January 1966), Nigeria (January and July 1966), Ghana (February 1966), Burundi (July and November 1966), Sierra Leone (March 1967), Mali (November 1968), Libya (September 1969), Somalia (October 1969). Many of these countries—notably Nigeria and Ghana—had to go through serial coups from the mid-1960s through to the late 1980s, invariably underscoring James O'Connell's "inevitability of instability" thesis.[8]

Just one example of a crassly authoritarian state that emblematized the plight of the so-called post-colonial African state will suffice for illustration of the one-party system. Malawi became independent in 1964 under the leadership of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, and two years later in 1966 was officially declared a one-party state, with his Malawi Congress Party (MCP) the only legally permitted party. In 1971, Dr. Banda formally declared himself President-for-Life and subsequently centralized all political, economic and military power in himself; he was Life President of the MCP, Head of State, Head of Government, in addition to holding the ministerial portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Justice, Works and Supplies, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Malawi.[9]

From the above illustration, and from a broad and critical study of the political developments and underdevelopment of the continent, it is probably not totally uncharitable to describe the so-called post-colonial African state as hardly more than a grand illusion perpetrated on Africans by metropolitan master illusionists, a gargantuan deceit intended by them to lure Africans into the false belief that colonialism has indeed ended, and the fact of Africa's underdevelopment can only be explained as a manifestation of Africans' congenital inability to handle modern nation-states. In short, it is meant to make Africans forget that the colonial rulers actually sold them a dummy. This grand deception has unfortunately subsisted for so long because Africans had hardly controlled the narratives of their own history. For example, analysts

casually refuse to accept or conveniently gloss over the indubitable fact that in the so-called post-colonial Africa, there are no citizens, only subjects or wards of the state! In reality, the state remains hardly more than a colonial artifact, a mere throwback to colonial rule in content but controlled by indigenous rulers. What has changed in the post-colony is not the fundamental character or the mission of the colonial state but merely the operators. As examples across the continent will prove, the state even after independence sadly remains predatory, violent and unaccountable, since there are no citizens to account to but only subjects. The reality is that Africans are still far from owning the states that colonialism bequeathed to them.

For the first four decades after independence, most of the African states were only held together by ruthless autocratic rulers who enjoyed the backing of different great powers of Europe and North America to give the false appearance of independent statehood. This was the situation throughout the Cold War era when the principal ideological and military adversaries in the West and the East exploited everything for selfish advantage. Many of the states appeared strong to the extent that the autocrats, dictators and presidents-for-life were able to employ available coercive resources to maintain a semblance of law and order, and thus ensured regime survival that kept the state on life support. Actually, that was the situation for most of the Cold War years when most African governments were hardly more than proxies of great powers and their economic interests.

But the end of the Cold War and the fragmentation of the colossal Soviet Union and the collapse of totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe exposed the lie known as the post-colonial African states, as they began to unravel with alarming rapidity. At the dawn of the post–Cold War era, the East-West ideological and military rivalries that necessitated external involvement in Africa had dissipated, the Soviet Union had dissolved into fifteen independent republics, and Czechoslovakia had peacefully broken up into two states, while multinational Yugoslavia was in the throes of a violent break-up into another six states. With several new states created in the international system, war in the Balkans, Iraq under Saddam Hussein invading and annexing Kuwait, the regional balance of power was altered, which sparked a new war involving the major powers in Middle East politics. Having their hands full with these new geopolitical and geostrategic developments in Europe and the Middle East, the attention of the Western powers consciously shifted away from Africa, thus disrobing the African dictators of the foreign support they had hitherto enjoyed. Thus began the cynically coined slogan of "African solutions to African crises" as if these crises were all home-grown.

In the absence of both the Soviet Union and Communism as threats to Western power and global hegemony, the nations of the West no longer had any need for the African dictators they had cultivated for more than

three decades. It was simply no longer fashionable for the West to openly fraternize with them anymore, making them expired and worthless. The swift removal of Western backing began the systematic unraveling of the so-called post-colonial states; the territorial entities that had hitherto been held together by authoritarian methods now began to convulse very violently and state authorities began to collapse in rapid succession, from Somalia to Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Benin, Liberia, Sierra Leone and others. Agitations for political and constitutional reforms began to resonate loudly across the continent in violent waves that autocratic and sit-tight rulers could no longer ignore, and some were even swept away in this massive unstoppable gale. This gale was later compounded by the Arab Spring, a series of domestic uprisings which have succeeded in unseating erstwhile unmovable tyrants in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and in the process unleashing new jihadist forces that are bent on imposing their own brands of Islamist theocracy across the Sahel-Sahara swathes of the continent. These contemporary developments across the continent have brought back foreign powers into the affairs of the states that have unraveled, some of them now under virtual foreign receivership—Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Central African Republic, Libya, and so forth.

It is time for a critical epistemological overhaul that will enable Africans to do a proper and nuanced narrative of their "post-colonial" history and development trajectory. This book is an attempt to question/query this subsisting orthodox belief that Africa is a post-colonial society, to shake and subject this long accepted "conventional wisdom" to critical and rigorous review, with a view to determining its sustainability as an established belief. It intends, through critical explorations of political developments across the continent, to shed some light on the validity or otherwise of the subsisting orthodox conception of Africa as a continent of fifty-four post-colonial nation-states. In essence, it attempts to raise serious epistemological questions about the way we study, perceive, understand, analyze and explain contemporary African politics and development. It will challenge, in broad terms and with specific illustrations, the subsisting notion of Africa as a post-colonial society and strip our current state of knowledge of the thin veneer of the post-colonial state to reveal the real character of the "African state" or "the state in Africa."[10] Let it be said from the outset that this work does not claim to be a curtain-raiser, for many eminent and profound Africanists and African scholars have severally made this point in diverse formats. However, this is intended to be a volume that not only encapsulates the theoretical and conceptual arguments but also brings empirical illustrations to validate its position in a single volume. To accomplish this singular objective, the book will illustrate the basic argument through a thorough examination of selected countries across the five subregions into which the African continent is divided.

Few Western analysts of African politics, with the prominent exception of some earlier ones like James Coleman, James O'Connell, and Basil Davidson,[11] ever bother to trace or relate the crisis of the African state to its colonial roots and origins. Whenever they do, their treatment of the colonial origins of the crisis of modern nation-states in Africa is casually glossed over or treated as unimportant to their analyses. For example, while the likes of contemporary analysts like John Campbell, writing for the US Council on Foreign Relations, would accuse Nigeria of being governed by "*Ogas*" and "*Big Men*"[12] and President Barack Obama in a famous put-down would berate Africa for being governed by "Strongmen" rather than strong institutions, the fact remains that such analysts fail to historicize the evolution and development of such phenomena. Actually it is convenient for the typical Western analyst to pretend that the ugly past that shapes and determines the present does not exist, or is at best irrelevant to the understanding of the African situation. Instead of the intellectual exertion of digging into the past to connect with the present, the resort to the lazy man's approach of apportioning blame to what they consider the incompetence of Africans to run modern nation-states is the easiest option. This perhaps also allows them to wash the ancestral guilt of both the slave trade and colonialism off their conscience. And this also serves the ideological preference of Western societies to control the narrative by deodorizing colonialism's hideous past and thus perpetrating the notion that colonialism was a "civilizing mission."

Undertaking a deeper and much more nuanced historical excursion into the origin and trajectory of the colonial state is what is required to put the matter in its proper context. And the central objective of this book is to situate the discourse within the context of the historical evolution of the African state and the deep-seated factors that are responsible for its contemporary backwardness, security challenges and governance crises. As Walter Rodney famously observed in the preface to his seminal work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, delving into the past is necessary "because otherwise it would be impossible to understand how the present came into being and what the trends are for the future."[13] It is, in a way, another critical look into the arguments of Africa's backwardness by the likes of Frantz Fanon and Walter Rodney, looking into the historical evolution of the nation-state in Africa, situating the analysis within the context of colonialism and imperial domination, without discountenancing the human agency, that is, the complicity of Africans themselves in why Africa remains what it is.[14] Doing this will help us to understand that Africa's contemporary governance and security challenges in the twenty-first century have a much deeper historical root and origin than is usually acknowledged by analysts. Without a deep knowledge and appreciation of how the past has shaped and continues to influence the present, our ability to exit from the current quagmire and begin to chart a

correct path for the future is invariably truncated. It is basically restating existing arguments for their freshness and contemporary relevance to the understanding of Africa's predicament.

To accomplish its modest objective of re-interpretation, this book is divided into two broad parts. The first part discusses the basic theoretical and conceptual logic behind the creation of the colonial state, the ensuing colonial rule, the metropolitan powers' disengagement from the colony on account of the vicissitudes of the Second World War, and the emergence of the supposed post-colonial states in Africa. In the first part, chapter 1 undertakes a deep theoretical and conceptual discourse of the state of the "African state" after independence from its colonial origin and provenance. Chapter 2 examines the deliberate architecting of the colonial contraption and its seeming transmutation into a sovereign state after the grant of independence.

Other chapters examine the basic factors that forced decolonization to be embraced as an option and how the imperialist powers conspired to manipulate the grant of independence in a manner that ensured that colonialism would continue in a more insidious form, only by changing the managers of the state.

The second part takes the debate further by a detailed empirical discourse of the crisis of the post-colonial state in Africa, using specific case studies of states that have or are still undergoing internal upheavals which are the consequences of the booby-traps that colonial rule had carefully planted into their architecture. It looks into and locates the governance and security challenges that have been plaguing the nation-states of the continent in the historical provenance of the state that colonialism created. States that emblematize these crises of governance and insecurity have been selected across the five zones of Africa for detailed examination. Flowing logically from the theoretical and conceptual discourse, as well as from the empirical narratives, it is not hard to conclude that for Africa to overcome the challenges of state and nation-building which have hobbled the nation-states since independence, there is a need to redesign and indigenize the political architecture of the state in a way that gives people real ownership of the state. It is then that the existing territorial entities or "mere geographical expressions" can begin the process of moving toward nationhood.

NOTES

1. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–19.

2. Pius Adesanmi, "Olisa Metuh and the British: Between the Colonised and the Postcolonised," *Premium Times* (online publication), January 30, 2016. blogs.premiumtimesng.com/?p=170811. (Accessed 1/30/2016).

3. Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014), 3.

4. Irina Filatova, "African State versus African Renaissance? A Historical Survey of the African State," in *A United States of Africa?*, ed. Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2001), 69.

5. Xavier Renou, "A Major Obstacle to African Unity: The New Franco-American Cold War on the Continent," in *A United States of Africa?*, ed. Eddy Maloka (Ibid.), 431.

6. W. Alade Fawole, "Governance, Political Instability and Civil Wars," in *Security and Developmental Challenges for Africa in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of Professor Thomas Akhigbe Imobighe*, ed. Amadu Sesay and Charles Ukeje (Kuru, Nigeria: NIPSS, 2015), 140.

7. The list includes Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello, and Sir Kashim Ibrahim in Nigeria; Sir Milton Magai and Sir Albert Magai in Sierra Leone; and Sir David (later Dauda) Jawara in Gambia.

8. James O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191.

9. Jonathan Mayuyuka Kaunda, "Continuity and Change in Malawi's Foreign Policy-Making," in *Globalization and Emerging Trends in African States' Foreign Policy-Making Process: A Comparative Perspective of Southern Africa*, ed. Kowa Gombe Adar and Rok Ajulu (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 72.

10. On the controversy regarding the "state" in Africa or the "African state," Claude Ake is of the view that since the state is an essentially—though not exclusively—capitalist phenomenon, the use of the term "state" to refer to the territorial entities in Africa is perhaps unhelpful. See Claude Ake, "The State in Contemporary Africa," in *Government and Politics in Africa: A Reader*, ed. Okwudiba Nnoli (Harare: AAPS Books, 2000), 57–65.

11. See, among others, James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); James O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191; Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

12. John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink* (Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2010).

13. Walter Rodney, "Preface," *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1972 [Revised edition, 1981]), vii.

14. Walter Rodney himself in several pages acknowledges that African elites are complicit in how Europeans underdeveloped their continent.

Acknowledgments

The idea of writing this book came to me after one of the series of seminars tagged "brainstorming sessions" held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos, Nigeria. In contributing to the discussion, I had cynically submitted that there are no states in Africa, in the strict Westphalian sense, but only the shells or caricatures that the departed colonial adventurers had left behind for Africans to operate if they could. My conviction rested on Kwame Nkrumah's experiential analysis of the neocolonial character of the state in Africa and James O'Connell's seminal work, "The Inevitability of Instability." I later went on to develop the notion into a book. While the NIIA is not responsible for my views, I must not fail to appreciate it and its Director-General, Professor Bola Akinterinwa, who graciously invited me to participate in the seminars.

Once the idea was fully concretized in my mind and I began preliminary work on it, a number of scholars, colleagues and friends assisted me in numerous ways. To Professor Olayiwola Abegunrin of Howard University in Washington, DC, I owe immense gratitude for encouraging me to complete and submit the manuscript to Lexington Books for consideration. He wrote e-mails to remind and encourage me not to relent on the work. About halfway in the project, I sent the proposal to Lexington Books at his suggestion. It was warmly welcomed by Kathryn Tafelski, then assistant acquisitions editor in charge of African Studies, Political Science and Legal Studies, who took interest in it and recommended it to the editorial board; and assistant editors Emily Roderick and Courtney Morales, who not only showed great understanding and patience with me but never failed to offer a word of encouragement through their e-mail correspondences and gentle reminders.

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W. Alade Fawole
Ile-Ife, Nigeria
February 2018

Part I

COLONIAL RULE, DISENGAGEMENT, AND THE POST-COLONIAL STATE

Introduction and Conceptual Discourse

Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first post-independence leader, aptly summarizes the basic condition of most African countries which, though independent, are not the real masters of their own national destinies. As he asserted, "a state in the grip of neo-colonialism is not a master of its own destiny. It is this factor which makes neo-colonialism such a dangerous threat to world peace."[1] Today, the African continent parades the worst examples of collapsed, failed and failing states, from Democratic Republic of Congo to Somalia, Central African Republic, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and Eritrea, to name a few. Many African analysts and commentators have wondered and queried why Africa, a continent of fifty-four independent states, remains substantially backward even after more than half a century of independence. The yearly UNDP Human Development Reports have consistently ranked most African countries at the bottom in virtually all the development indices. Sub-Saharan Africa ranks the worst among all the regions of the world in terms of life expectancy at birth, under-five mortality rates, mean years of schooling, gross national income per capita, human security, extreme poverty, healthcare provision, and more. In short, African countries perennially occupy the lowest human development rankings. For example, in the 2015 Report, no African country featured among forty-nine countries in the Very High Human Development category, only five in High Human Development category,[2] twelve in the Medium Human Development category, but there were thirty-five of them out of a total of fifty-one countries in the Low Human Development category.[3]

Conversely, several Asian countries that were on the same level of underdevelopment as African states in the early 1960s—Malaysia, China, South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, and so forth—have since moved on, some of them like Singapore from third world to first, according to Lee Kuan Yew.

Myriad explanations have been proffered by both Africans and non-Africans for this sorry state of affairs, mostly centering on either the deliberate refusal or chronic incompetence of the local ruling elites who collected power from the departed colonial officials to advance the state and nation-building projects allegedly handed over to them by the colonialists. Analysts of this persuasion are apt to contend that it is high time we stopped blaming colonialism for Africa's woes, that Africa should have made appreciable progress in the areas of nation-building and development under indigenous rule in five decades, that we should stop subscribing to *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*[4] but instead look inward to how Africans themselves have either deliberately or inadvertently underdeveloped their own countries and the entire continent. Embedded in this rather cynical argument, of course, is that Africans have lost the moral right to continue to blame colonialism as the source of their state-building woes five decades after independence, that they should locate the problem squarely in the incompetence of Africa's own ruling elites to operate and sustain modern states. Noble and laudable as these sentiments of exasperation with African governments may seem, they also unwittingly and uncritically subscribe to and parrot the Western racist game of shifting the blames for Africa's woes on Africans themselves, invariably justifying the racist presumption of Africans as sub-human, pre-modern, inferior and therefore incompetent to govern modern states! This racist argument of Africans' "congenital inferiority" or "genetic predisposition" to incompetence has subsisted in very subtle forms for decades.[5] It was actually the moral argument employed to rationalize and justify colonial domination as a "civilizing mission" and, at a later date, the institution of apartheid as state ideology. Commentators and analysts from former colonial countries have always painted a rosy picture of how colonial domination brought the benefits of modern civilization to primitive and pre-modern peoples by creating and bequeathing to them modern governance systems and structures but which they unfortunately remain too primitive and backward to operate correctly and make functional for their own sakes. If anything, it served the purpose of cleansing or at least whitewashing their dirty consciences.

An inescapable reality, and one that Africa has had to contend with, is the fact that the character of the "state" that the imperialists created and later bequeathed to Africans was essentially totalistic, absolutist, authoritarian, predatory, violent and unaccountable, and as Nkrumah and others have famously asserted, had no corresponding responsibility whatsoever to the colonial subjects.[6] Let us not forget that the colonial state architecture was created solely to facilitate plunder by the metropolitan power, and nothing else. Handed over to African local elites as colonial rule came to an end, the colonial state remained exactly what it had been under the departed foreign rulers—a rickety but authoritarian and unaccountable leviathan that the local

elites promptly instrumentalized for self-aggrandizement rather than for development. In the hands of the local elites, the state in its essence was a foreign imposition, and it was unworkable no matter how much they tried, because it was not intended *ab initio* to be durable. The African ruling elites to which power was handed realized from their own experience of agitational politics that the state bequeathed to them was a weak entity and that the only way to survive and defend their own interests was, as Cooper has noted, to employ "the same strategy of gatekeeping that had served the colonial state" so as to keep opposition at bay.[7] The so-called democratic states that were imposed on Africans were themselves erected on solid anti-democratic foundations that could not be easily reformed even if the new local rulers had the intention. It is little wonder that they began to fail in quick succession shortly after independence.

Indeed, as things stand today, there is hardly any sub-region of Africa that is not in deep crisis of state and nation-building in one form or the other. For example, the Arab Maghreb North Africa is still reeling from the aftermath of the violent "Arab Spring" that erupted in 2011 and swept off erstwhile and immovable dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, as well as relentless jihadist onslaughts in Algeria. In West Africa, state failure had begun in the early 1960s with serial coups in Togo, Nigeria, and Ghana, but commenced in greater earnest in the early 1990s when Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire spectacularly unraveled in quick succession due to latent and unresolved intra-state divisions that had been embedded in the very fabric of the states. The number in this group of failing states has now increased with the virtual implosion of Mali, where Tuareg insurgents nearly succeeded in carving out a separate Azawad Republic from the country, before external interventions prevented its total dismemberment. Since the end of its civil war in 1970, Nigeria, undoubtedly the preeminent African country, has witnessed unrelenting domestic violence and insurgency from the extremist *Maitatsine* group that unleashed violence in the early 1980s, and other militant activities in the oil-rich Niger Delta region and, of course, *Boko Haram* Islamist terrorism and insurgency in the North.

East Africa and the Horn of Africa have witnessed the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the independence of South Sudan from the Republic of Sudan after decades of bloody war, the insurgency in Darfur, the outright collapse of Somalia and its unraveling into an enclave of warlords and bandits, kidnappers and pirates, and the ongoing civil war in newly independent South Sudan. The Central Africa sub-region has grappled with little success with the collapse of Democratic Republic of Congo, the horrendous bloodbath in Rwanda in 1994, the near collapse of Central African Republic, among others. With perhaps the exception of a few, most African countries that appear relatively stable on the outside are actually

groaning under deep-seated internal problems, contradictions and divisions arising from their colonial provenance. South Africa, unarguably the most economically developed and politically sophisticated country on the continent, is dealing with its own peculiar internal contradictions and crisis of legitimacy that bubble to the surface much more prominently now in the post-Mandela era.

It is clear from the above submission that Africa is in deep crisis, that the "African state" is reeling under critical internal contradictions that were deliberately embedded in its fabric and structure; the political architecture of the "African state" or the "state in Africa" has been exposed to be a hollow shell, a pathetic caricature of the Westphalian conception of the state. In reality, hardly any of the myriad crises plaguing the states on the continent is without both visible and invisible hands of foreign powers which, in pursuit of selfish interests and agendas, have helped to complicate the teething problems that colonial rule had bequeathed to Africans at the grant of flag independence. All the departed colonial powers still have substantial investment and vested politico-economic and strategic interests in their former colonies which compel them to intrude in their domestic affairs. For example, the British, before departing their colonies, ingeniously established business conglomerates and left behind political and administrative structures to enable them to retain a firm grip on the former colonial possessions after independence. On its own part, France actually did more than that to retain its grip: it tied up its former colonies securely to its own national economy by giving them a common currency that is linked to the French Franc; it cynically imposed one-sided and unequal military and defense agreements on them, and retained its own military forces in several of the states to keep them in check. Five decades after independence, French military garrisons still remain in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and Niger Republic, among others. If anything, Mali's near implosion in 2012 has provided a new pretext for strengthening France's military presence in West Africa.

Portugal, another former colonial power, was not even interested in conceding independence to its colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde, because it kept its possessions not as colonies *stricto sensu* but as overseas territories, or as mere extensions of Portugal. These colonies had to engage in armed struggles to gain the same independence that the British had conceded to their colonies. The United States of America, though not a colonial power in the traditional sense, is perhaps the most intrusive of the Western great powers into the domestic affairs of African countries. It employs political means, propaganda, economic subversion, military intimidation and other subterfuges to intrude into the internal affairs of African states, including orchestrating *coups d'états* against "unfriendly" governments.[8]

In the post–Cold War era, erstwhile Western hegemony and influence in Africa is coming under relentless challenge by the recent Chinese scramble for resources and influence. China is not only exploiting vital resources, it is also seriously cultivating friendships across the continent, employing "soft power," diplomacy, and offer of aid. Chinese firms are engaged in numerous construction projects across the continent. China even built and donated the Secretariat of the African Union in Addis Ababa. These are signs of China's burgeoning influence in Africa, and signs of a new foreign scramble.

Arising from the above is the need to interrogate the crisis of the state in Africa or of the African state by looking more closely at its roots, its historical construction by Western imperialism, and the character which colonial rule deliberately gave it. This, as Dani Nabudere has observed, is because Africa's "problems arise from Africa's history in terms of the slave trade, colonization and continued subordination in the world economic and social system."[9] And therefore, "an understanding of Africa's place and role in the world today thus cannot be detached from an understanding of the continent's history."[10] This crucial point that is often casually ignored in the analysis of Africa had been made as far back as the mid-1960s by James O'Connell in his seminal article, "The Inevitability of Instability."[11] It is high time Africans went beyond the racial stereotype that they are incompetent, and begin to look more closely into the dummy that departed colonialists sold them. This brings us to the poser: whether or not there is really something to honestly call a "post-colonial" state in Africa. Is Africa truly independent, a real post-colony in the correct definition of the term, or is it merely the archetypal neo-colonial enclave that Nkrumah mentioned? This is the poser that this work addresses.

THE ILLUSIVE POST-COLONY: A CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

An explanation of the title of this work, and some of the terms, for example, "illusion," "post-colonial state," is apposite at this point. Reference to the illusive state is not intended to suggest that independent African states are not real states, as understood in the ordinary definition of the concept. They are states to the extent that they have been granted flag independence and *de jure* sovereignty by their respective colonial masters, and have also been recognized as such on the world stage. They parade all the known attributes which only states in the international system have—fixed geographical territories, established and permanent populations, sovereignty, central governments which command the allegiance of all that live within the respective territories, monopoly of the legitimate instruments of violence, currencies, and recognition and acceptance by the rest of the international community.

They have received international legitimation and acceptance on account of possession of these attributes.

However, while all the known attributes are clear, what is perhaps less clear are the attributes of real independence and sovereignty. How truly independent and sovereign are the fifty-four African states, or do they only parade what Kwame Nkrumah famously described as the mere outward trappings of international sovereignty?[12] Discussing the state in Africa, Claude Ake's views are hardly different from Kwame Nkrumah's. According to Ake,

> Since autonomization is the very essence of the state as a modality of domination, it is not clear whether we can properly speak of the state in post-colonial Africa. That is not the same thing as saying that government does not exist, or that domination does not exist, or even that there is no coercive apparatus for the subordination of some social groups by others. After all, the state is only a particular modality of class domination.[13]

From all the above, the implication is not that the state does not exist to the extent that it has all or most of the attributes in the definition, but rather whether it is a real African state, autonomous and post-colonial! It would appear from Ake's submission that he does not seem to subscribe to the fact that what we call states in post-colonial Africa are states in the real sense of the word, but perhaps states still in the process of formation—that is, entities that are still going through the process of evolution into states. But even then, he still cautions that thinking of states in post-colonial Africa as being in the formative stages might also be misleading, "for the process of state formation appears to be bogged down in contradictions which stubbornly refuse transcendence and it would appear a new complex reality has in fact emerged."[14]

This brings us to our description and explanation of the operative phrase in the title of this work which is "the illusion of a post-colonial state." To agree to or accept our categorization of the African state as a mere illusion, we must begin by defining what an illusion is in the English language. According to *Dictionary.com* an illusion is "something that deceives by producing a false or misleading impression of reality." Another defines it as "an erroneous perception of reality" and "the condition of being deceived by a false perception or belief," or "something that produces a false impression." In the same breath, a casual check of the thesaurus reveals several synonyms for the word illusion, among which are apparition, appearance, deception, fallacy, false impression, fantasy, figment of the imagination, ghost, hocus pocus, impression, imitation, make-believe, mirage, myth, semblance, and virtual reality, among others. As employed in this discourse, something is adjudged to be illusive or illusory when it is "based on or having the nature of an illusion." The conceptual analysis that immediately follows will reveal whether or not the state in Africa is real or a mere illusion.

The Neo-Colonialism Thesis: Kwame Nkrumah and Others

Ghana's first post-independence leader, Kwame Nkrumah, remains without question the most seminal reference point in the discourse on neo-colonialism as it affects Africa. Writing from both deep intellectual and experiential perspectives, Nkrumah asserted that "neo-colonialism" is the last stage of imperialism—in other words, a continuation of the imperialist pursuit that was previously accomplished by direct colonial rule but which is now being done in a more subtle but sinister form by the indirect control and manipulation of the former colonies to which flag independence had earlier been granted. In a nutshell, a neo-colonial state can be summed up as one that has the externalities of *de jure* independence but is in reality still controlled from the capital city of the metropolitan power. In other words, such a state is outwardly independent and sovereign but in reality still attached to the same colonial master under a different guise. It can be summarized that what many African countries got was sham independence, a mere semblance, an imitation of the real state—they were sold a dummy! This was the position adopted by the Third All-African People's Conference which took place in Cairo in 1961. As cited by Offiong,

> This conference considers that Neo-Colonialism, which is the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries, which become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical forces, is the greatest threat to African countries that have newly won their independence or those approaching this status.[15]

The Conference also identified and denounced eight different manifestations of neo-colonialism, the three that are most germane for our discussion here being:

- The deliberate setting up of puppet governments that would do the biddings of the former colonial countries;
- Economic penetration and infiltration of the newly independent countries through capital investments, loans, monetary aids, supply of technical experts, imposition of unequal concessions, and so forth, to perpetuate and further deepen their dependence on former colonial powers; and
- The insidious but surreptitious imposition of military bases sometimes portrayed as scientific research stations.[16]

Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian leader, must undoubtedly have been one of the intellectual originators and propagators of this notion, for he was the convener and host of the first All-African People's Conference in Accra in

1958, a year after Ghana gained independence. Elaborating further on this thesis in his seminal book, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* published in 1965, Nkrumah had identified what he termed the "subtle and varied" political, economic, religious, ideological and cultural methods devised and employed by neo-colonialists to maintain independent African countries in perpetual subjection to foreign domination and control, an objective hitherto pursued, according to him, by "naked colonialism."[17] The imperialists, he asserted, merely switched tactics since naked colonialism was no longer practicable and sustainable in the face of mounting militant protests from the peoples of the colonies. As a great apostle of Pan-Africanism and a charismatic African leader, Nkrumah had by the early 1960s indubitably become a major irritant to perceived Western political and economic hegemony in Africa that he had to be removed. There is copious evidence in the public domain from declassifed United States' National Security Agency (NSA) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) documents about the role of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) not only in the February 24, 1966, military overthrow of the Nkrumah government but also in the US-orchestrated serial coups and political instabilities that removed other perceived radical leaders in Congo, Mali, and so forth, in the early-mid 1960s. These were done not only to effect changes that would see the emergence of leaders that would be friendly and sympathetic to US and Western interests but also to send the necessary powerful signals to other leaders as well.

It is remarkable that Nkrumah's thesis on neo-colonialism has been adopted in various forms and fashions in other literary and scientific works dealing with Africa. One of these is James O'Connell who, as far back as 1965, had asserted in a major article in the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, that political instability was inevitable in post-independence Africa because the state system that colonial rule had bequeathed was not only alien to the people but it was perhaps a cumbersome contraption that was never really adapted to local situations and conditions in Africa before the colonial rulers departed.[18] The colony was ruled by a foreign elite caste which combined all executive, legislative and judicial powers in themselves without any input from the "natives" and secured compliance to its authoritarian laws by armed intimidation. As Basil Davidson has noted, colonial authorities ruled by decrees which were "administered by an authoritarian bureaucracy to which any thought of the people's participation was damnable subversion."[19] But while departing after decades of authoritarian rule, the colonial officials took great care to design new and democratic governance systems and constitutions which they then imposed upon the colonies as parting gifts. It is laughable that the "natives" who had been under authoritarian rule for decades were then expected to run "democratic" governments for which

they were never trained by their foreign rulers. What actually took place at independence was the grafting or superimposition of a liberal democratic ideology and its structures upon a largely authoritarian state system, which the Africans were expected to operate and perfect. Sublime as the notion of democratic African states might seem, it was essentially founded on a faulty logic in the sense that not only was the colonial state fundamentally authoritarian and unaccountable in its character, the newly emergent African political elites taking over power were ill-schooled in democratic politics and therefore ill-prepared for the rigors of democratic governance after independence.

In other studies, many perceptive analysts have also subscribed to this school of thought. For example, while analyzing the sources, origins, dynamics, and resolution of conflicts in "post-colonial" Africa, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman in their book, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*,[20] concluded that

> the ending of colonial rule created high hopes for the newly independent countries and for the inauguration of a properly post-colonial era, but such optimism was relatively short-lived, as the extent to which the West has not relinquished control became clear. This continuing Western influence, located in flexible combinations of the economic, the political, the military and the ideological (but with an overriding economic purpose), was named neo-colonialism by Marxists.[21]

From all accounts, and from the speed with which these supposedly new post-colonial states began to unravel in the early 1960s, it was obvious that what colonial rule left behind were not states in the real sense but mere shells and caricatures that Africans were saddled with.

It is important to bear in mind that the pristine colonial state was a predatory, extractive and inherently violent state. Its post-independence successor was equally a predatory, extractive, rent-seeking and therefore violent re-carnation of its predecessor. This colonial relic, as Nkrumah famously observed, bears no corresponding responsibility to its population; its institutions were carried over from colonial rule and, with the exception of the military and police which facilitated internal pacification for extractive purposes, were generally weak and ineffectual, and this allowed rulers to impound more powers to their offices in an increasingly centralized system of governance. These rulers were therefore largely unaccountable to the people. Thus alienated from the state after independence, the people reverted to the default setting—that is, to the agitational politics that they were consigned to under colonial rule—hence, state-building and nation-building were futile and impossible.

IMPACT OF THE COLD WAR ON GOVERNANCE, SECURITY, AND STABILITY IN AFRICA

The impact of the Cold War, an ideological struggle for global supremacy between the West and the East, principally between the United States of America and the defunct Soviet Union from 1945 until 1990, cannot be discountenanced in any analysis of African politics, governance and security from independence until now. This Cold War, which among other things manifested itself in the rival great powers sponsoring proxy wars in Africa and internationalizing local conflicts, affected Africans negatively for upward of four and half decades, a hefty chunk of their overall existence, and its impact remains deep-seated and enduring in contemporary African politics.

Cold War ideological and military rivalries resulted in the deliberate creation, support for and facilitation of the emergence of several dictatorial rulers who were hardly more than proxies of foreign powers and influence on the continent—Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire, Gnassingbe Eyadema in Togo, Omar Bongo in Gabon, Felix Houphouet-Boigny in Cote d'Ivoire, Ahmadou Ahidjo in Cameroon, Paul Biya also in Cameroon, Mohammed Siad Barre in Somalia, Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, and Hissene Habre in Chad, and so forth. These leaders served foreign interests in Africa. Others who rejected the proxy status or were deemed by the Western powers as being too independently minded and "dangerous" were often violently overthrown in military coups or were simply assassinated. Notable ones like Kwame Nkrumah, Samora Machel, and Amilcar Cabral, suffered this fate, while some others had their countries and regimes thoroughly politically destabilized and economically asphyxiated. Ahmed Sekou Toure in Guinea belongs in this category.

Western powers which controlled the major international financial institutions, especially the Bretton-Woods institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, utilized and manipulated them to sabotage and subvert the economies of African states to coerce them into complying with Western political and economic dictates. In some cases, these veritable institutions of Western economic domination were used to advise and get African nations to borrow, ostensibly for development but in reality to enslave them in a cruel, unjust and inequitable international division of labor as hewers of wood and drawers of water. The imposition of the highly destructive IMF/World Bank-inspired economic structural adjustment programs in the 1980s is a case in point. None of the countries that were force-fed this strange economic pill ever made any economic progress by it, Nigeria being a typical example. Today, many African states are still struggling for survival under the crushing weight of externally induced debts that they can never repay. They were coerced and cajoled to take these loans which apparently never led

to any development nor enhanced their capacity for repayment, so they are trapped in a diabolical and cruel debt peonage created for them by devious "economic hit men" from the West.[22] Poverty-ridden Nigeria had to cough out a hefty sum of $12 billion in order to be "forgiven" $18 billion and to be freed from its strangulating debt overhang.

As part of this asphyxiating imperialist stranglehold, the economies of Francophone West African states were deliberately tied to the fortunes and misfortunes of the French economy and the vagaries of the French franc, with the implications that they were subjected to the economic decisions made in Paris without their input. Even when Nigeria had proposed regional economic integration as a mechanism for collective development, it was France that frustrated the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) by tricks and subterfuge until 1975. One of the tricks was to encourage the establishment instead of an exclusively Francophone economic grouping called the CEAO. France's objective was to discourage any form of Anglophone-Francophone cooperation and unity that might jeopardize its economic stranglehold on its former colonies which it was exploiting for selfish advantage. Besides, the overall objective was to thwart any form of cooperation that could lead to collective development and integration. With nine of the sixteen countries in the sub-region being Francophone, there was no way the rest of the English-speaking countries could have formed ECOWAS since they are not geographically contiguous for such a purpose, and Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde were yet to gain independence. This lack of geographical contiguity was a major disincentive to the formation of a purely Anglophone regional body.

Facing daunting political opposition and myriad economic and social crises at home, several African leaders increasingly resorted to authoritarianism, centralization and concentration of state powers in themselves and reliance on coercive methods to keep their restive populations in check and guarantee regime survival. As proxies of Western nations and economic interests, they enjoyed the backing of foreign powers which needed them as veritable bulwarks against Soviet and Communist penetration of the African continent. For the Western powers, Africa must be preserved by all means as an exclusive sphere of influence, and any Soviet gains must be contained and rolled back. And this was achieved by offers of economic incentives, political manipulation, regime protection and other similar subterfuges. Mobutu Sese Seko lasted in power for upward of three decades (from 1965 to 1997) in Congo largely because of American backing for his dictatorial rule. Every attempt made by the people to unseat him through coups and domestic insurgency was thwarted by the United States, until his usefulness as a Western proxy suddenly expired at the end of the Cold War and he was allowed to be run out of power by the Laurent Kabila-led insurgency in May 1997.

Even as at the mid-1980s, Nigeria and several other African countries were force-fed or cajoled to adopt the bitter economic prescriptions that were concocted by the World Bank and IMF economists, the so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes, the after-effects of which nearly totally destroyed their fragile economies. The IMF loans and the stiff conditionalities that must be swallowed along with the bitter economic adjustment pills invariably set the stage for increased authoritarianism and created the basis for the internal political and social upheavals that African states have been grappling with since the end of the Cold War. All these have been further compounded by the rampaging globalization and its imposition of neo-liberal economic agenda on the rest of the world. In contemporary times, state authoritarianism is coming under sustained assaults by domestic militant and insurgent groups who increasingly have independent access to illicit weapons. Stripped of the foreign backing they had hitherto relied upon, these African dictators became totally disrobed and naked in the post–Cold War era, and their regimes began collapsing one after the other—Mobutu Sese Seko, Mohammed Siad Barre, and Samuel Doe, and so forth. Those who got wise among them quickly resorted to political liberalization, even if mostly cosmetic, to survive, hence the spate of national conferences and political changes that swept across many states since 1990.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR

The post–Cold War era has witnessed increasing militant challenges to the authority and survival of states in Africa by sub-national groups, hence the serial state failures that hallmarked the last decade of the twentieth century and stretched into the second decade of the twenty-first century. As Yusuf Bangura has aptly observed, political development in Africa is now characterized by the emergence of aggrieved but militant sub-national groups which neither owe their rise nor any form of allegiance to external sponsors and are thus not amenable or subject to foreign control, as was the case in the 1960s and 1970s. These militant and insurgent groups now have independent access to their countries' vital national resources—oil, timber, diamonds, and so forth—with which they fund domestic insurgencies and procure weapons from illicit international arms dealers.[23] The cases of insurgencies and civil wars in Liberia, Sierra-Leone, the Niger Delta and Boko Haram in Nigeria, Angola, and Somalia, and so forth, will be discussed more elaborately in the relevant chapters. In the specific cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone, both of which collapsed in quick succession, the insurgent forces led by Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh respectively promptly seized their countries'

natural resources—rubber, timber, and diamonds in Liberia and principally diamond-producing areas in Sierra Leone—and used the proceeds to fund their operations. Each had enough resources to procure weapons from illicit arms dealers, mostly from the old Warsaw Pact arsenals which had been abandoned in former Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe. A major implication of this was that neither of the two insurgent groups was beholden to any external sponsors and therefore were not in any way amenable to foreign manipulation and control.

As part of the consequences of the end of the Cold War, the African continent has witnessed more political instability, violent internal conflict and uprising, and general insecurity since the early 1990s than at any other time since a majority of the countries became independent in the early 1960s. Africa convulsed so badly within the first decade after the Cold War such that the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan highlighted in his *Report on the Causes of Conflicts in Africa* that in 1998 alone, destructive internal wars were raging in not less than fourteen African countries while eleven other countries were experiencing severe internal political upheavals.[24] Several internal and external factors account for this sudden upsurge in conflict and insecurity in Africa.

First, the implosion of the Soviet Union, and its subsequent dismemberment into more than a dozen independent republics, invariably left the United States of America as the sole remaining superpower, and Western liberal democracy the sole surviving ideology. This new shift in the global configuration of power inevitably granted the US virtually unlimited opportunity to advance the ruthless imposition of Western liberal values across the globe in a manner that also unleashed a fresh wave of political liberalization. America's preoccupation with handing out democracy like T-shirts across the globe and insisting on regime change in a number of cases is further facilitated by the promotion and funding of civil society activism. In Africa, this new American preoccupation to spread liberal democracy by encouraging and empowering non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations raised popular democratic consciousness and agitations which inexorably compelled several autocratic regimes to begin experimenting with a variety of often deceitful political reforms and pseudo-democratization processes. The fact that many African states, having recently undergone (or are currently undergoing) "political transitions," either from military dictatorship or from one-party authoritarian rule to some form of "democratic" governance, invariably engendered what Robin Luckham has termed "new forms of militarism, violent conflict and insecurity."[25] This is so because democratic governance and its attendant freedoms now allow aggrieved peoples and groups to give vent to long-suppressed emotions, desires and anger, sometimes violently. For example, Nigeria, which has been experimenting with democratic

rule since 1999, has witnessed the privatization of violence through the emergence of armed "ethnic militias"[26] and the violent Boko Haram Islamist sect which viciously challenged the state's traditional monopoly of the means of coercion.

It is pertinent to make the point, however, that it is not the introduction of democratic rule *per se* that has engendered these conflicts. They are rather the inevitable consequences of outstanding internal problems brought forward from the days of authoritarian rule, but for which democratic rule has unfortunately yet to provide the right solutions. The lingering and festering crisis in Nigeria's oil-bearing Niger Delta region which the federal government's amnesty program is directed at is a case in point. It was triggered by agitations for the rectification of the historic injustices done to the people and ecology of the region by decades of oil exploration and attendant environmental despoliation. In some other countries, a democratization process that went berserk often unleashed violence and insecurity, as in the case of Algeria between 1992 and 2000,[27] and in Zimbabwe, and the violence that gripped Kenya after the massively rigged general elections of December 2007. So, instead of enjoying the real "dividends" of democratic rule, "many new democracies have been torn apart by ever more violent 'new' conflicts, often on the basis of ethnic or religious identities."[28] Kenya is therefore a specific example of a democracy that went totally berserk and unleashed a massive wave of inter-ethnic violence unprecedented in Kenya's history.

In addition to this, and infinitely more problematic, are the challenges that post–Cold War international politics have posed to African states. In the first instance, the countries of the West have no further need of the erstwhile authoritarian regimes that had served them well as the bulwarks against communism in Africa. Now left to fend for themselves, such regimes have had to embark on some form of political liberalization to escape total extinction, and some of them in the process of political reforms threw their states into violent convulsions and insecurity which, in a few cases, resulted in outright state failure.[29] No longer enjoying external backing from the West, authoritarian regimes in Africa became severely vulnerable to internal insurrection by groups that have scores to settle or demands to be made on the state. Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone are prominent in this category.

Secondly, the globalization of terrorism, a new phenomenon since Al Qaeda's September 2001 attacks on the United States, has become a distinct characteristic of post–Cold War international politics so much that amorphous non-state actors now pose serious challenges to international peace and security. If former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan once admitted that "one terror network, al-Qaeda, has the capacity to kill around the world, and has struck in more than ten UN member states in the past few years,"[30] the

situation has become vastly more complex today. Africa has not been spared, having experienced terrorist attacks on US embassies in East Africa in which hundreds of innocent Africans died. Recent developments in transnational terrorism include the insurgent activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria and contiguous countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon; the Al-Shabaab menace in Somalia and threatening the whole of East Africa; the activities of the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in North Africa, and several others such as Ansar el-Dine and MUJAO operating and causing havoc in Africa's Sahel-Sahara region. These groups after the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya gained access to looted heavy armaments from Libya's armories to cause greater havoc to different countries, as was witnessed in Mali when separatist Tuaregs with the assistance of freelance jihadists summarily dismembered the country in the year 2012 before external help arrived.

CONCLUSION

The central thrust of the discussion in this introduction is that, not only does the so-called post-colonial state owe its origin and provenance to the colonial state, it is in reality hardly different or distinguishable from it, except with regard to what Claude Ake calls the change in the composition of the management teams. While the African state is the reincarnation of the colonial state, which was created for resource extraction and plunder, it nonetheless was still being expected to function as a normal modern nation-state even though this was not constructed into its fabric nor was it the intention of its creators. State failure has thus become prevalent largely because the states were *ab initio* not made to last, and this has become more real after the Cold War when the foreign backing that had hitherto sustained many autocratic rulers was suddenly removed.

If anything, it is perhaps apposite to say that Nkrumah's highly romanticized call for Africans to seek first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added did not materialize. Yes, the Africans, as we have seen across the continent, did obtain political or flag independence which endows them with the external appearance of statehood but withheld the real substance from them. The notion that all would be well with Africa once the colonies shook off the colonial yoke terribly overlooked the extent of colonial penetration and the fragility of the state that Africans would inherit once the overlords departed. It is perhaps distressing that, in spite of his theoretical depth and knowledge of what Africa faced, Kwame Nkrumah himself as leader of Ghana manifested the characteristics of the authoritarian "Big Man" that has plagued governance on the continent for more than five decades. Whether by design or default, Nkrumah ended up the archetypal anti-democratic ruler.

Nkrumah also probably unwittingly played into the hands of the very same neo-colonialist forces he had so vehemently condemned and thus provided them the leeway for a comprehensive subversion of Ghana and other so-called post-colonial states.

NOTES

1. Kwame Nkrumah, "Introduction," *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965).

2. The countries are Mauritius, Seychelles, Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia. See UNDP Human Development Report, 2015.

3. UNDP Human Development Report, 2015.

4. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1972).

5. It has existed as a notion for decades and the colonizers of Africa employed it to provide moral justification for both the slave trade and colonial subjugation. Among those who sought to provide pseudo-intellectual justifications for this notion was Oxford History professor, Hugh Trevor-Roper who reportedly asserted that Africans were "barbarous tribes" who had no history worth studying.

6. Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books Ltd, 1963); James O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191; Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1972); Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

7. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 5.

8. On Democratic Republic of Congo, see John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*; Michael Bronner, "Our Man in Africa," *Foreign Policy* (The Magazine), December 28, 2014, describes America's cynical use of Hissene Habre to perpetrate the most heinous autocratic rule in Chad; Stephen R. Weissman, "What Really Happened in Congo: The CIA, The Murder of Lumumba, and the Rise of Mobutu," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2014), m.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141523/stephen–r–weissman/what–really–happened–in–congo.

9. Dani Nabudere, "African Unity in Historical Perspective," in *A United States of Africa?*, ed. Eddy Maloka, 9.

10. Nabudere, "African Unity in Historical Perspective," 9.

11. O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," 181–191.

12. See Kwame Nkrumah's works, especially, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books, 1963); and "Introduction," *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*.

13. Claude Ake, "The State in Contemporary Africa," in *Government and Politics in Africa: A Reader*, ed. Okwudiba Nnoli (Harare: AAPS Books, 2000), 60.

14. Ake, "The State in Contemporary Africa," 60.

15. Cited in Daniel A. Offiong, *Imperialism and Dependency: Obstacles to African Development* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1982), 61.

16. Cited in Offiong, *Imperialism and Dependency*, 62.
17. Nkrumah, "Introduction," *Neo-Colonialism*.
18. O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability."
19. Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden*, 208.
20. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
21. Quoted in Innocent Ifeanyi Emenari, *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Chinua Achebe's Novels*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile–Ife, 2014, 193.
22. For graphic details of this sinister practice, see John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (New York: Plume Books, 2004).
23. Yusuf Bangura, "Understanding the Political and Cultural Dynamics of the Sierra Leonean War: A Critique of Paul Richards' *Fighting for the Rain Forest*," *Africa Development* XXII, nos. 3 and 4 (1997): 117.
24. UN Secretary-General's report on conflicts in Africa, cited in *Africa Renewal* (formerly *Africa Recovery)*, UN Department of Public Information 18, no. 3 (October 2004): 15.
25. Robin Luckham, "Democratic Strategies for Security in Transition and Conflict," in *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments in Transitional Democracies*, ed. Gavin Cawthra and Robin Luckham (London: Zed Books, 2003), 3.
26. See W. Alade Fawole, "Militaries, Militias and Mullahs: National Security Issues in Nigeria's Foreign Policy," in *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2008), 96–115.
27. For a detailed analysis of the Algerian case, see Frederic Volpi, "Democratisation and Its Enemies: The Algerian Transition to Authoritarianism, 1988–2001," in *Governing Insecurity*, ed. Cawthra and Luckham, 155–180.
28. Robin Luckham, "Democratic Strategies for Security in Transition and Conflict," in *Governing Insecurity*, ed. Cawthra and Luckham, 5.
29. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a case in point.
30. See Kofi Annan, "Courage to Fulfil Our Responsibilities," *The Economist* (London), December 4, 2004, 24.

Chapter 1

Colonial Rule and the Political Architecture of the Post-Colonial State

THE POLITICAL ARCHITECTURE OF COLONIAL RULE IN AFRICA

This chapter examines the origin, nature, historical mission and role, as well as the actual character of the state system—in other words, the entire political architecture—that colonial rule created and eventually bequeathed to Africa at independence as the post-colonial state. In reality, it is difficult to understand fully the fundamental character of the state in Africa in the post-colonial era without understanding its provenance and the inextricable links with the colonial rule that gave birth to it. It will appear that an inextricable organic and umbilical cord binds the so-called post-colonial state in Africa with its colonial ancestor, for as Claude Ake observed, what changed at independence was not the character of the state but rather the composition of state managers—that is, a change of managers from the colonial to the indigenous rulers whilst the state remains essentially unchanged.[1]

The origin of the colonial state is not shrouded in any mystery; it is boldly located in the historical mission and the essential logic of capitalist imperialism which bred the colonial enterprise. It was the imperialist scramble for Africa's vast resources that triggered the colonial enterprise that created what are today regarded as modern nation-states in Africa. Once the major European nations abolished the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, their attention and energies were shifted to devising other means of continuing the criminal exploitation and cornering the rich labor and natural resources of the African continent for their own selfish ends. The powerful metropolitan states of the time thereafter began the scramble for territories and resources in Africa, a scramble which was eventually legitimized through the instrumentality of the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 during which the continent of Africa was

arbitrarily and cynically carved up into territorial possessions of the different European states. The major contenders for colonies in Africa were, in the main, Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Portugal, and the essence of the Berlin Conference was to mutually divide the continent into colonies and thus avoid the destructiveness of bloody clashes.

But it must be emphasized that the newly acquired territories passed through different forms and stages of colonization, a combination of trickery, cajolery, threat, and actual use of military force to subjugate and corral unwilling peoples into a new compact. In the case of Nigeria, while trading and missionary activities facilitated gradual expansion from the coast into the hinterland, powerful kingdoms such as the Benin Kingdom and the Sokoto Caliphate had to be subdued and incorporated into the colonial state by military power, thus bringing together a multiplicity of ethnic nationalities into a single state. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of this forcible cobbling together was the absence of any desire on the part of the colonial adventurers to create real and durable states out of the new colonies.

Having thus subverted and subdued the subsisting African states and kingdoms, sometimes by ruthless armed force and sometimes by bribery and subterfuge, the metropolitan powers proceeded to impose foreign rule on the peoples of the colonies through the creation of European-type states that were completely alien to the peoples. These new but foreign regimes were often forcibly and violently resisted by the local peoples who had been robbed of their sovereignty, forcing the colonial authorities to rely mostly on coercion to exact compliance to alien law and governance. In the process, a European-type state structure with all its bureaucratic and security paraphernalia also had to be created and imposed, often by force, to facilitate resource exploitation and evacuation to Europe. Consequently, the colonizers had to make sure that the state system that they had created in each colony for the purpose of fulfilling the cardinal objectives of the colonial enterprise was particularly imbued with a certain nature, and this nature was equally determined by the logic and objectives of colonialism only. Even though the different foreign powers predicated their colonial policies and practices on separate ideologies and justifications,[2] the fundamental objective was the same: merciless resource exploitation for the benefit of the individual European states.

The resultant colonial state was highly centralized, bureaucratic, predatory, and unquestionably violent. Since it was established purely for the purpose of facilitating resource extraction and plunder, it had to severely exclude the indigenous inhabitants from any form of participation in the governance of the colonial state, and thus had no corresponding responsibilities whatsoever toward them beyond what was necessary to facilitate resource exploitation. With the exception of the few territories where an insidious form of settler colonialism was practiced (Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau,

Kenya, Zimbabwe), state administration was minimal, limited to the maintenance of security, collection of taxes and creation of the enabling environment for resource plunder. The underlying logic of the colonial enterprise did not admit nor could accommodate state creation except as it was necessary to carry on the main objective of resource extraction. All that talk about a civilizing mission was no more than seeking a means of cleansing a dirty conscience. Since state creation was not a core objective, employment of the divide and rule strategy was quite pervasive in all the colonies, for this ably facilitated political domination and plunder.

In Britain's African colonies, the logic of divide and rule served as a critical disincentive to the unity of the disparate ethno-national groups that colonial rule had brought together. In very insidious cases such as Nigeria with over three hundred ethnic groups, British policy was to deliberately create gulfs and divisions between the various groups, such that it was difficult to form a single nationalist opposition to foreign rule.[3] Intentionally kept apart from any united political opposition to foreign rule, a number of the political formations that metamorphosed into political parties before independence had to evolve largely from ethnic or primordial associations, such as the *Action Group* (AG) from the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* and the *Northern Peoples Congress* (NPC) from the *Jamiyyar Mutanen Arewa*, while others were decidedly regional, such as the *Northern Elements Progressive Union* (NEPU), and the *United Middle Belt Congress* (UMBC). The same divide and rule methodology was even more ruthlessly implemented in the settler colony of Kenya.[4]

French policies in its African colonies were not any different. The negative impacts of French divide and rule policy are more visible most especially in post-independence Chad and Senegal. Chad has remained largely disunited ever since the French deliberately carved out country in two—namely, the "useless north" which resisted foreign imposition, and the "useful south" where colonial rule and modern administration penetrated and took roots much faster. It was the southerners who had embraced Western education and culture that formed and dominated the political parties that collected sovereign powers from the departing French rulers, while the northerners who had stiffly resisted foreign rule were left holding the short end of the stick. For decades after independence, no government ever governed Chad effectively as a single and united entity; the northern part was, as it was under colonial rule, put under military pacification. Senegal, France's African pride and showpiece, is still battling with the inherited problem of separatism in its Casamance region, a crisis arising from deliberate French colonial divide and rule policy.

Portuguese colonialism was even more insidious and intrusive in the colonies. The reason was that Portugal never regarded its African possessions as colonies but instead as mere overseas extensions of Portugal itself.

Consequently, colonial administration not only did not create real states but never even contemplated independence for the territories. Thus, when the end of the Second World War in 1945 compelled the eventual disintegration of colonial empires, Portugal lagged behind in preparing the colonies for independence, and had to fight long, drawn-out, and highly destructive colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. All its African colonies without exception had to secure independence by armed struggle, with all its disruptive implications for their survival. The scars remain most prominently in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

In terms of the historical mission and role definition for the colonial state, the impression must not be created that colonial rule was the same in all the African colonies under the different metropolitan powers. However, the subtle differences in style of governance reflecting the basic philosophy and orientation of each colonial power notwithstanding, the underlying logic of colonialism remained exactly the same everywhere on the continent. Said Adejumobi has made this position very clearly. According to him,

> Colonialism, though primarily an economic project meant to facilitate the brutal exploitation of labor and natural resources in the colonies, evolved a political infrastructure that fostered relations of domination and control, which were a prerequisite for the colonial enterprise. Although methods of colonial governance differed slightly among the colonial powers, for example between the British "indirect rule" policy and the French policy of "assimilation," the logic and dynamics of these regimes, and the institutional structure and process of state formation which they set in motion, were basically the same.[5]

Arguing in the same vein, Abdoulaye Bathily also asserted that any distinction between British "indirect rule" and French "assimilation" policies is at best dubious.[6]

At the height of the colonial adventure, the African continent was callously balkanized into colonies or territorial possessions of different European powers, with mostly artificially drawn boundaries that did not recognize subsisting historical realities and ethnic relations separating them. The resultant colonial states, as they later turned out to be, and seemingly patterned after the Westphalian tradition of the European state system, have inevitably ossified into modern independent states and have consequently become huge stumbling blocks to every effort to unite and ultimately unify the continent. From Nkrumah's efforts which began immediately after Ghana's independence in the late 1950s, through the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 to its eventual transformation into the African Union in 2002, the hope of African unity remains almost a forlorn hope, an enterprise to which successive African rulers since the early 1960s have merely been paying lip service. Even though Col. Muammar Gaddafi, when he was African

Union (AU) chairperson, appeared poised to fast-track the evolution of a United States of Africa, his effort was greeted with cold reception and cynicism by some of the major countries such as Nigeria whose predilection for the gradualist approach has remained unchanged since the early 1960s.

The influence and impact of the colonial enterprise on state formation in post-colonial Africa have remained relentless, pervasive and sinister, inexorably vitiating Nkrumah's sublime vision for a united African continent, a huge continent not of independent states anymore but of diverse peoples united under a single political authority. This was the vision he powerfully articulated in his seminal work, *Africa Must Unite*, published in 1963. The core of the philosophy of Pan-Africanism was predicated on the essential oneness of African peoples in the continent and in the Diaspora, a unity that is at once physical and spiritual, the unity of a continent whose march of civilization and progress had previously been cruelly interrupted, first by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, and subsequently thereafter by merciless plunder and deliberate underdevelopment during centuries of European colonialism. Some proponents regard this as the unity of the entire Black race or the Negro race in Africa, America, the Caribbean and Latin America and the movement began in the Diaspora before it came to the continent.[7]

Nkrumah's apt description of colonial rule, a product both of deep intellectual reflection and personal experience as newly independent Ghana's first leader, remains perhaps the most poignant and unassailable testimony to the character of the colonial state.[8] Other perceptive scholars like Basil Davidson and Claude Ake have provided deep analytical insights into the character and mission of colonial rule in Africa. As Ake has also aptly noted, the colonial state was distinguished by its absolutism and the arbitrariness of its power over the subjects.[9] In fact, this absolutist and arbitrary power of the colonial state allowed its rulers to readily criminalize any form of political opposition and dissent, a notable characteristic which the early post-colonial ruling elites used effectively to immobilize opposition parties and politicians and to put many of them securely locked up in jail. Surprisingly, even Kwame Nkrumah, the foremost apostle of African unity and development, employed the same authoritarian and repressive methodology of the colonial state to put his political rivals, especially J. B. Danquah, permanently out of circulation. Hastings Kamuzu Banda of Malawi exemplified the quintessential African post-colonial dictator.

In the course of the early nationalist struggles in the various colonies, the local African elites were more concerned with being included and integrated into the colonial governance system than in reforming the unjust and defective system of foreign domination. Adebayo Williams, while discussing what he regards as the fiction of the post-colonial nationhood in Africa, also came to the conclusion that

> the leaders of independence movements in Africa, even of the most radical persuasion and revolutionary temperament, preferred to struggle within the problematic of the colonial nation. None ever questioned its inherent absurdity. This is perhaps the origin of the myth of the inviolability of colonial boundaries.[10]

One would not have difficulty concluding that the fundamental logic of the nationalist struggle, except in a few cases of revolutionary uprising, was actually to secure power and its other attendant benefits for the emerging middle class elite after the departure of the colonial rulers. Taking ownership of the state for the benefit of the people was out of the question, and that may explain why there are no citizens but subjects of the state. No wonder then that the African middle class simply replaced the foreigners without questioning the character of the state or reforming the inherent contradictions of the colonial state.[11]

Decolonization, the Post-Colonial State, and Neo-Colonial Dependency

After several decades of foreign domination, the political architecture that the colonialists had created and eventually bequeathed to Africans upon their departure "was actually constructed on authoritarian and anti-democratic foundations for which the emergent African nationalists could not be held responsible."[12] In reality, therefore, the post-colonial state which the succeeding local elites inherited was the quintessential colonial state in its pristine and unrefined form and character. Having little patience or tolerance for dissent and opposition, which they saw as needless luxury for newly independent states that were in a hurry to catch up with development, the new post-colonial ruling elites inescapably fell back to using exactly the same coercive methodologies of governance (use of military, civil police, intelligence, and other security outfits) that had served the colonialists so well. In many cases, opposition parties were deliberately enfeebled, subverted, or even outlawed, while opposition politicians were swiftly imprisoned on trumped-up charges of sedition and even treason. This was the beginning of Africa's gradual descent into one-party dictatorship and the era of presidents for life.

From what we have seen thus far, the territorial state that colonial rule had created inexorably ossified into the post-colonial nation-state the moment the emergent African ruling elites simply and naively took over its reins from the departed overlords instead of summarily dismantling, redefining and restructuring it. Adherence to the international law doctrine of non-interference in the domestic affairs of independent states became the defining characteristic of the newly independent African states in the early 1960s. The protection of individual state's sovereignty, another international law principle, also

became an overriding desideratum of African foreign policies. These two doctrines were boldly enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity in 1963, while the acceptance of the sanctity of territorial states and their boundaries inherited from colonialism became a *fait accompli* as the basis for subsequent African unity and mutual cooperation. The survival of the artificial territorial states that were bequeathed by the departed metropolitan rulers, and the survival of the new regimes, became issues that took pre-eminence over other considerations such as African unity, progress, and the development of the entire continent. In the final analysis, the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 was to undermine the fundamental essence of African unity and integration in favor of the continued existence of the territorial states.[13] In essence, the state that colonial rule brought into existence has become, in the view of Basil Davidson, not merely a burden but actually a curse to Africans.[14]

But having inherited the colonial state in its pristine form, the African ruling elites were remiss in not attempting to and actually structurally redefining the states to belong to the people. What they did instead was to promptly step into the shoes of their former masters, move into the various state houses and systematically instrumentalize the newly independent states for hegemonic control and primitive wealth accumulation by them and their cronies. Even though the necessity for "structural transformation" was both logical and indisputable, since the colonial state had only subjects and not citizens, the new African rulers who should have indigenized the state and given real sovereignty back to the people preferred instead to preserve the predatory state as they had inherited it. This had to be so, as Claude Ake argues further, because "the coming of political independence . . . [only] changed the composition of the managers of the state but not the character of the state, which remained much as it was during the colonial era."[15] Since the emergent African ruling elites, often carefully handpicked by the departed colonial officials from the ranks of their local collaborators, had decided on privatizing the colonial state structure, its institutions and processes to serve their selfish hegemonic interests, instinctive reliance on coercion to obtain compliance from the "citizens" became indispensable to governance. Adebayo Williams argues further that

> the first generation of politicians, rather than reform the paternalistic and authoritarian colonial state, actually saw it as a legitimate weapon in the struggle for hegemony. The urge to control the centre and the enormous means of coercion and capital accumulation became the be-all of all political struggle and this was to engender an even more critical deformation of the state-structure.[16]

This apparent lack of strategic vision cannot be solely blamed on the African rulers alone. We must acknowledge, first, the fact that the

post-colonial state was not amenable to reform because of its class character, and second, because of the invisible but potent stranglehold of the metropolitan patrons in the affairs of the new states. In the first instance, it would have been preposterous to expect that the new local elites would reform the state that they inherited, since it was their own instrument of hegemonic control over the resources of the country. To attempt to deconstruct and reform the state and imbue it with a new character would have amounted to committing class suicide on their part. We must remember that the fundamental essence of agitation against colonial rule was, *ab initio*, for the inclusion of the new bilingual local middle class elites in colonial governance rather than for redefining the essence and mission of the state. As Ake argued, what changed at independence was not the character of the state but those that are running it—in short, the passing of the baton of power from the agents of the metropolitan states to the natives of the former colonies.

Second, the pervasive influence of metropolitan capitalism was not limited to economic matters alone but, as Ake would have it, much more prominent in the political field. Coming into the world system in the heydays of the Cold War, African states subsequently became veritable pawns in the hands of the great powers. Great power rivalry for ideological supremacy and economic and military domination played itself out prominently on the continent when many states became proxies of foreign interests. Internal crises and conflicts within and between African states became unduly externalized and complicated when the interests of external powers were involved[17]; African governments survived in office or were removed depending on their disposition toward the various foreign powers,[18] and full-blown dictatorship along the lines of colonial authoritarianism was encouraged and facilitated from outside.

Even though flag independence was granted to a large number of the colonies in the 1960s, the reality was that they were neo-colonial appendages of the former colonial powers. The new rulers of Africa's supposedly independent states were no more than local servants of foreign interests. As Nkrumah famously observed of neocolonialism, "The essence of neocolonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty [but] in reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside."[19] This had to be so because the nationalist struggles in many of the colonies were mostly to ensure the inclusion of the new bilingual African middle-class elites into colonial government. Having thus been gradually integrated into the colonial state system and governance with all its privileges and appurtenances, the new middle-class elites found it convenient to simply step into the shoes of their departed masters, a strategic move that guaranteed them easy access to national resources for private wealth accumulation. The emergent elites with

the assistance of their metropolitan patrons promptly converted their newly independent countries into prebends[20] for the accumulation of inordinate private wealth, thus making the states pawns in the hands of metropolitan neo-colonialists. In countries like Nigeria, Zaire, Angola and others with rich natural resource endowments, outright state robbery became the main logic of governance.[21] This pattern of statecraft is replicated in most African countries, allowing the ruling elites to hang on to power and thereby frustrate those who are outside the ruling cliques. Claude Ake puts the issue more graphically thus:

> To become wealthy without the patronage of the state was likely to invite unpleasant attention of those in control of state power. Political power was everything; it was not only the access to wealth but also the means to security and the only guarantor of general well-being. For anyone outside the hegemonic faction of the political elite, it was generally futile to harbour any illusions of becoming wealthy by entrepreneurial activity or to even take personal safety for granted. For anyone who was part of the ruling faction, entrepreneurial activity was unnecessary, for one could appropriate surplus with less risk and less trouble by means of state power.[22]

Kwame Nkrumah captured the situation of neo-colonial dependence so aptly when he famously observed that neo-colonialism created "client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power which is supposed to have given them independence."[23] He asserts further that even though independent in the technical and theoretical senses, the subtle face of neo-colonialism was such that "these countries continue the classical relationship of a colonial economy to its metropolitan patron, i.e., providers of primary products and exclusive markets for the latter's goods."[24] It must be stated that the metropolitan powers were not merely content with just pulling the economic levers of control[25] alone but also used the direct approach of concluding varieties of military and defense agreements with the newly independent states to tie them more securely to the control of outside powers. France concluded agreements with all its former colonies and for many years stationed its troops on African soil[26] to monitor, manipulate and control their governments.[27] Britain initially attempted a similar line of control although with less success than the French. Its proposed neo-colonial defense pact with Nigeria which would have allowed the creation of British military bases and stationing of troops in the country came under intense domestic opposition and had to be swiftly abrogated in January 1962.[28] Until the outbreak of the civil war in 1967, Nigeria doggedly followed the British and would not do anything that would jeopardize British political and economic interests in Nigeria and Africa. Nigeria, for instance, shied away from having a diplomatic showdown with Britain over the question of the Unilateral Declaration

of Independence in Rhodesia in 1965 as African member-states of the Commonwealth had earlier threatened to do.

While the Cold War lasted, Africa was a victim of suffocating extra-African influence, manipulation and control. But the end of the Cold War, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and eventual disappearance of Communism as a rival system on the world stage, brought with it new challenges for state survival in Africa. The post–Cold War era is witnessing the ruthless universalization of Western liberal values and unleashing fresh political and economic conditionalities being imposed on African states. Africans are now experiencing a wave of externally induced political liberalization, inexorably compelling several autocratic regimes on the continent to experiment with a variety of often deceitful political reforms and pseudo-democratization processes. Rather than escape from external dictation, new mechanisms of neo-colonial control have emerged, with the result that the countries and their governments are still clients of powerful foreign economic and political interests. For example, the United States government at the end of the Cold War in 1990 made it known that all its aid to Africa would henceforth be tied securely to evidence of democratization, emphasizing, according to Herman Cohen, the then US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, that "those countries which fail to respond to, or worse, suppress popular demands for democratization will find themselves in an ever more disadvantageous position in the competition for US assistance and private investment."[29] In the same vein, the European Union as far back as the late 1980s also adopted political conditionality as a requirement for the grant of aid and foreign direct investment.[30] What greater evidence of blatant external manipulation does one require to conclude that Africa's position as a client of neo-colonial forces has not changed even in the post–Cold War era? One contemporary manifestation is the threat by British Prime Minister David Cameron to withhold Western aid and assistance to countries that legislate against lesbianism and homosexuality.

Emblematic of the precarious condition of Africa after the Cold War is the resurgence of internal conflicts in many countries, with the collapse of DR Congo being the most problematic and intractable.[31] These are manifestations of latent internal fissures and divisions that colonial rule purposely created and nurtured in the states. Since divide and rule, as we have observed earlier, was the main plank on which control in each of the colonies rested, the problem of ethnic particularism and disunity that the colonial rulers deliberately encouraged and emphasized among the disparate ethnic groups, has remained resistant to solution even five decades after independence. We must remember that in most cases, consideration of which of the ethnic groups the colonial rulers were more comfortable with was the main deciding factor as to who would be allowed to inherit the mantle of power.[32] The French imposed their own chosen rulers on their colonies as they departed, with Guinea under

the leadership of Ahmed Sekou Toure being the only exception where this failed. In only a few cases, such as Ghana, were the British officers unable to impose their own quiescent lackeys as successors. DR Congo originally imploded shortly after independence in 1960,[33] and again after the Cold War in the 1990s when the United States no longer needed Mobutu Sese Seko, its longtime dictator, as an anti-communist bulwark. This could happen only because the US conveniently looked the other way as Laurent Kabila's insurrection chased him out after thirty-two years of corrupt dictatorship.[34] The great powers had by the early 1990s diverted attention to what they regarded as far more important and pressing engagements in the Balkans and the Middle East even while the Rwandan army and the *Interahamwe* death squads brutally slaughtered almost a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in that hapless country in 1994. Not only would they not lift a finger to assist, they deliberately also prevented the United Nations from doing so.

What the preceding analysis seeks to establish is the fact that what Africans inherited as states were not the typical Westphalian varieties but lawless, authoritarian, violent and predatory leviathans. And that may explain the unending controversy as to whether they are states in the real sense or peculiarly African contraptions. In discussing the controversy surrounding the "state in Africa" versus the "African state," Adebayo Williams identifies the basic characteristics of the Westphalian type of state to include, (a) being "the arbiter and custodian of the legitimate means of violence in the polity," (b) possessing the capacity "to employ non-coercive means for the greatest good of the greatest number of the people," (c) the "ability of the state to sublimate and transcend patrimonialism" by operationally differentiating the public and private domains, and (d) ability "to put in place adequate mechanisms for regulating and controlling inevitable conflict among the elite."[35] African states have undoubtedly not been able to conform to this accepted notion of the state. Instead, what Africa inherited from colonial rule were mere caricatures of the Westphalian state which its creators did not intend should survive beyond a few years before imploding.[36]

Other earlier scholars of the African experience have come to a similar conclusion. While interrogating the crisis faced by the immediate post-colonial state on the continent, James O'Connell pungently observed that the colonial state was created by brute force, bringing together a multiplicity of often disparate ethnic formations, and whose mode of operation cynically "combined executive, legislative, and judicial powers in the hands of a single foreign caste and permitted only a minimum separation of those powers."[37] He also argues that when colonial rule was being dismantled, the local political elites who envied the excessive powers of the colonial overlords resented any suggestions that such powers might be whittled down through written constitutions which the departing metropolitan powers sought to impose on them.

No wonder therefore that many African countries resorted to the authoritarian traditions of colonial rule, in effect becoming one-party states with presidents for life firmly in control. What we can learn from this is that the state that colonial rule created and which the post-colonial rulers inherited, is totalitarian and absolutist, making no room for popular participation, and therefore unaccountable to anyone.

This very character of the original colonial state system in Africa has changed very little, if at all, in the post-colonial era. It is only more recently, and possibly with external assistance, that many states began to witness the rise of civil society which, at best, is only able to penetrate governance and public affairs very slowly in many countries. In a large number of the states, civil society is hampered, the press as society's watchdog is deliberately hamstrung, and opposition political parties are deliberately enfeebled and remain as mere cosmetic adornments in the so-called democratic systems, where they are allowed to exist at all. The state largely monopolizes the instruments of violence and other security paraphernalia purely for internal pacification rather than for the time-honored defense of the territory from external attacks and internal subversion. States are unable to guarantee protection for lives and property.

In reality, therefore, the newly independent states in Africa were ill-equipped to transcend both the patrimonialism and authoritarianism of the colonial state, hence the serial political instabilities, armed insurgencies and uprisings, state failures and collapse that have become the lot of the continent in the post–Cold War era. These critical challenges to the state had always been there, even in the 1960s and 1970s, but were readily quelled by authoritarian ruthlessness with assistance from the respective metropolitan godfathers.[38] Apart from these cases of failure and collapse, the post-colonial state in general has been unable to live up to the dictates of the modern state system in that it lacks the basic wherewithal, as Adebayo Williams has enumerated above, to be the sole custodian of the means of violence,[39] to employ non-coercive resources to provide adequately for the benefit of the majority of the population,[40] and to mediate conflict. The state is unable to transcend patrimonialism and authoritarianism, as many inevitably became the private fiefs of powerful authoritarian rulers and their cronies. The challenge to the legitimacy and survival of the state has become more prominent with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War rivalries which had helped to sustain many ruthless despots in power for decades.

CONCLUSION

The fate of contemporary African states is inextricably linked with their colonial provenance. This is because the various colonial powers, *ab initio*, "made

no pretense that they were occupying foreign countries in the interests of the indigenous inhabitants, though they tried to justify their behavior to themselves in terms of their civilizing mission"[41] and thus made little real effort to erect state structures that would endure beyond colonial rule. Erected only for the purpose of looting and resource extraction, it was not the desire of the metropolitan conquerors to leave behind durable modern states for African peoples. If any such durable state had emerged at all, it must have been by default than by design. Even if the emerging African political elites had any intentions of building such durable modern nation-states after independence, they were themselves ill-equipped for such a gargantuan undertaking. In the first instance, the colonial state that was constructed on an authoritarian and anti-democratic foundation was not easily amenable to reform, and the departing colonial rulers never bothered to redefine its character before handing it over to the natives. What they left behind was the quintessential colonial state with all its pristine characteristics un-redefined. It was rather cynical and hypocritical of them to expect that the Africans who inherited this rickety structure should reform and redefine it if they could.

Second, it bears re-stating that the emergent middle-class African elites had been severely excluded from colonial governance and administration and thus were condemned to agitational politics only. Their political training was not in democratic governance with its characteristic multi-partyism and tolerance of opposition, since colonial rule itself was undemocratic and intolerant of opposition. Having been thus schooled in exclusionist politics, it was little wonder most of them swiftly outlawed or enfeebled all forms of political opposition to their rule, with the consequence that the newly independent nation-state returned to its anti-democratic default setting. The consequence is that the state they inherited and operated after colonial rule turned out to be a burden and a curse, as Basil Davidson has asserted.[42]

NOTES

1. Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1996 [Reprinted in Nigeria by Spectrum Books for African Centre for Democratic Governance, 2003]), 3.

2. The British had "indirect rule" while the French had "assimilation" as the basic planks of their colonial policies in Africa.

3. For a detailed examination of the rise and promotion of ethnicity and ethnic consciousness in Nigeria during colonial rule, see, amongst others, James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Okwudiba Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978); W. A. Fawole, "Colonial History and the Search for Democratic Nationhood: The Case of Anglophone West Africa," in *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in*

West Africa: Identity, Citizenship and Conflict, ed. W. A. Fawole and Charles Ukeje (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005), 61–62.

4. For a thorough analysis of British policies in Kenya from the perspective of an insider and victim, see Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru: An Autobiography* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1967).

5. Said Adejumobi, "Identity, Citizenship and Conflict: The African Experience," in *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in West Africa: Identity, Citizenship and Conflict*, ed. W. A. Fawole and C. Ukeje (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005), 25.

6. Abdoulaye Bathily, "The West African State in Historical Perspective," in *Government and Politics in Africa: A Reader*, ed. Okwudiba Nnoli (Harare, Zimbabwe: AAPS Books, 2000), 38.

7. W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and so forth, were the forerunners.

8. For a graphic depiction of colonial rule, see Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books, 1963); Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

9. Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1996), 2–3.

10. Adebayo Williams, "Closed States and Open Borders: Interrogating the Fictions of Post-Colonial Nationhood in Africa," *Black Renaissance*, 124.

11. Dani Wadada Nabudere, "African Unity in Historical Perspectives," in *A United States of Africa?*, ed. Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: AISA, 2001), 14, 19.

12. Fawole, "Colonial History and the Search for Democratic Nationhood: The Case of Anglophone West Africa," 59.

13. Benoit Ndi-Zambo, "African Unity: Looking Back, Looking Forward, and a Recipe for Failure," in *A United States of Africa?*, ed. Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: AISA, 2001), 29.

14. See Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden*, 1992.

15. Claude Ake, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2000), 36.

16. Adebayo Williams, "Democracy in Nigeria: Retrospect and Prospect," text of seminar paper delivered at the Afrika Studie Centrum, Leiden, February 11, 1999, 7.

17. The Congo crisis of the early 1960s and the Ethiopia-Somali conflict in the late 1970s are prominent cases where extra-continental interests played prominent roles.

18. France entered into a series of military and defence agreements with virtually all its former colonies and established military bases on their soil. This was used to monitor and guarantee the survival of friendly regimes and for the removal of unwanted ones, such as the deployment of French troops that restored Gabonese president Leon Mba to power after a military coup in 1964, and the swift removal of self-styled emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa from power in the Central African Republic in 1979.

19. Kwame Nkrumah, "Introduction," *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965).

20. For a conceptual elaboration and analysis, see Richard Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1991).

21. See W. A. Fawole, "A Critical Interrogation of the Historical–Political Genesis of 'State Robbery' in Nigeria," text of Faculty seminar paper presented at the Faculty of Administration 2009 Seminar Series, OAU Ile–Ife, Thursday, May 5, 2009.

22. Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, op. cit., 7.

23. Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books Ltd., 1963), 174.

24. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, 176.

25. France demonstrated its intention to maintain an economic stranglehold on its former colonies when it inserted clauses in the 1957 Rome Treaty establishing the European Economic Community that would allow goods from those states to enjoy preferential treatment in the newly created EEC markets.

26. French troops were stationed in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Chad, Central African Republic, and Djibouti, among others.

27. France employed its troops to support favored regimes and to remove unwanted ones. The cases of Leon Mba in Gabon in 1964 and Jean Bedell Bokassa in Central African Republic respectively are instructive.

28. The ill-fated Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact, negotiated and concluded between emerging Nigerian rulers and the British overlords was stiffly resisted by Nigerians immediately after independence and thus had to be swiftly abrogated in January 1962.

29. Herman Cohen, "Democratic Change in Africa," address to the African-American Institute, November 8, 1990.

30. Ankie Hoogvelt, "Globalisation, Imperialism and Exclusion: The Case of Sub–Saharan Africa," in *Africa in Crisis: New Challenges and Possibilities*, ed. Tunde Zack-Williams, Diane Frost, and Alex Thomson (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 22–26.

31. Many countries, most significantly Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire, and so forth, have suffered critical internal crises leading to outright state collapse in a few cases.

32. The British ensured that elections were manipulated in favor of a certain section of Nigeria; the French deliberately divided Chad into "useful south" and "useless north" while Algeria was distinguished between the "French Algerians" who accepted French citizenship, and "Muslim Algerians" who stiffly resisted foreign rule.

33. The major Western countries were uncomfortable with the radical posturing of its first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, and thus fomented domestic upheavals that eventually led to his murder and the ensuing political instability which allowed Col. Joseph Mobutu, a notable stooge of Western powers, to seize power and impose military rule.

34. Samuel Doe suffered the same fate in Liberia when America refused to come to his aid after Charles Taylor raised armed insurrection against his regime in December 1989.

35. Adebayo Williams, "Towards a Typology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts in Africa: Elite Reorientation in the Era of Globalisation," text of seminar paper delivered to the Conflict, Control and Conciliation Group Meeting, Afrika Studie Centrum, Leiden, May 12, 1999, 7–8.

36. This argument has been made elsewhere. See W. Alade Fawole, "A Continent in Crisis: Internal Conflicts and External Interventions in Africa," *African Affairs* 103, no. 411 (April 2004): 297–304. See also a seminal analysis by James O'Connell, "The

Inevitability of Instability," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191.

37. O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," 183.

38. We can still vividly recall the serial Shaba uprisings against Mobutu which were usually put down with military and logistic assistance from the United States and Morocco. In the post–Cold War era, however, internal insurgents no longer require external support for their operations. The examples of Jonas Savimbi in Angola, Charles Taylor in Liberia and Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone who seized control of their countries' national resources to prosecute their domestic insurgencies remain instructive.

39. Non-state armed groups have posed severe threats to the authority and legitimacy of the state, invariably threatening both political survival and the sanctity of territorial integrity. The cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Guinea-Bissau, and Somalia may be some of the most prominent across the continent. Nigeria has been battling with militant armed groups in its oil-rich Niger Delta for over a decade.

40. Failure or inability to employ non-coercive mechanisms to provide the basic social and physical infrastructures that would positively benefit the wellbeing and welfare of the vast majority of the people have caused social and political chaos and upheavals in several countries, calling into question and threatening the very survival of the inherited post-colonial state. The state remains largely a mere colonial artefact in the minds of most people since they neither own nor are able to control it for their benefit.

41. Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014), 313.

42. Davidson, *Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*.

Chapter 2

The Grant of Independence

Imperialist Conspiracy and the Subversion of the Post-Colonial State

Until the outcomes of the Second World War forced a rethink of the continuation of colonial empires, it was not known that any of the European powers that had colonies in Africa—Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, and Belgium—ever remotely or seriously contemplated the inevitability of the grant of independence to their overseas possessions. This could be attributed to the fact that the colonial enterprise was never really for the interests of the colonized people. Francis Fukuyama said quite bluntly that "colonial powers made no pretense that they were occupying foreign countries in the interests of the indigenous inhabitants, though they tried to justify their behavior to themselves in terms of their civilizing mission."[1] War-time British Prime Minister Winston Churchill openly confessed he had not been elected into office to preside over the dissolution of the vast British Empire.[2] Though a member of the victorious allied powers that won World War II in 1945, Britain had come out of the war severely weakened, politically and economically exhausted, its infrastructure badly damaged from the war, such that it needed to make a more sensible and realistic readjustment of its priorities and policies in the post-war years. James Coleman's assertion in his seminal study provides illumination of this, that "before 1948 the British government did not anticipate that a united and independent Nigeria would emerge for a very, very long time."[3] France was perhaps far worse off than Britain in the course and outcomes of the Second World War. It suffered a devastating defeat and endured four years of humiliation under Nazi military occupation, and was only liberated by a combined allied military offensive in 1944. It thus came out of the war in very bad shape, completely robbed of its national ego and cultural hubris. Most other European states were not much better off at the end of the Second World War.

Aside from this unenviable state of the European states in the immediate post-war years, the victory of the Allied powers came with the emergence of two military superpowers, the United States of America and the then Soviet Union, a development that comprehensively shifted the center of global power and decision making away from European capitals for the first time in history and relocated it to the new centers in Washington, DC, and Moscow, occasioning what F. S. Northedge refers to as "changes in the composition of the family of great Powers."[4] Not particularly helpful to the ailing European powers was the fact also that these two newly emerged global hegemons incidentally happened neither to be colonial powers, in the proper sense of the term, nor were they even remotely connected with European colonialism, and so were thus not particularly enamored of, or sympathetic to, the continuation of European colonial empires. To put this in perspective, we must bear in mind that the United States of America had reportedly since the end of the First World War in 1918 openly and firmly taken the position that self-determination was the inalienable right of all peoples and that a denial of that right was actually responsible for the outbreak of that global catastrophe. The major colony-owning European powers accepted this notion of the right of peoples to self-determination but cynically interpreted it that such civilized norms could not be applied to "primitives" in the colonies for whom colonial domination was actually a "civilizing mission." The Soviet Union, a principal state champion of the Communist ideology and its egalitarian ideals, and a major sponsor of its spread through global revolution, openly opposed colonial domination and stood in solidarity with those it described as the "oppressed peoples of the world" in their bid to shake off their oppression. By the body language of the new superpowers it was evident that the new postwar configuration of power in the world no longer conduced to colonialism. From then on, it was only a matter of time before the colonial edifices would begin to crumble.

In the various African colonies themselves, the beginnings of a continent-wide revolutionary ferment that would eventually signal the end of colonial rule within the next decade or so were already perceptible. In the first instance, thousands of African soldiers from the various colonies had stood proudly shoulder to shoulder with and fought valiantly alongside their European counterparts on the various battlefields in Europe and Asia to liberate nations from foreign domination. Nigerians had fought as part of imperial British forces in Burma, Singapore, East Africa and elsewhere against the oppression of Nazi Germany and imperial Japan and had in the process become so politically radicalized by their experiences that they had begun to yearn very seriously for freedom and self-rule in their own homelands. These demobilized soldiers had returned to the colonies after the war to complement the growing anti-colonial agitations of the Western-educated

nationalists who had prominently taken up the fight for independence at the political level. In West Africa, for example, J. E. Caseley-Hayford of the Gold Coast and other like-minded educated Africans had formed as far back as 1919–1920 the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) as a platform to press for the emancipation and unity of the colonial peoples, an idea that was comprehensively derided as ludicrous at the time by the then British Governor-General of Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford.[5] Though elitist in its origin and solely urban based in its activities, these nonetheless represent the stirrings and undercurrents of what would eventually become full-blown anti-colonial campaigns in Africa.

Across the continent, a number of educated Africans who had attended the landmark fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, UK, in 1945 (Obafemi Awolowo and Jaja Wachuku from Nigeria, Nkrumah from Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta from Kenya, and Hastings Kamuzu Banda from Malawi) had also returned home to their respective countries fully charged and radicalized to press for territorial independence for their peoples, with some of them eventually emerging as leaders of their respective countries at independence. That famed Manchester Congress was held up as being responsible for setting the tone for the subsequent anti-colonial struggles that would confront British rule in Africa in the post–WWII years. The eventual collapse of colonial empire began in Asia when the genie of independence was let out of the bottle as some British Asian colonies—India (as India and Pakistan), Ceylon, and Burma—gained independence in quick succession by 1947.

It was thus this convergence of a plethora of auspicious circumstances: first, the evident political and socio-economic weaknesses of post-war metropolitan nations; second, the lack of ideological and moral support for the continuation of colonialism from the two new global superpowers, the United States and the USSR; and third, the groundswell of radical agitation in the colonies themselves, that combined to render indefinite colonial rule no longer feasible and forced the powers to begin to consider independence as a possibility. Confronted with this eventuality, Britain and France each engaged in separate plans. While Britain had to creatively adapt to this idea, hosting constitutional conferences and making preparations, France on the other hand initially believed it could get the colonies into a different sort of arrangement that would rope them into a Francophone Community (*la Communauté Francophone*) until its hands were forced to consider real independence. Any such notion of a Francophone Community fell apart when Guinea flatly rejected the idea and went on to become independent in 1958.

Portugal, another colonial power, was definitely less politically sophisticated to apprehend the enormity of the geopolitical and geostrategic changes that the outbreak and outcomes of the Second World War had wrought on the international system, and thus remained obdurate and adamant in its

commitment to the continuation of colonial empire in Africa. This obduracy led it to engage in the most senseless and bruising colonial wars ever fought by any colonial power in Africa until the mid-1970s. All its African possessions—Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, and Mozambique—were actually not regarded as real colonies but as mere overseas extensions of mainland Portugal, and all of them except Sao Tome and Principe had to gain independence through armed struggles only in the mid-1970s.

IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACIES AND THE SUBVERSION OF POST-COLONIAL NATION-STATES

Though it was the vicissitudes of the Second World War that forced the hands of the imperialist powers, except the obstinate Portugal, to begin preparations for the grant of independence to African colonies, there was pervasive desperation on their part not to lose grip completely on their colonies, thus employing subterfuge in many cases to push the dates for independence as far as possible. Actually, there was the fear of the possibility of these colonies falling into the seductive embrace of Communism and its egalitarian promises which would have signaled total loss to the major metropolitan powers, especially Britain and France, and give their sworn ideological foe a strategic foothold on a continent that had hitherto been an exclusive Western preserve for centuries. This desperation was more evident on the part of France which had much earlier violently lost its Asian colonies in French Indochina, now Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, first to the Japanese during World War II and later to defeat in a war of independence waged by the Communist Viet Minh forces led by Ho Chi Minh at the famous battle of Dien Bien Phu, eventually forcing total French evacuation from Asia by 1954. With the violent loss of its Asian possessions as a result of the Second World War, Africa was the last remaining stronghold where France could claim a modicum of influence to remain relevant as a global power to be reckoned with.

Since granting independence had been made inevitable, Britain and France each crafted ingenious plans to subvert or thwart the countries from achieving real nationhood. Attention is focused mainly on Britain and France here because they collectively owned the largest collection of African possessions in North, West, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, nearly forty of today's fifty-four independent countries.[6] The implication is that their influence in "post-colonial" Africa, as will be made clear in subsequent chapters, has also been by far the most pervasive and destructive of state and nation-building.

As for the British after the war, there was no doubt that they did put in place rather elaborate but deceptive plans for granting independence to their

colonies and UN Trust territories—gradual constitutional changes that began involving Africans in governance, the various Lancaster House meetings for peaceful negotiations of dates and conditions for independence, and so forth—but these were part of a sophisticated subterfuge to prevent the evolution of real nationhood in the colonies. In virtually all cases, new governmental structures patterned after the Westminster model and complete with new democratic constitutions were carefully erected for the colonies as part of the processes of granting independence. What perhaps makes that curious if not laughable was the fact that the colonial state that they had created and operated for decades was actually built upon an authoritarian foundation, with an imperious and unaccountable British Governor at the top who was only answerable to London. As Kwame Nkrumah, James O'Connell, Basil Davidson[7] and others have made quite clear, Africans were thus bequeathed a democratic system constructed on an authoritarian foundation which could not function efficiently even if the succeeding African elites had the willingness to make it work. This was the trap the departing British carefully set for their colonies, and which would haunt and hobble the newly independent sovereign states, as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

On their own part, since the French were not originally sold on the idea of independence until it became inescapable by circumstances beyond their control, they did not have elaborate independence plans comparable to that of their British counterparts. France angrily but reluctantly freed Guinea in 1958 after the British Gold Coast had achieved sovereign status a year earlier in 1957, but made sure that the country would be made a bad example of anti-colonial agitation in Francophone Africa. From 1960 onwards, several countries obtained independence on terms and conditions that were favorable to France. (A more elaborate discussion of France's systematic and destructive manipulation of its former colonies is available in chapter 5 on France of this volume.) With the exception of Guinea under the more radically inclined Ahmed Sekou Toure, only the regimes that were favorably disposed to doing Paris's biddings were allowed to take power in all the other colonies. Algeria was a special case, treated as an overseas extension of mainland France, and had to fight a war of independence which ended in 1962. All former African colonies were roped with France in an intricate web of economic, trade and military-defense pacts that made them hardly more than pathetic appendages to the Élysée Palace.

The bottom line is really that even at independence, the change that took place was more in terms of appearance than substance, as African elites merely replaced their departed former white masters in the same state system that had severely alienated the people and exhibited no responsibility toward them. Commenting on the grant of independence, Claude Ake argues persuasively that "the coming of political independence . . . [only] changed the

composition of the managers of the state but not the character of the state, which remained much as it was during the colonial era."[8] In short, the colonial state retained the exact same nature and character that colonialism had given it: predatory, rent-seeking, unaccountable and violent. It is hardly any wonder that what the Africans inherited as the new nation-states were actually a burden and curse to them.[9]

Not long after they gained political independence, African countries began to fail and collapse, wracked by deep-seated but latent domestic instabilities that had been deliberately built into their very foundations. Coups and counter-coups were common, violent political upheavals, insurgencies and civil wars began in earnest; democratic systems were being replaced with military or one-party dictatorships, and extreme forms of personalist rule took the place of inherited democratic governance systems. By the end of the first independence decade in 1970, most of them had become virtual basket cases with tyrants and despots holding sway across the continent. All of this began creating the impression that Africans were perhaps incapable of running the modern nation-states that the departed colonial powers had so graciously bequeathed to them. With this ugly development began also the debate over whether these rickety contraptions were peculiarly "African States" different from the Westphalian conception or were mere "States in Africa" and caricatures or bad copies of the original. The swift democratic reversals everywhere in post-colonial Africa (Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Togo, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc.) also raised the question whether the colonial state really transitioned into the post-colonial state at all, or whether independence was merely an elaborate ruse.

These queries and posers are germane against the backdrop of the new states exhibiting all the characteristics of the old colonial contraptions, a mere continuation of the logic of colonialism—that is, merciless predation, pillage and prebendalism in the crudest forms hallmarked by lack of openness and accountability, resource extraction, rent-seeking, massive state robbery, political instability, reliance on the tried and tested repressive tactics of the colonial state, all leading to the spate of state failure and eventual collapse that pervaded the continent. In most cases, Africans could not claim real ownership of the state, as what is called the "post-colonial state" is a mere artifact, an atavistic left-over or relic of a cynical colonial adventure. For example, Nigeria, the most populous of them, has remained what many regard as hardly more than "a mere geographical expression," a monstrous and predatory leviathan that remains alien and detached from the people who are supposed to be its owners. Separatist agitations and other centrifugal forces have remained resilient more than five decades after independence and more than four decades after the end of its disastrous civil war.

The posers regarding whether the colonial state actually transitioned into a real post-colonial state is one that cannot be resolved without an excursion into colonial history, without an understanding of the history and logic of colonialism, as well as the colonial rationale that brought them into being. Why, for example, did the European countries carve up Africa and create states in the process? What were their real motives for creating the states beyond the egregious rationalization of carrying out a "civilizing mission"? The economic logic behind the colonial adventure is inextricably linked with the fulfillment of imperialism's fundamental *raison d'être*: to facilitate extractive predation. This most basic logic of imperialism could not be accomplished except through the instrumentality of an overarching state apparatus that would control each territory, create a government that would control the vast natural resources of the territory, control and regulate trade, levy taxes, and make laws that would legitimize resource extraction and evacuation to the metropolitan countries.

Fulfilling these basic functions is the *raison d'etre* of the colonial state apparatus which totally marginalized Africans from participation in governance. Since both slavery and colonialism were predicated upon the notion of the superiority of the white races, the European colonizers regarded African peoples as tribal, barbaric, pre-civilization peoples who should not be allowed to have a say in how they are governed, they created the state merely to facilitate the fundamental objectives of colonization. Lord Frederick Lugard, Governor-General of Nigeria from 1914 to 1919, perhaps emblematized this white supremacist notion in his reckless characterization of the native African, among others, as a "thriftless, excitable person, lacking in self-control, discipline and foresight," and "who exhibits something of the animals' placidity and want of desire to rise beyond the state he has reached."[10] The supposed modern and liberal system that colonial officials created was the barest minimum that they required to administer the colonies since they had no fundamental motivation to bring these "primitive people" to "modernity." When independence was later granted as the inevitable fallout of World War II, what Africans inherited were mere appearances of states without the real substance. Congo, the emblematic "non-state," quickly unraveled immediately after independence because it was a mere carcass or shell of a state. Many others were not different, and it was only the ingenuity of Africans that kept them running for the next few years even in the most rickety forms.[11]

In almost all cases, flag independence was carefully negotiated to protect and advance the vital interests of the European states, and give them the power of control in the new sovereign states without the corresponding responsibilities to the people that ought to go with it. The interests of the former colonialists were deliberately embedded in the fabrics of the newly emergent states during the decolonization era. This was made possible

because the emerging African political elites were themselves more interested in replacing the colonial rulers than in a transformative decolonization process that would have altered and redefined the very essence of the predatory and unaccountable colonial state. Had this not been the case, perhaps a new and authentically African state would have been fashioned out. Instead, what emerged was the quintessentially colonial state in the guise of a post-colonial state with the replacement of the white overlords with the native ones. It was, as the French would say, a case of the more things change, the more they remain the same!

Nigeria, as a case in point, was deliberately prevented by British colonial divide and rule policies from ever becoming a united entity, and the ethno-regional fault lines that the colonial officers deliberately fostered and nurtured for several decades have continued to haunt the country till now, making the north-south dichotomy an enduring if centrifugal aspect of Nigerian politics. Though supposedly amalgamated into a single colonial territory in 1914, purely for administrative convenience only, the different sections of the colony were still governed separately and by different rules and regulations. Whilst the colonial officials indirectly ruled through the powerful emirs in the northern region, the western part was a different proposition entirely as the Yoruba traditional rulers did not command the near absolute powers of the northern emirs. In the eastern region, the British colonial officials had to create "warrant chiefs" among the acephalous Igbos through whom they imagined they could rule the people.

Overall, the colonial authorities carefully put in place political and economic structures and institutions in all the colonies that would guarantee them continual control and influence in the newly independent states. These include series of military and defense pacts, economic agreements, ideological guidance, and trade agreements which attached the new states securely to the apron strings of metropolitan states. Today, there is a new scramble for the control of Africa's vital and strategic resources—oil and gas in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea; the presence of the US Africa Command; so-called Economic Partnerships Agreements between unequal "partners"; imposition of a neo-liberal economic agenda on the states; external economic control through the Bretton-Woods institutions of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and today's World Trade Organization and its discriminatory trade rules and practices; and globalization, which is no more than a universalization of Western, mostly American, values, all of which preserve the interests of the great Western powers. Today in Nigeria and other resource-rich states like Gabon and Angola, foreign-owned Multinational Corporations are exploiting ethnic antagonisms, capturing and pocketing governments through financial inducement of corrupt state officials, to create crisis and disunity for the ease of exploitation of natural resources.

In colonies where the grant of independence was not secured through negotiations, the people had to fight grueling and exhausting liberation wars which in the end made the new states mere shells or caricatures of their Westphalian counterparts. Portugal gave up its colonies in the mid-1970s only after senseless and costly colonial wars, even abandoning Angola without a central government being put in control. What ensued in Angola immediately was a tripartite war for control between the principal guerrilla factions, namely the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). In other newly independent states such as Ghana and Democratic Republic of the Congo (later Zaire), the United States Central Intelligence Agency masterminded regime changes to get rid of radical leaders that America was not comfortable with, while supporting some of the most ruthless sanguinary despots for the ruination of the African continent—Mobutu Sese Seko, Omar Bongo, Gnassingbe Eyadema, Paul Biya, and so forth. Those that they could not control were easily demonized—foreign powers in conjunction with apartheid South Africa and racist Zimbabwe created, sponsored and unleashed the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) as an anti-communist rebel force to cause havoc and destabilize the FRELIMO government in Mozambique after its independence and sponsored worldwide virulent propaganda against Robert Mugabe and the isolation that led to the systematic destruction of the economy of Zimbabwe, among other state-wrecking plots. In addition, military coups and domestic insurrections were sponsored, governments were callously destabilized, leaders were ordered to be assassinated, wars and instabilities were sponsored in several states—the US refused to recognize the Angolan government for decades after its independence but instead encouraged and facilitated UNITA to wage war against it. After the Cold War, America and their Western allies swiftly abandoned Liberia to burn when Charles Taylor launched a domestic insurrection against the previously US-backed Samuel Doe government, while concentrating attention and efforts on the Balkans instead; they conveniently looked the other way while a hundred-day bloodbath that led to the slaughter of nearly a million people raged on in Rwanda in 1994.

At the continental level, the then newly formed Organization of African Unity followed the colonial dictates of adopting and holding as sacrosanct the inequitable and unjust borders that colonial rule had created, rather than seeking to resolve the critical problems of the continent. The adoption of the international law doctrine of non-interference in the internal affairs of independent states was meant to ossify the colonial artifacts that European powers had created and bequeathed to Africans as modern states and gave murderous sit-tight dictators and tyrants a hiding place. The imposition of the World Bank and IMF-inspired Structural Adjustment Packages in the 1980s

and other similarly destructive economic prescriptions were meant for the perpetuation of economic inequalities and the unjustness of the international system into which African states have been roped. The destructive impact of these economic pills is to make Africa a ward of the international community, cowering at the mercy of so-called development partners and aid agencies. Today, it is not just the French alone that summon African leaders to foreign capitals for summit meetings; China and India have also joined the fray.[12] Western countries are also now gratuitously imposing additional conditionalities such as respect for human rights and lesbian and gay rights as minimum conditions to qualify for external aid. British Prime Minister David Cameron stated matter-of-factly that countries with anti-gay legislation would no longer be qualified for aid.

CONCLUSION

Kwame Nkrumah so aptly captured the situation of neo-colonial dependence when he famously observed that neo-colonialism created "client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power which is supposed to have given them independence."[13] The experiences of Ghana and other African countries speak pungently to the correctness of this assertion, as will be made clear in subsequent chapters in this book.

Even though they are independent, in the technical and theoretical senses, the subtle face of neo-colonialism is such that most of "these countries continue the classical relationship of a colonial economy to its metropolitan patron—that is, providers of primary products and exclusive markets for the latter's goods."[14] It must be stated that the metropolitan powers were not merely content with surreptitiously pulling the economic levers of control behind the curtain[15] alone, but they also used the direct approach of concluding varieties of one-sided military and defense agreements with the newly independent states to tie them more securely to the control of outside powers. France concluded agreements with all its former colonies and for more than fifty years had been the only former colonial power stationing its troops on African soil[16] to monitor, manipulate and control their governments.[17]

Britain initially attempted a similar line of control although with less success than the French. Its neo-colonial defense pact with Nigeria which would have allowed the creation of British military bases and stationing of troops in the country met stiff domestic resistance and had to be swiftly abrogated in January 1962.[18] But then, the British devised other ingenious means of retaining considerable influence in post-independence Nigeria. These included the bureaucratic officials and police and military officials they left behind ostensibly to assist the new government. Both the Nigeria

Police Force and the Nigerian Army were largely officered by Britons until 1964 and 1965 respectively when the first indigenous Inspector-General and General Officer Commanding emerged. It is therefore understandable that Nigeria until the outbreak of the civil war in 1967 doggedly followed the British and would not do anything that would jeopardize British political and economic interests in Nigeria and Africa. Nigeria, for instance, shied away from a diplomatic showdown with Britain over the question of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Rhodesia. Could this be just because of the conservative politics of those they left in power or because of the overwhelming security and military presence they maintained in the country—for example the army which had the duty of guaranteeing regime survival? In a power contest between President Nnamdi Azikiwe and Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa after the massively rigged 1964 general elections, the armed forces took sides with Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa because President Nnamdi Azikiwe was reluctant to legitimize the electoral malfeasance by asking him to form a government. The Prime Minister prevailed!

NOTES

1. Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014), 313.
2. Speech at the Mansion House, London, November 10, 1942.
3. James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958 [Paperback edition by Broburg and Wilstrom, Benin City, Nigeria, 1986]), 321.
4. F. S. Northedge, "The Adjustment of British Policy," in *The Foreign Policies of the Powers*, ed. F. S. Northedge (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 161.
5. See Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, 192–194.
6. These included UN Trust Territories administered by both countries.
7. See Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books Ltd., 1963); James O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191; and Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992).
8. Claude Ake, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2000), 36.
9. That is the argument that Basil Davidson pursues in his seminal study, *The Black Man's Burden*, 1992.
10. F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922 [5th edition, published by Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London, 1965]), 70.
11. See O'Connell's analysis in his "The Inevitability of Instability."

12. See Alade Fawole, "China, Africa and the New Collective Clientelism," *The Nation* (Lagos), Wednesday, December 23, 2015, 48.

13. Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books Ltd., 1963), 174.

14. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, 176.

15. France demonstrated its intention to maintain an economic stranglehold on its former colonies when it inserted clauses in the 1957 Rome Treaty establishing the European Economic Community that would allow goods from those states to enjoy preferential treatment in the newly created EEC markets.

16. French troops were stationed in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Chad, Central African Republic, and Djibouti, among others.

17. France employed its troops to support favored regimes and to remove unwanted ones. The cases of Leon Mba in Gabon in 1964 and Jean Bedell Bokassa in Central African Republic respectively are instructive.

18. The ill-fated Anglo-Nigerian Defense Pact, negotiated and concluded between emerging Nigerian rulers and the British overlords was stiffly resisted by Nigerians immediately after independence and thus had to be swiftly abrogated in January 1962.

Chapter 3

Britain and the Orchestration of Pseudo-Decolonization

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE END OF EMPIRE

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) was compelled, at the end of the Second World War, by the outcomes of that war to begin considering the inevitability of granting independence to its colonies in Asia and Africa, an act that would signify the inexorable winding down of the British Empire, the once mighty empire covering a sixth of the globe and over which proverbially the sun never sets. Prior to that time, Prime Minister Winston Churchill had asserted in November 1942 that he was not elected into office to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire. He said, "I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." The implication of this emphatic assertion, of course, was that hardly anyone in Britain at the time, politician or leader, ever seriously contemplated that the eventual end of empire was near, at least until the vicissitudes of the world war forced the inevitable on them. By the end of the Second World War in 1945, India's independence (eventually as India and Pakistan in 1947) was already inevitable, and its occurrence eventually opened the doors for the imminent end of the British Empire, unleashing the gale of nationalist agitations for independence that began sweeping across Africa from the 1950s, a development that the more perceptive British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan famously characterized as "wind of change." On a visit to Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa) in January 1960, Macmillan had perceived this correctly, and famously remarked that "the wind of change is blowing through the continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact."[1]

Britain was not particularly different from the other colonial powers in that its industrial revolution and the modernization that it brought were predicated on the vital agricultural and mineral resources plundered from the colonies in Africa. British industrial growth and the expansion of the capitalist class was sustained on the regular supply of primary products from the colonies which also guaranteed a boost in British military power with which it was able to increase its global reach, power and influence. With this background, it was hardly conceivable that anyone within the ruling elites ever envisaged giving up the proverbial goose that laid the golden eggs for imperial Great Britain. It was in this sense that Prime Minister Winston Churchill's declaration that he was not in office to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire may well be understood, although he was the only one bold enough to express it with that tone of finality. After all, British war efforts were also boosted by soldiers from different parts of the empire, and its industrial capacity to produce war materiel benefited from the raw materials from its overseas possessions, especially in Africa. But while that was the general feeling in Britain as the Second World War raged on, the end of that war threw up entirely different scenarios not only for Great Britain alone but for all European colonial powers as well.

Although they came out of the war victorious against Nazi Germany and the Axis powers, the war had both traumatized and exacted terrible tolls on all the European countries. Many were politically exhausted, economically drained, had suffered critical infrastructural destruction and serious social dislocations on a scale that made continuation and sustenance of colonial empires no longer realistic. Britain's war-time Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who would not tolerate the notion of the dissolution of the British Empire in 1942, had by July 1945 been voted out of office and replaced by Clement Atlee. The new Labour Party government, elected by a landslide victory over Churchill, went on to preside over the beginning of decolonization with the grant of independence to India, Burma, and Ceylon, and the gradual but inexorable dissolution of the entire British Empire. The independence of Britain's Asian possessions opened the door for the eventual gale of decolonization that would take place in Africa from the mid-1950s. This was also because the cost of running the colonies no longer made political or economic sense, and the sensible option was to consider the grant of independence to them.

Consideration for independence for the colonies, signifying the dissolution of the British Empire, was forced on Great Britain, as it was on the other major European colonial powers. Decolonization became inevitable, whether the colonies themselves were actually prepared and ready for it or not. In most cases, independence, often booby-trapped to undermine the new states' sovereignty, was hurriedly packaged in response to growing and relentless

nationalist agitations and was handed out to the colonies in quick succession. As Meredith has noted, this was done also to prevent these colonies falling into the embrace of the then rampaging Communist Soviet Union in the aftermath of the global war.[2] Since it appeared that Britain was also eager to avoid senseless and costly colonial wars in Africa, granting independence was thus the least costly option. To fulfill Britain's agenda for pseudo-independence, new democratic political structures complete with brand new constitutions were hastily constructed and super-imposed on subsisting anti-democratic and authoritarian colonial structures.[3] By these arrangements, the British sought to convert overnight local elites, whose main involvement in and experience under colonial rule had been in oppositional and agitational politics, into "democrats" who the British expected would operate the imposed new system. It seemed the British didn't get it, that democrats could not be manufactured overnight, pressed into service in the morning, and still be expected to make a success of democratic politics in which they had not been previously schooled either by training or experience. Or it could as well be that it was the best option they could come up with in the haste to decolonize and save themselves costly colonial wars.

Ghana was the first British colony to become independent in sub-Saharan Africa on March 6, 1957, under the radical leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. This feat did not happen because of any careful British planning, but in spite of it, it opened the floodgates which made the 1960s Africa's independence decade. Many other British colonies followed in quick succession in the early 1960s[4]—Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and so forth.

If independence for the colonies was inevitable, the British then decided they had to bring their political savvy into the equation, so that loss of colonies would not also result in total loss of political, economic and military influence on the continent. This was also thought to be necessary in the context of East-West rivalry for global influence so as to deny the Communist Soviet Union any influence on a continent that had been an exclusive Western sphere of influence and domination for centuries. Ghana had to be granted independence in 1957 because the colonialists could not withstand much longer the gale force of the "wind of change" that Nkrumah's political activism and mass mobilization had unleashed in the then Gold Coast. Having broken ranks with the Joseph Danquah-led United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a party which he had adjudged too slow and too conservative for his own brand of radical and populist politics, Kwame Nkrumah had formed a new political party in 1949 named Convention People's Party (CPP), with the jarring slogan of "Self-Government Now" with which he advocated for independence for the Gold Coast. This populist approach clearly resonated with the mass of the people and stripped the elitist and conservative UGCC of

its support base. Nkrumah's party later won the February 1951 general elections while Nkrumah himself was still in prison where he was serving time for what the colonial authorities had termed "subversive activities." His party, the CPP, reportedly won a clear majority of thirty-four out of the thirty-eight seats contested for in that election, thus leaving the colonial governor, Sir Arden-Clarke, no choice but to release him from prison and ask him to form a government which had to share power with the colonial governor. Since full independence had not yet been granted, the colonial governor still retained substantial powers and exclusive control over the armed forces, police, judiciary and foreign affairs. To have done otherwise, that is, not releasing Nkrumah from prison, was liable to foment the kind of anti-colonial uprising the British authorities could least afford. This was the beginning of Gold Coast's inexorable and rapid acceleration toward independence, a pace that confounded the British colonial rulers who had originally conceived a more relaxed and longer period of transition.

Though an independent nation-state, the British still retained considerable presence and interest in the former Gold Coast, now renamed Ghana by Nkrumah's government. Nkrumah's description succinctly captures this situation.

> In the case of our civil service, we were reliant not upon our own nationals but almost entirely upon nationals of a power which had been ruling us and who had been trained to conduct the policy of that power. Bound to the interests of their own country for so long, it could hardly be expected, apart from a few exceptional cases, that they would change their attitude towards us overnight.[5]

If this expresses Ghana's plight, or predicament, after independence, it was definitely not alone in it. Britain retained substantial influence in all its former colonies.

Nigeria and others followed suit in the early 1960s, gaining independence under a political system, the Westminster Parliamentary system, and operating a constitution that was written for them by the departing colonial masters. Even after independence, all of them remained firmly politically, economically, militarily and socially attached to Great Britain because of the institutions and structures bequeathed to them by colonial rule. Nigeria perhaps best emblematized this attachment. Its parliamentary system of governance, its armed forces and police, its civil service, its judiciary and even the educational system, remained exactly as the British had created and bequeathed them. In terms of its economy, not only was the Nigerian currency, the pound sterling, denominated against the British Pound, the country's external reserves were held in British banks, and Britain was Nigeria's largest trading partner in the world. British-owned companies dominated the manufacturing

sector, while the distributive trade and banking were also under the firm grip of British owned companies and banks respectively.

Just as it was the case in Ghana, several British civilian and security personnel remained behind in Nigeria for several years after independence to monitor Nigeria's growth and development trajectory, and possibly prevent any tendency that it might stray into the embrace of the Communist powers. A significant number of British military and police officers, as well as civil servants, remained in the service of newly independent Nigeria for several more years. For example, Sir Peter Stallard, a veteran colonial civil servant, stayed in Lagos as adviser to Prime Minister Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa; Major General Sir Christopher Welby-Everard was the head of the Nigerian army, an army which was largely officered by Britons until February 1965, while the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) only had its first indigenous Police Inspector-General, Louis Edet, in 1964.[6] Evidently, these underlay Britain's resolve to maintain considerable influence in the domestic affairs of newly independent Nigeria. To further consolidate its grip on the country, Britain signed a defense pact with the Nigerian government in 1958 which would have allowed the basing of British military forces and equipment on Nigerian soil and using its airspace and facilities in Kano and Lagos for aerial staging. Although signed by all the then frontline political parties, apparently out of fear that their refusal might jeopardize negotiations for independence,[7] the "neo-colonialist" pact, as many Nigerians later dubbed it, came to grief on the grounds of sustained popular agitation once its actual contents were known and had to be unilaterally abrogated by Nigeria in January 1962.[8]

It was perhaps in Kenya that Britain's reluctance to grant independence manifested most ferociously, and thereby unwittingly sparked the *Mau Mau* uprising and its violent struggle for independence. Kenya was treated as a white settler colony because it had what the British regarded as extremely rich agricultural soils. Because of its natural richness in fertile soils, Kenyans were driven out and dispossessed of their lands by the white settlers, employed as virtual slave laborers in white-owned farms, and thus had inflicted upon them a much more sinister form of colonialism, forcing the people to embark on armed struggles for independence through the instrumentality of the *Mau Mau* rebellion. The British reacted to this development with maximum force and extreme brutality to protect the interests of the white British settlers. The massive military pacification which was unleashed against Kenyans during the *Mau Mau* revolt succeeded in decimating the rebellion such that by the time independence was eventually granted in December 1963, there was little doubt that the country was ill-prepared for successful and durable sovereign existence, judging by the scale of physical and infrastructural destruction, mass dislocation and socioeconomic disruption that British repression had deliberately inflicted. British colonial officials and settlers did not see Kenya

as a colony in the traditional sense but as a territory that they owned, invariably an extension of the British homeland, and therefore any thought of independence for it was remote.

Post-independence Kenya was left in near ruins, and Kenyans were nonetheless still expected to make a success of the shell of the state they had inherited. It would appear that the seeds of future political instability had been integrated into the political architecture of Kenya, exactly the way it was in the other former colonies. Though legally independent and parading the externalities of a sovereign state from December 1963 (i.e., having a government, national flag and anthem, bureaucracy, army, police, etc.), it was "not yet *uhuru*" as a leading nationalist and politician, Oginga Odinga, aptly argued in his autobiography of the same title.[9]

If Kenya was the archetypal white settler colony, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) indisputably epitomized all that was evil and sinister in British colonial rule in Africa. Rhodesia was a classic example of a settler colony that exemplified all the evils of settler colonialism just like Kenya, French Algeria and the Portuguese African colonies. The white settlers who had appropriated almost all the fertile farmlands not only regarded themselves as owners of the land but would not even brook any notion that the natives could ever become independent except under white domination. With independence happening all around them in the early 1960s and growing domestic agitation for same, the white settlers under the leadership of Mr. Ian Smith, in 1965 seized the territory from Britain, its colonizer, and unilaterally declared it an independent country. This was met with domestic resistance and great uproar across the rest of the African continent. Instead of Britain reasserting its ownership of the colony, by force if necessary, it merely sought assistance of the United Nations to impose sanctions on the recalcitrant white minority usurpers. Britain's unwillingness to do anything met diplomatic disapproval in Africa, especially from African member-states of the Commonwealth who threatened a total diplomatic boycott of Great Britain if it failed to reassert control, a threat which Ghana and Tanzania reportedly carried through.[10] The end result of Britain's failure was a decade-and-half-long guerrilla war of independence launched by Robert Mugabe's ZANU and Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU with foreign assistance from diverse places such as the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba.

While it seemed that the British government was powerless or unwilling to take any serious action against their ethnic kinsfolk who were settlers in Rhodesia in this brazen theft of the colony, the rest of independent Africa, especially the Commonwealth members, did not take kindly to this development. They issued Britain an ultimatum to reverse the illegal unilateral declaration and to put in place measures for proper independence under black majority rule by December 1965 or face a mass diplomatic boycott.

It was, however, not until the Commonwealth Summit of 1979, after a prolonged armed struggle, that Britain became persuaded to reassert control and take responsibility for the country and began negotiated independence settlement. By then Rhodesia had become known as Zimbabwe. Because the blacks had to fight a long and brutal war of independence until 1979, the eventual negotiated independence that was brokered by the British government at Lancaster House in London after the August 1979 Lusaka Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) left Zimbabweans with peculiar problems carefully embedded in the political architecture of the country. This happened also because Britain's political intervention did not allow the ZANU and ZAPU forces to win decisively on the battlefield, necessitating that special privileges be negotiated and inserted into the constitution for the white minority population. For example, the white landowners, barely one percent of the total population of the country (a large number of them absentee landowners) but who held about 70 percent of all fertile agricultural lands, were nonetheless allowed to hold on to their forcibly seized fertile lands whilst the British government undertook to provide funds in the future to buy back the lands for redistribution to Zimbabweans. This promise was never fulfilled by successive British governments until Zimbabwe lapsed into a one-man autocracy and the question of land redistribution once again surfaced strongly in the 1990s.

Even though President Robert Mugabe could be held responsible for his authoritarian stranglehold on Zimbabwean politics, he nonetheless was aided by the conspiracy of external forces, mostly Western powers, which employed their mass media to demonize him, denounced his ruthlessness that forced him to retreat from all pretensions to democracy. Britain's blunt refusal to honor its pledge to provide funds for land buy-back and redistribution put enormous pressures on the government from former guerrilla fighters and ZANU partisans who yearned for such. While efforts were made throughout the early to mid-1980s to get the British to do the needful, Mugabe could not take unilateral action as he might have wanted to on the matter because he was persuaded by other African states to shelve such action in order not to jeopardize the changes being negotiated in neighboring apartheid South Africa in the late 1980s. Had Mugabe not tarried, the negotiations for a peaceful end to apartheid in South Africa next door might have served as a clear disincentive to a productive end, for the South African authorities would have used the post-independence land grab in Zimbabwe as an excuse to stall or frustrate the negotiations entirely. Unable to contain the pressure anymore after the transition from apartheid in South Africa by the early to mid-1990s, Mugabe was compelled to embark on the long-delayed wholesale land reforms which saw forcible repossession of white-owned farmlands which were mostly redistributed to former ZANU guerrilla fighters and other loyalists of the

government, a disastrous policy that has turned the once famed agricultural breadbasket of Southern Africa into a pathetic basket case, not without help from the Western countries that through economic sanctions and propaganda brought Zimbabwe to the brink of total failure.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the foregoing examples that the entire decolonization project in British Africa was at best a dubious exercise which Britain would have preferred to avoid except that the vicissitudes of the Second World War had made it inevitable. Being technically the product of a certain kind of *force majeure*, Britain's eventual departure from Africa intentionally still left its former colonies chronically incapable of sustaining durable democratic governance. Although they all paraded the outward attributes of nation-states, the newly independent African states nonetheless were shells without the real substance of statehood. It is thus little wonder that they only managed a few years of mediocre democratic sovereign existence before what O'Connell famously terms the "inevitability of instability" began to manifest. Ghana, first to be independent in British colonial Africa, lapsed into a one-party state under Kwame Nkrumah, while Nigeria, Britain's most prized possession, suffered devastating military coups and a highly destructive civil war barely seven years after independence. Other newly independent states fared no better, as colonially constructed authoritarianism boldly re-emerged in one form or the other in each of them. In the chapters that follow, we shall examine and highlight these developments and how they comprehensively vitiated any honorable notion of real post-colonial nation-states.

NOTES

1. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, quoted in Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: Free Press, 2006), 90.

2. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 90.

3. James O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191.

4. A total of 17 African countries obtained independence in 1960 alone.

5. Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books, 1963), 90.

6. For details on the British presence in the public service, armed forces and the police of the Nigerian federation after independence, see severally, N. J. Miners, *The Nigerian Army, 1956–1966* (London: Methuen and Co., 1971); and David

Jemibewon, *The Nigerian Police in Transition: Issues, Problems and Prospects* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2001).

7. Kaye Whiteman, "The Switchback and Fallback of Nigeria-Britain Relations," in *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu (Scottsville, South Africa: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2008), 256.

8. Obafemi Awolowo, "Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact," in *Voice of Reason: Selected Speeches of Obafemi Awolowo, vol. 1* (Akure, Nigeria: Fagbamigbe Publishers, 1981), 26–35; also, Olatunde J. B. Ojo, "The Making and Termination of Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact," in *The Structure and Processes of Foreign Policy Making and Implementation in Nigeria, 1960–1990*, ed. G. O. Olusanya and R. A. Akindele (Lagos: NIIA, 1990), 253–274.

9. Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*: *The Autobiography of Oginga Odinga* (London: Heinemann, 1968).

10. Kaye Whiteman, "The Switchback and Fallback of Nigeria-Britain Relations," 258.

Chapter 4

The Role of France in the Subversion of the Post-Colonial State

The very close and intimate relationships that France forged and has largely maintained with its former colonies in Africa (*La Francafrique* as is generally known) for more than five decades can only be understood against the backdrop of France's own predilection for power and global relevance after the Second World War. France had undoubtedly emerged from that war as a much weaker global player after having been defeated and occupied for four years by Nazi Germany and had to be liberated by the largest multinational military expedition spearheaded by the United States and Great Britain. Although acknowledged as one of the great powers of the world prior to that war, France had always pretended to both cultural and political sophistication over fellow European nations, almost to the point of looking down on them. Its national pride was, however, badly wounded not just because of defeat by the culturally inferior "Huns" (a disparaging term used for Germans) alone but also because its eventual liberation came at the hands of even less-regarded nations such as Great Britain and the United States of America. As Dorothy Pickles so aptly put it,

> Although technically on the side of the victors, France emerged from the war economically, psychologically and politically only on the fringe of great-Power status. She was not represented at Yalta or at Potsdam. She had to fight for the right to share in the occupation of Germany. She was faced with a tremendous task of economic reconstruction and modernization, jealous of Great Britain's "special relationship" with the United States, and her advance in the nuclear field, yet unable to catch up the ground lost by four years of occupation.[1]

These pills were undoubtedly too bitter for a proud France, a nation that had for three centuries regarded itself as a political and cultural leader in the world, to swallow without consequences.

Though gifted a permanent seat in the Security Council of the newly created United Nations, more for old times' sake than for any significant contributions to the global war efforts, it was indisputable that France's national pride as a great power had been badly shaken by the four years of Nazi occupation. It thus was uncomfortable with the rising Anglo-American and Soviet military and ideological dominance in world affairs, most especially in European affairs. Having emerged as one of the two military superpowers at the end of the war, the United States was already becoming too prominent and militarily preponderant in the defense and protection of Western Europe from any possible or potential Soviet Communist threats. The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that put Western Europe under America's nuclear umbrella and the Marshall Plan not only significantly increased Anglo-American hegemony in Europe but virtually sidelined France to second rate position. Having lost its own Asian colonial possessions during the war, now being denied much relevance in Western Europe because of America's overarching military and economic influence, and in Eastern Europe because of the Soviet Union's dominance, France's only remaining chance to continue to play a big power role rested solely on retaining a firm grip on its African colonies. Retaining control and influence in Africa was therefore what it was willing and ready to do at all costs and by whatever means necessary. Even though the granting of independence to colonial dependencies had been made inevitable by the vicissitudes and outcomes of the Second World War, France granted it to its own African possessions only on such terms and conditions that were considered suitable for it to retain some relevance as a global player. Jean-Francois-Medard puts it more aptly:

> In granting independence to its African colonies from 1960, French President Charles de Gaulle attempted to replace direct domination with indirect hegemony. Keeping France's influence in Africa was considered to be one of the preconditions for Paris to hold its rank in world politics, and to maintain its international status as a global player (*grandeur de la France*).[2]

France would have been totally disrobed and robbed of any form of influence in world affairs without its African colonies, so the grant of independence was carefully managed and choreographed to suit Paris's own strategic designs. For continued political and strategic relevance, France needed "a clientele of African states" through the establishment and maintenance of "special relationships" with them, while economically these "special relationships" guaranteed it unrestricted access to vital resources such as uranium and oil.[3] These special economic relationships with the former colonial dependencies also extended to creating a special status for them during the formation of the European Economic Community in 1957. Even before they

became independent, France made sure that provisions for preferential tariff concessions in all EEC markets were inserted for them in the Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community.[4] These economic ties between France's eighteen African dependencies and the EEC were later formalized after their independence through the Yaounde Conventions of 1963 and 1969.[5] These countries could not wriggle out of this obviously neo-colonialist entrapment even if they had wanted to, for not only were they tied to France through a common currency but all had unequal military and defense agreements with France which, more than anything else, guaranteed regime survival.

DE GAULLE, DECOLONIZATION, *FRANCAFRIQUE*, AND RELATIONSHIP OF DEPENDENCY

Only a good grasp of France's contemporary historical experience can provide required elucidation for the range and depth of its interests in Africa, and put its Africa policies in proper perspective. Yes, it is true that economic interests lay at the very bottom of the entire colonial enterprise, but France's post-WWII interests transcended purely economic considerations alone. And these had nothing to do also with the egregious notion of colonialism as a civilizing mission. A simple fact that must be understood is that France had, due to the vicissitudes of the Second World War, completely lost its once revered place as one of the great European and world powers. And it was both the recognition of that fact and the need to ameliorate it that undergirded President Charles de Gaulle's design of a peculiar Africa policy for France from the late 1950s, generally known with the term *Francafrique*.

The term *Francafrique* depicts and describes France's so-called "special relationships" with its former African colonies, a relationship that was based solely and exclusively on the protection and advancement of France's national interests on the continent. President Charles de Gaulle began this clientelistic system with the core objective of restoring France's past glory and grandeur, and it was predicated upon maintaining its strategic foothold in Africa where it already had a large imperial presence. De Gaulle entrusted the implementation of this neocolonialist policy to Jacques Foccart, his faithful adviser on African affairs who also served succeeding French governments in that capacity continuously from 1958 until 1974. He was later rehabilitated to play similar roles again in the 1990s until his death in 1997. The intricate web of relationships that De Gaulle constructed with France's former dependencies was so strong that France became the only former colonial power that could summon two dozen African leaders to a summit with an iron-clad assurance that they would attend.

Martin Meredith has so graphically captured the totalizing and strangulating influence of France in the domestic affairs of its former colonies even after independence that it is worth quoting:

> To ensure that the new states survived and that French interests there were protected, de Gaulle adopted a benevolent stand, signing agreements covering a wide range of financial and technical assistance. France supplied presidential aides, military advisers and civil servants to staff government ministries. The French treasury supported a monetary union, underwriting a stable and convertible currency. French troops were stationed permanently in several capitals under defence agreements designed to provide a guarantee of internal security. France also operated an extensive intelligence network in Africa controlled from the Elysee Palace by de Gaulle's African adviser, Jacques Foccart. The French continued to dominate industry, banking and trade as thoroughly as before. In the post-colonial era, *l'Afrique Noire* was regarded as part of France's *chasse gardee*—a private estate, jealously guarded against encroachment by other world powers.[6]

This graphic and unflattering portrayal of France's relations with Francophone African states more than any other demonstrates the indisputable validity of Kwame Nkrumah's assertion that African states were hardly more than neo-colonies even after the grant of flag independence. It is worth stressing that France is not the only culprit in this ignoble enterprise of subjecting African states to neo-colonial exploitation, although its peculiar methodology was infinitely more deep-seated and sinister. Perhaps with the exception of a few colonies, political power was deliberately handed over at independence to carefully chosen members of the local ruling elites who could be trusted to do the bidding of external powers. Meredith portrays the cosmetic reality of flag independence further, noting that the so-called "changes that occurred were largely ceremonial" for the French ensured that the newly independent countries were controlled by local elites securely tied to the French and whose main functions included protecting French interests.[7] *Francafrique*, France's cultivation of clientelistic relationships with its former colonies, as Medard has noted, was predicated on three strategic considerations, namely political, strategic and cultural.[8]

Political Considerations

Right from 1958 when he came to power in Paris, President Charles de Gaulle's original proposition was for France's colonies to form a French Community as opposed to outright grant of independence and sovereignty. This Community, a mere extension of France as De Gaulle envisaged it, would be in control of such matters as defense, foreign and economic policies

of all members.[9] In effect, France would still control everything through unitary or joint policies that would be made from the Élysée Palace. It would appear that only Guinea-Conakry under the leadership of the radical trade unionist, Ahmed Sekou Toure saw through this sinister neo-colonialist subterfuge and opted for independence instead. The Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG) led by Ahmed Sekou Toure had won a majority of fifty-six out of the sixty seats in the 1957 territorial elections, a victory that empowered Toure and his party to speed up the process of decolonization in the country such that Guineans were able to massively reject inclusion in a proposed French Community in a referendum held on September 28, 1958. The French angrily left the country and Guinea became independent four days later on October 2, 1957, under the leadership of Ahmed Sekou Toure. But Guinea suffered tremendously and adversely for its temerity to oppose France's proposals.

With Guinea becoming independent in 1958, the agitation for full decolonization began resonating more prominently in all the colonies, resulting in the eventual collapse of the French Community by 1960 when most of the countries started gaining independence. Realizing the inevitability of the grant of independence, De Gaulle, as Chipman has noted, cleverly ensured "that as many of the new states as possible signed agreements with France so that contractual link between the metropole and the new states overseas would help to preserve France's influence in Africa."[10] In effect, and as happened in other former colonies, France did not hand over sovereignty to the people of its colonies but instead to the new and emerging bilingual middle-class elites who could be manipulated to do its bidding.

It served France's post-war interest to keep a string of client states in Africa for the purpose of re-stating its international status as a major power. Unable to exercise power and meaningful influence in any other region of the world since the loss of its Asian colonies, retaining an almost exclusive sphere of influence in Africa then became a priority of France's post-war foreign policy. This was readily possible in Africa where it already had about two dozen colonies for which the grant of independence had become a necessity. De Gaulle knew that establishing patron-client connections would be necessary to allow France to keep the colonies firmly in its grip and to control for its international relations. In essence, holding on to Africa was what gave France its international reputation as a great power, its claim to *la politique du grandeur*. Though the political consideration undergirding the relationships was very strong, it however maintained relations with each of the former colonies according to their unique importance to France's overall global strategy. For example, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, and Gabon enjoyed greater intimacy with France; Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire because of their importance as foremost strategic West African outposts, and Gabon, more so because of its huge hydrocarbon resources. President Omar Bongo

of Gabon was a notable darling of the French for he allowed giant French oil firm, Elf, to control oil exploration in that country. Elf was a state enterprise established by President De Gaulle in 1963 which reportedly grew to become an integral element of France's foreign policy in Africa, not only controlling oil production but also influencing African governments and providing intelligence services for Paris.[11] The giant state oil company also reportedly provided slush funds for France's military and intelligence operations in Africa during the Gaullist era. Bongo's corruption-ridden regime and longevity in power (42 years) were not unconnected with the facilitation of Elf and his close and warm personal relations with the Elysee Palace.

Let us not forget that since the main factor that got France a permanent veto-wielding seat at the United Nations Security Council was not its obviously minimal contributions to the allied war efforts but rather its large imperial possessions in Africa, losing grip on the continent would amount to losing out to its main rivals in the power game. It is in this regard that Africa's strategic importance to France can be appreciated.

Since President de Gaulle was both the originator and designer of the texture and content of *Francafrique*, he also felt the necessity to maintain strict personal control over France's Africa policy, a policy thrust which was brutally and efficiently implemented for a decade and a half from 1958 to 1974 under the close supervision of his close personal aide, Jacques Foccart. Ably assisted by covert support from military forces and the external wing of the French intelligence service, the SDECE (External Documentation and Counter-Espionage Service), Foccart was the principal architect of France's unflattering epithet of "*Gendarme of Africa*." He made sure that African leaders were favorably disposed toward Paris, and was also implicated in several coups d'états, mercenary operations, assassinations and other clandestine meddling in domestic affairs across the continent to keep African governments firmly in line. In fact, Foccart made sure that France's relationship with those dependencies was secured through an intricate network of formal and informal political, economic, security institutions as well as a series of cooperation agreements.[12]

From 1960 onward, France became the undisputed major foreign power in control on the African continent, further consolidating its influence through the annual Franco-African summits which began in 1973, and able to herd two-dozen African heads of state to Paris and effortlessly got them to do France's bidding at the snap of a finger. Though only about ten countries reportedly attended the inaugural Franco-African Summit conference in Paris in November 1973, attendance at the annual summits had grown steadily to about forty countries a mere decade later by 1982.[13] It had grown in importance as the single largest diplomatic gathering of African heads of state, beside the annual summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), a development which prompted President Mitterrand's exuberant claim: "what other country could

invite so many states to participate in a conference of this kind and be sure that they would come?"[14] In reality, there was no other country but France alone that could pull off this great feat! This factor, more than any other, was what gave the United States of America the strongest assurance that the Communist Soviet Union would not gain a foothold on the continent, more so since France would not brook any challenge to its hegemony on the continent.

In any case, since France considered it to be in its utmost national interest to keep the Communists out of Africa, it openly supported the most ruthless dictatorships as long as they flaunted real or imagined anti-communist credentials. France realized early the efficacy of military power to pursue its policies and advance its political, diplomatic, and cultural interests, and thus concluded a string of military and defense agreements with the African states concerned, and had military bases and deployed troops in more than half a dozen countries. Perhaps what made America comfortable with these arrangements was that French bases could also serve as NATO's forward operating bases in case of need. These troops were used to support friendly governments and to depose recalcitrant ones or those who fell out of favor with Paris.

Economic Necessity

The strategic political conditions are inextricably linked with the protection of France's economic interests and domestic development, both of which inevitably account for its global status. France depends substantially on the vital natural resources of Africa, most especially crude oil, uranium, phosphates, and iron ore. France's dependence on these vital resources necessitated that it would ensure that it maintained a vise-like grip on the former colonies, and it secured this by a series of measures and policies that roped the African countries into unequal economic and commercial treaties and partnership agreements as well as bilateral aid packages. The agreements ensured that France would enjoy virtual exclusive access to some of the strategic resources such as uranium and crude oil. Aid packages were generously offered to the countries, whilst the mostly autocratic regimes in return enjoyed the support and confidence of the former colonial metropole. French forces still guard and protect Niger Republic's uranium producing sites.

It was generally known that most of the aid that was offered these countries eventually ended up in France for the purchase of French-made goods and military hardware. Military and defense cooperation agreements which involved training and equipping of African military forces further ensured that the regimes would fall in line. Besides, France never for once hid its readiness to employ its own forces to further its national interests through outright interventions, coups, assassinations, deposing leaders and such like.[15] Chipman points out that as of the year 1960, there were no less than 100 French

military bases of different categories on the African continent although this number was pruned down considerably after many of the states became independent and created their own indigenous national armies with assistance from France.[16] Nonetheless, the states were secured through a network of defense and cooperation agreements. It was crystal clear to the African client states that France would not tolerate radical shifts in their economic and external relations, a factor sufficient to keep the Soviet Union at bay. To this end, the series of bilateral and multilateral military and defense agreements signed with France allowed Paris to do three things simultaneously: first, to protect the countries against any possible foreign attacks, second, to help the autocratic regimes keep their internal opposition from gaining power, and third, to keep a tab on the exploration and exploitation of such strategic resources as hydrocarbons and uranium and other vital minerals for the use of France and to prevent them from falling into the "wrong" hands.

France was instrumental in the attempts to frustrate the formation of a West African sub-regional economic platform for collective development and integration that was being championed by Nigeria. Though it began the moves for the formation of a sub-regional economic bloc shortly after the end of its civil war in 1970, the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which Nigeria was spearheading did not become a reality until May 1975 when the treaty establishing it was eventually signed in Lagos, all because France cynically erected obstacles and barriers to its realization.[17] France probably resented or was uncomfortable with Nigeria's rising profile as a sub-regional economic power, most especially after the oil boom of the early 1970s made the country by far the richest African country. This is understandable against the backdrop of the mutually cold relationship that had subsisted between them since Nigeria's severance of diplomatic relations with Paris in January 1961, and France's and Cote d'Ivoire's support for Biafra. Perhaps the most critical disincentive to a regional economic body was France's encouragement and sponsorship of the formation of an exclusively Francophone rival, the CEAO, by France's former colonies, where Paris believed its interests would be much better protected.[18] This undoubtedly vitiated the formation of ECOWAS by the remaining Anglophone states since they were not even geographically contiguous for such an integrative venture even if they had intended to go it alone.

Cultural Determinants

The cultural determinants of France's Africa policy were not mutually exclusive from its political factors. The whole idea was the sustenance of the French notion of political and cultural superiority. This self-conceived notion and the need to bring the benefits of such civilization to the rest of

the "uncivilized" world were employed *ab initio* as the rationalization for its colonial enterprise and its assimilation policies. To France, colonialism was a necessary, benevolent, and civilizing mission.[19] This conception of cultural superiority came under assault, as has been demonstrated above, by France's loss of face and influence during and after World War II. The need for France to regain lost ground, the restoration of dented national pride, and the need to remain relevant in global affairs were the determinants of De Gaulle's Africa policy.

At different times since 1960, France has maintained military bases and deployed armed forces in several African states including Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger Republic, Gabon, Djibouti, Reunion, and Central African Republic. These forces, apart from the several coups d'états they fomented, were also the visible guarantors of regime survival for all the despotic rulers in these states, and also visible evidence of support from the Élysée Palace in Paris. The numerous defense agreements also assured the countries of France's assumed readiness to come to their aid in case of attack. The longevity enjoyed by such autocratic rulers as Leopold Sedar Senghor, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, General Gnassingbe Eyadema, El-Hadj Omar Bongo, and Paul Biya in their respective Francophone states might not have been possible without support from Paris. Overall, France's hubris and cultural pride was bolstered by its ability to serve as the ultimate guarantor of regime survival in its former dependencies and to prove to the rest of the world its firm grip in Africa.

From the 1970s, changes were made in how France related with ex-colonies. Metropolitan intrusions became less overt; changes were made in the series of defense and cooperation agreements when most were renegotiated, although most of the changes were more cosmetic and symbolic as they did not fundamentally affect France's relations with African states or its methods of protecting its political, economic and cultural interests. More often than not, its resort to intrusive military activities was not affected by the contents or wordings of the various bilateral and multilateral defense and cooperation agreements. Rather than diminish, French political and cultural outreach had expanded considerably to include countries hitherto not in its original sphere of influence, such as Zaire (now DR Congo), Rwanda, and Burundi.[20] While its intrusion lasted, as Xavier Renou has observed, France reportedly used its Africa-based forces to militarily intervene no fewer than thirty-four times on African soil between 1963 and 1997 for the purposes of defending pro-French regimes against domestic opposition.[21] This is a glaring evidence of France's meddling in so-called post-colonial Africa. Significant among France's many instances of the use of its military forces in Africa is the intervention in Gabon in 1964 to restore President Leon Mba after a

coup had deposed him from power, and the September 1979 "Operation Barracuda" that was sent to depose self-styled "Emperor" Jean Beddel Bokassa in Central African Republic.

France and Guinea's Post-Independence Travails

No other country bore the brunt of France's ruthless policies in Africa as much as the West African state of Guinea, its first colony to gain independence in October 1958. Led by its radical leader, Ahmed Sekou Toure, the country's enthusiasm for real independence was palpable to the extent that he openly rejected General Charles de Gaulle's proposal for the establishment of a Franco-African Community, a proposal that several other leading political figures in other French colonies had earlier acceded to. The Community was intended by de Gaulle as a veritable mechanism for France to retain its firm grip on its African colonies rather than grant them real independence, a policy thrust he had vigorously canvassed during a whirlwind visit to all the colonies in August 1958 and which had received endorsement from many until he got to Conakry, Guinea's capital city. Sekou Toure's outright rebuff of the idea and openly opting for independence angered the arrogant and vindictive De Gaulle, who vowed retribution for Guinea's effrontery or audacity. The vote not to join the proposed Franco-African Community was a resounding success for Toure, and Guinea was declared independent thereafter.

But the grant of independence, rather than a thing to celebrate, was actually the beginning of the country's woeful plight and resultant dictatorship. True to his vow to punish the country for that audacity and disgrace of France, De Gaulle proceeded to systematically wreck the country and make it a bad advertisement for standing up to France and setting the precedent which would later lead to the independence of other French colonies and the end of the notion of a Franco-African Community. He deployed a plethora of vindictive actions which included recall of French public servants such as teachers, engineers and technicians, doctors and nurses from health institutions, dismantling of military installations and withdrawal of security personnel, followed by deliberate and wanton destruction of any French government-owned physical property they could not carry with them and a host of other ingenious punitive measures.[22]

This was not a way for a country to begin life as an independent state in the middle of the twentieth century. This certainly could not have been what Sekou Toure and his countrymen and women bargained for when they opted for independence. Reeling under this French bitterness, regime survival became a critical issue and Toure had to turn to the former Soviet Union for succor and assistance even after Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah had offered it immediate assistance. It was inescapable that this Western-orchestrated

punishment would drag Toure further into the Soviet Communist embrace that encouraged his penchant for dictatorship at home. Under him, the Guinean government became increasingly intolerant of opposition as he entrenched himself as a sit-tight ruler, human rights and fundamental freedoms were callously abbreviated and grossly abused, and the state became increasingly lawless, predatory and unaccountable, almost the exact replica of what the colonial state had been except that the managers of the state were indigenes. This was Guinea's situation for two and half decades, from independence in 1958 until Toure's death in 1984, followed by a coup d'état and a burgeoning civilian pseudo-democracy, before another series of coups and the attendant political instability which has left the country today a virtual failed state.

CONCLUSION: NEW REALITIES AND CHANGES IN FRANCE-AFRICA RELATIONS

Undoubtedly, France's relations with its former colonies have undergone significant changes and innovations in recent times in line with new realities in African and world politics. The changes are a consequence of the passing away of ruling elites in Africa and France as well as global developments since the end of the Cold War.[23] The death of some of Africa's old guard ruling elite like Felix Houphouet-Boigny in Cote d'Ivoire, Gnassingbe Eyadema in Togo who had cultivated and enjoyed intimate personal relations with the French ruling elite, as well as the death of the likes of Francois Mitterrand and Jacques Foccart in France began the gradual diminution of France's influence in Africa.[24] Newer Francophone leaders do not enjoy such close personal ties to the ruling class in Paris.

Changes at the international level since the Cold War ended also contributed. Prominent in this regard is the increasing involvement of the European Union as a body in African affairs. France takes advantage of this development to further its interests, thus reducing its individual commitments to the continent while operating within the wider ambience of the European Union. Second, France has increased and diversified its relations with the rest of the continent, with greater improvements in a number of cases. For example, as Medard has observed, the erstwhile Franco-Nigerian hegemonic competition in Africa has gradually given way to greater mutual cooperation as neither country regards the other as a threat anymore.[25] France has also discovered that the frequent employment of military forces in Africa to serve exclusively French interests was becoming counterproductive because of its political and diplomatic costs to its interests and Paris has pro-actively and gradually reduced its military presence. As contemporary examples are demonstrating, much more could be achieved and at less cost by the use of soft power.

Significant also is what Chafer sees as the shift of France's focus to other competing areas such as Eastern and Central Europe and Southeast Asia which definitely offer better political, economic and technological opportunities for France to play a bigger role in world affairs than Africa which is increasingly marginalized in a highly globalizing world.[26] The European Union's expansion toward Eastern and Central Europe offers France a greater leverage for great power play than its special relations with Africa ever could in the post–Cold War world, hence its gradual retrenchment from the continent.

Unfortunately, however, whilst France was beginning to retrench from overt military commitment on the continent, recent intra-state crises on the continent, signposted by the contemporary and troubling collapse of some Francophone states like Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic and Mali, seem to be inviting the French back in a manner reminiscent of the heyday of French military interventions to resolve internal political crisis. Even though France had grown quite weary of using military force and had thus considerably reduced its forces on the continent in recent decades, these unforeseen circumstances seem to be compelling it to return. French soldiers have returned to Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, and Mali to put down intra-state crises that had the potential to permanently fracture and fragment each of the countries.

Mali is a special case that called for swift intervention by France. In 2002 after Tuareg separatists in collaboration with Islamist jihadists overran government military garrisons in the north and declared a secession from the republic, France responded by swift and massive troop deployment and armaments to address that internal insurgency that had also been complicated by the involvement of jihadist forces seeking to establish an Islamist caliphate by force. It was France's swift intervention that initially turned the tide of the insurgency even before the ECOWAS states had had time to put together a regional force. French soldiers are still in the country. The most recent terrorist attacks in Cote d'Ivoire have led France to deploy more troops to that country, indicating a burgeoning French military presence across the continent all over again. This is in addition to those guarding the uranium mines in Niger Republic. The popular French aphorism seems to convey the reality: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

The implication of renewed French military interventions after it had cancelled its "special relations" with Africa, as would appear from all the above, is that France, the ace colonial power, is compelled to return to the scenes of its original crimes, to attempt to fix the very patchworks of nominal states it cynically created and bequeathed to Africans as modern states. Not only did French colonial rule disallow real states to emerge, its reluctance to grant independence, which it later grudgingly did, and its viselike grip on the politics, economy and defense of the newly independent countries, did much

to damage the possibility of evolving durable states from the erstwhile colonial territories. It was therefore little surprise that once its attention shifted elsewhere after the Cold War, these Francophone states began to unravel systematically, burdened as they were by severe economic problems and huge externals debts, political instabilities arising from unresolved ethno-national disparities, as well as insurgencies and civil wars in some cases. In a sense, France's chickens have come home to roost.

NOTES

1. Dorothy Pickles, "France: Tradition and Change," in *The Foreign Policy of the Powers*, ed. F. S. Northedge (London: Faber and Faber [new and revised edition], 1974), 206.

2. Jean-Francois Medard, "Crisis, Change and Continuity," in *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2008), 315–316.

3. Medard, "Crisis, Change and Continuity," 316.

4. Part IV, Articles 131–136 of the Treaty of Rome. See Carol Cosgrove Twitchett, *A Framework for Development: The EEC and the ACP* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), 7.

5. Kenneth J. Twitchett, "Yaounde Association and the Enlarged European Community," *The World Today*, February 1974, 51.

6. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: Free Press, 2006), 70.

7. Meredith, 70.

8. Meredith, 316.

9. Daniel Bon and Karen Mingst, "French Intervention in Africa: Dependency or Decolonization?" *Africa Today* 27, no. 2 (August 1980): 7.

10. John Chipman, "French Military Policy and African Security," *Adelphi Paper No. 201* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Summer 1985), 5.

11. Antoine Lerougetel, "France: Elf Verdicts reveal State Corruption at Highest Levels," https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2003/11/elff-25.html. (Accessed 1/10/2015).

12. Meredith, 316.

13. Emeka Nwokedi, "Franco-African Summits: A New Instrument for France's African Strategy?" *The World Today*, December 1982, 478.

14. President Mitterrand, at the close of the 1983 Franco-African summit in Vittel, quoted in Chipman, "French Military Policy and African Security," *Adelphi Paper No. 201* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Summer 1985).

15. For a list of French military interventions in Africa up till 1982, see generally, Robin Luckham, "French Militarism in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 24 (1982): 61; also Chipman, op. cit., 50.

16. Chipman, 7.

17. Daniel Bach, "The Politics of West African Economic Cooperation: C.E.A.O. and ECOWAS," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, no. 4 (1983): 605–623.

18. Emeka Nwokedi, "Nigeria and France," in *Nigeria's External Relations: The First Twenty-Five Years*, ed. G. O. Olusanya and R. A. Akindele (Ibadan: The University Press, 1986): 290.

19. Pickles, "France: Tradition and Change," 205.

20. Robin Luckham, "French Militarism in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 24 (1982): 58.

21. Xavier Renou, "A Major Obstacle to African Unity: The New Franco–American Cold War on the Continent," in *A United States of Africa?*, ed. Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2001), 431.

22. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 68–69.

23. Tony Chafer, "Franco-African Relations: No Longer So Exceptional?" *African Affairs* 101, no. 404 (July 2002): 343–63.

24. Chafer, "Franco-African Relations," 344.

25. Medard, 325–30.

26. Chafer, 344.

Chapter 5

Portugal

Forced Decolonization and Its Consequences

Portugal's African territories were some of the last countries on the continent to secure political independence from foreign imperialist domination. And this did not happen until the middle of the 1970s, clearly a decade and a half after most of their continental neighbors had become sovereign independent nation-states. Portugal, being relatively less developed compared to the other European colonial powers such as Great Britain and France, was most reluctant to consider the possibility of independence for them, not until its hands were forced by relentless agitation and very costly anti-colonial guerrilla wars raging in the territories, costly to Portugal in political, economic, military, and even diplomatic terms. *Oxford Bibliographies'* very apt summary is worth quoting to elucidate this point:

> To a much greater extent than those of other European colonial powers, Portugal's African empire was woven deeply into the culture, politics, and economics of the metropole. Long after the more developed and industrialized states of Europe had decolonized, Portugal maintained its narrow centralized form of rule—from Mozambique to Angola in the south and from Guinea-Bissau in the west to the Atlantic archipelagos of Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe. It did not do so easily; the last decade and a half of Portugal's imperial presence—from the early 1960s until the final collapse of the empire in the mid-1970s—was marked by guerrilla warfare in the three continental territories and anticolonial agitation in the islands.[1]

As the above quotation makes clear, Portugal was easily the least industrialized and least developed of the European colonial countries, and would rather hang on to its African possessions for survival than grant them independence. A brief detour into Portugal's colonial history, and its egregious conception of colonialism as a "civilizing mission" through a sinister policy of

assimilation (*Assimilado* in Portuguese) just as the French also did, will assist in understanding its refusal or reluctance to consider the option of decolonization for the colonies, an option which had already been made inevitable for all of Europe by the circumstances and outcomes of the Second World War. Assimilation was the policy by which Portugal's government sought to make Portuguese citizens out of the "primitve natives" of its colonies in Africa. Predicated exactly on the same premises of racial superiority as France's assimilation policy, Portugal wanted to create a core of Africans who would renounce their primitive cultures and embrace Portuguese culture, education, and religion and evolve into Portuguese citizens in every sense except the color of their skin. Those who had so "evolved" or been "assimilated" would then be injected into Portugal's colonial administration and, ostensibly, would enjoy the same rights and privileges as white Portuguese citizens. This was the theoretical basis of the policy even though the implementation was a different matter entirely. Though Portugal adopted a position of neutrality and thus abstained in the war, the war's outcome nonetheless rendered any justification for the continuation of all European colonial empires, including Portugal's, no longer tenable. As we have argued in chapter 3 in this volume, the political and economic exhaustion of Britain, the defeat and occupation of the French homeland by Nazi forces, France's loss of its possessions in Asia, and the rising wave of nationalism in the colonies, had all combined to sound the death knell of their colonial presence in Africa. Notwithstanding Portugal's neutrality in the war, its colonies were not immunized against what British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan had in 1960 famously referred to as the "wind of change" blowing across Africa.[2]

PORTUGAL IN AFRICA: COLONIAL HISTORY AS A GUIDE

Portugal was indisputably the first European country to establish and sustain contacts and relationships with Sub-Saharan Africa on both the Atlantic and Indian coasts from the late 1490s, and can thus be classified as having the longest relationship of any European power with the continent. Its contacts and relationships began effectively from the late fifteenth century when Portuguese explorers sailed along the west and east coasts of Africa in their attempts to reach India to tap into India's flourishing spice trade. In the process of this purely commercial endeavor, these Portuguese adventurers established outposts along the west coast of Africa, which came to be known as Portuguese Guinea and Portuguese Angola, and later on the east coast as well, with settlements in modern-day Mozambique. These settlements were initially hardly more than fortified coastal trading outposts and did not extend into the

hinterlands since Portugal's principal economic activity at the time consisted only of the trade in slaves that were supplied by local African rulers and slave merchants who raided the hinterlands and brought their merchandise to the coast for export. Portugal is thus deeply implicated as the European country that established the trans-Atlantic slave trade which other adventurous European nations later tapped into and which resulted in the shipping of millions of black Africans into the Americas. Portugal shipped slaves to its South American colony of Brazil. This was long before the era of the "Scramble for Africa" in the late nineteenth century and the onset of direct colonization, a competition which later compelled Portugal to begin to assert some form of political and administrative control over the territories it had established in Guinea-Bissau and Angola on the west coast and Mozambique on the east coast. In all the earlier centuries of Portugal's presence in sub-Saharan Africa before the onset of the European scramble, its principal interest was merely in trade (slaves and other commodities) and the exploitation of the rich economic resources of the territories. Besides, the initial absence of competition from any other rival powers did not necessitate the introduction of political control until the era of colonization invited direct and frontal competition from other European states.

It was the onset of the European scramble for colonies in Africa in the nineteenth century that gave Portugal the needed incentive to begin to push into the hinterlands to acquire colonies like other competing powers. Its colonial possessions were still mostly on the west coast of Africa, namely Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau), Angola, Mozambique, and the island countries of Cape Verde, Sao Tome, and Principe. This contrasted with the obviously more adventurous French and British who ventured far into the interior of the continent for colonies. Prior to the late nineteenth-century Scramble for Africa, Portugal's trade was mostly in African slaves who were shipped to its plantations in Brazil. The abolition of the hitherto prosperous slave trade and the enforcement of the policy by the British Navy was actually the trigger for the scramble and colonial conquest and subjugation of African peoples and territories. But even in this scramble to gobble up territories, the European nations still recognized the need to avoid bloody intra-European wars that could arise from a zero-sum competition, and thus convened an international conference in Berlin in 1884–1885 to peacefully establish and concretize the territorial limits of what each of them was claiming. After the 1884–1885 Berlin Conference had succeeded in validating the territorial boundaries of the colonies of the contending European powers, Portugal then began the process of establishing real colonial rule in the territories it possessed. Even at that, it neither particularly regarded its territorial possessions as colonies in the proper sense nor treated them as such, regarding them instead as mere overseas extensions of the Portuguese homeland. Political and administrative control

of the territories was generally weak and at best perfunctory, since they were governed directly from Lisbon. Mozambique in particular was initially hardly more than a coastal stop for the Portuguese merchants on the way to and from Asia, and therefore did not have anything resembling a state structure.

Portugal's colonialism was predicated on its conception of the inferiority of the Africans, and the need to bring the benefits of Western civilization to them was adjudged the cardinal tenet. This was exactly the same jaded excuse other colonial nations employed as moral justification for their inhuman acts against Africans. Though the policy of assimilation was ostensibly technically intended to make Portuguese citizens out of colonial peoples, its operation in reality was a different matter entirely. Since Portugal was not really serious about it, the policy was not adopted until early in the twenty-first century, and even then, only in principle. Its actual implementation was without serious political commitment or will, but it remained the veritable ideological justification for colonial subjugation and economic predation. In reality, Portugal was not interested in its ostensible mission of "civilizing Africans" as much as in creating only a small pool of literate and bilingual Africans that would service the administration of the respective colonial territories in clerical and allied positions at the lower levels—in short, that would facilitate achievement of the central economic objective of colonialism, which is resource extraction. Consequently, even the type of Western education that was offered to Africans was generally poor in quality; basic modern infrastructure was virtually non-existent and overall modern development for the territories was not even remotely part of the consideration. Frederick Cooper has summed up the ugly reality of *assimilado*: "while Africans could theoretically aspire to the status of *assimilado* (the assimilated one), only one percent ever got there, and racism characterized every dimension of the system, from the judiciary to labor recruitment."[3] In all the years of Portuguese rule very few Africans actually attained the status of *assimilado* in all its colonies.

Actually, Portuguese colonialism, like that of the other competing European powers, was purely for economic predation and nothing else; it had nothing whatsoever to do with bringing civilization or development to Africans. The abysmally poor conditions of the colonies, most especially Portuguese colonies after about five centuries, is aptly summed up by Walter Rodney's assertion that

> at the end of 500 years of shouldering the white man's burden of civilizing "African Natives," the Portuguese had not managed to train a single African doctor in Mozambique, and life expectancy in eastern Angola was less than 30 years. . . . As for Guinea-Bissau, some insight into the situation there is provided by the admission of the Portuguese themselves that Guinea-Bissau was more neglected than Angola and Mozambique.[4]

This graphic portrayal indicates the plight of Africans in those colonies, attesting of course to Portugal's lack of desire to "civilize" the natives. But then, maybe Portugal should not be blamed much, as a society cannot give what it does not have. Portugal itself was a backward European country, and there was thus a limit to what it could give to its colonies.

Although Portugal adopted a neutral posture and thus did not participate on any side in the Second World War, it was still generally more backward than most of the other European colonial countries that had fought the war and had suffered tremendous physical devastation, economic disruptions and social dislocations. Politically, it was governed under an iron-fisted dictatorship for decades in the twentieth century, its illiteracy rate was significantly higher than those of other European states, and thus it lacked the political and economic sophistication of its peers. This was understandable, for, even as of 1960 when a total of seventeen African countries gained independence, nearly half of Portugal's population was still illiterate.[5] What this implies, according to Walter Rodney, was that half of the Portuguese population could readily be judged and classified as uncivilized since they could not meet the very educational requirements they had set for Africans to become *assimilados*![6]

While the vicissitudes of the Second World War had compelled other colonial nations to begin considering the grant of independence as an eventuality, Portugal instead simply dug in deeper into its African colonies, deepening its dependence on them and their resources for survival and power. Even though a foundation member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1949, Portugal did not enjoy the full moral support of its military allies, especially the United States of America, in its colonial adventures, more so when independence was being arranged by the others for their own colonies. When no fewer than seventeen African colonies gained independence in the year 1960 alone, the ground was set to trigger violent anti-colonial agitations mostly in Portugal's own colonies in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau from 1961, and protests in the archipelagoes of Cape Verde, Sao Tome, and Principe, unleashing what would be the most violent and senseless colonial wars ever to ravage the continent of Africa. The curious combination of its political and economic backwardness, in spite of its much longer history of exploration dating back nearly five hundred years, made it difficult for Portugal to contemplate total disengagement from the colonies it so woefully depended upon. Decades of backward dictatorship had indubitably ruined any chances of its ever developing the requisite internal political sophistication, the type readily associated with the British and the French, to recognize the seismic changes that the Second World War had wrought on the international system, and which had made the continuation of the colonial enterprise no longer feasible. Britain had recognized this much earlier than

even the French, which had to be taught bitter lessons of military defeat and forced decolonization in Asia after the end of the Second World War.

With the wind of change sweeping across the African continent beginning with seventeen former colonies obtaining independence in 1960 and being admitted into the community of sovereign nation-states, it was clear that it was merely a matter of time before internal rumblings and agitations for independence would begin earnestly in the Portuguese colonies too, and not even the pretense that they were not colonies but mere extensions of homeland Portugal would stop the revolutionary ferment. In reality, independence was already contagious, and only Portugal was stupid enough not to recognize or acknowledge this inevitability. The few *assimilados* and other educated folks in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau—the likes of Agustinho Neto, Eduardo Mondlane, and Amilcar Cabral respectively—were therefore to play a major role in the vanguard of aggregating and articulating the groundswell of agitations for freedom from foreign imperialist domination. Initially, the agitation for independence was a peaceful move in all the colonies on the erroneous belief that Portugal was as reasonable and perceptive as the other colonial nations. It was Portugal's obduracy by officially criminalizing the political formations in the colonies that inevitably pushed them into armed struggle as the only alternative.

With Amilcar Cabral, his brother Luis Cabral, and four others, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was established in 1956 as a platform on which the people of Guinea-Bissau and the island of Cape Verde were to negotiate for independence. For them, it was actually intended to be a peaceful political exercise to reason with the Portuguese authorities and negotiate its withdrawal as a colonial power. This was, however, not to be, as Portugal's heavy-handed repression of any peaceful agitation eventually convinced the members of that party of the inevitability of armed struggle for independence, an action they were compelled to begin in March 1962. This was after a dozen and a half African countries had become independent in 1960 alone, firing the euphoria of freedom across the continent. Also in Angola from the early 1950s, a number of political groups—the most prominent being the Party for the United Struggle of Africans in Angola (PLUA) in 1953, the Angolan Communist Party, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) in 1954, and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in 1956—began to peacefully demand independence but had to change tactics and resort to guerrilla attacks from 1961 in reaction to intense Portuguese repression and massacre. With the formation of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) in 1962, what would be Portugal's decade-long multiple colonial wars in its African possessions of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde had begun in earnest, wars in which a plethora of interested foreign

powers, namely Cuba, China, the Soviet Union, Zaire, South Africa, and the United States, would eventually be involved in support of different sides.

Even though not a colonial power, and without long historical relationships with the continent, US support for some of the liberation movements especially in Angola not only complicated that country's post-independence politics but effectively stifled its overall development. America sponsored local proxies to tie up the country in a blood-fest for the next two decades, vitiating its ability to engage in any meaningful internal development. A similar scenario was also enacted in Mozambique where the United States in collaboration with apartheid South Africa created, sponsored and unleashed the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) to destabilize the Marxist-oriented post-independence FRELIMO government that was headed by President Samora Machel. It was unfortunate that a Portugal that militarily over-extended on different war fronts on different sides of the African continent at the same time could still imagine that its declared will not to allow independence could prevail. This delusion of the military might and invincibility of Portugal persisted until the realities began to dawn on its armed forces in the early 1970s that they were being used to pursue a lost cause. It was this realization that precipitated a military coup d'état against the dictatorial government of the *Estado Novo* that had held sway in Lisbon since early in the twentieth century. This was the Lisbon coup of 1974, a change of government that would set in motion the course of independence for the colonies.

The 1974 Lisbon Coup and End of Portuguese Rule in Africa

On April 25, 1974, a bloodless military coup, masterminded by a left-wing faction of the Portuguese armed forces, overthrew the government of Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano in Lisbon, putting an end to the *Estado Novo* regime that had been established by his predecessor, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, since the 1930s. General Antonio de Spinola, himself a veteran of Portugal's colonial wars in Africa, had assumed the leadership of the country after the coup but his political body language was out of tune with the sentiments of the radical wing of the military which had masterminded the coup and whose main objective was ending the colonial wars and withdrawing from Africa just as other European powers had already wisely done. This apparent lack of synergy between the new government under General Spinola and the rest of the exhausted and war-weary military eventually led to his removal and replacement by a new government that was willing to summarily terminate colonial wars in Africa. One major development that General Spinola had failed to grasp was that a number of Portuguese garrisons in Africa, exhausted from more than a decade of unwinnable wars, had not only rebelled against Lisbon's authority but had actually seized control and were

willing and ready to negotiate the process of independence with the African freedom fighters in the various colonies. This unprecedented mutiny was perhaps inevitable, for, after a decade and a half of brutal and costly military engagements, wars that were costly not only in terms of human and material resources alone but in terms of negative world public opinion as well, the Portuguese armed forces had simply become fatigued by the plethora of senseless and unwinnable colonial wars. The contention of the radical members of the Armed Forces Movement was that Portugal should abandon its useless colonial enterprise and grant independence to the colonies as the other European states had done. Unfortunately, the obduracy of the dictatorial *Estado Novo* caused such an obviously sensible option to be ignored. To drive home their conviction, the members of the Armed Forces Movement carried out the overthrow of the repressive government of President Marcello Caetano in Lisbon in April 1974.[7] The demand of the younger and more radically inclined officers behind the coup was two-fold: "increased democratization at home, and decolonization in Africa."[8] Even though General Antonio de Spinola, the new Portuguese leader after the change of government, did not immediately and whole-heartedly concede this demand, it was evident that the generality of armed forces officers were already tired of the wars many of them had confessed that, judging the tide of history, they could never win. This was why by July 1974 the Armed Forces Movement had to confront General Spinola with the urgent necessity for decolonization and later forced his resignation from office in September the same year. The new leader enthroned by the Movement was General Francisco da Costa Gomez who swiftly acceded to the demand for negotiating with the freedom fighters for independence.

In real terms, therefore, the April 1974 Lisbon coup was the game-changer that effectively signaled the beginning of the end of Portugal's long and senseless wars and colonial rule in Africa. Coming on the heels of this development, and in quick succession, Guinea-Bissau declared its independence on September 24, 1973, but it was not recognized by Portugal until September 10, 1974; Mozambique became independent on June 25, 1975; Cape Verde on July 5, 1975; Sao Tome and Principe on July 12, 1975, and Angola on November 11, 1975, thus ending Portugal's colonial empire and the longest European presence in Africa. It was evident that these countries had been so badly governed, exploited and plundered that they faced nothing but a grim and unenviable future in the late twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

The peaceful political agitations for independence which had begun in the 1950s were unfortunately allowed to snowball into armed struggles and

a decade and a half of destructive colonial wars in Portugal's African possessions. Portugal's obduracy and refusal to contemplate independence for the colonies was a function of the combination of its insidious type of settler colonialism which classified the colonies as overseas extensions of Portugal, its crass underdevelopment at home compared to other European nations such as France and the United Kingdom which made it to cling to the colonies for survival, and its evident lack of the requisite internal political sophistication at home to craft survival strategies beyond colonial rule. Portugal itself was under an authoritarian and repressive *Estado Novo* for decades in the twentieth century, robbing the country of the opportunity to develop the requisite political sophistication to match its competing European colonial powers. When it got itself in fighting wars in Africa, it was done with extreme viciousness, as winning or losing those wars became matters of survival both for the regime as well as for Portugal as a nation-state. Portugal would have no other territories to plunder if it lost those colonies, so extreme brutality was called for to defeat the freedom fighters and retain the colonial empire.

The sheer brutality and the extensive scale of physical destruction of the wars in the respective territories would no doubt leave their deep and extensive scars in terms of economic and social dislocations and political problems which were to hobble the liberated colonies for decades after the guns had fallen silent. Angola is a particular case in point. The Portuguese rulers literally abandoned the country in November 1975 without adequate preparation or willingness to effectively hand it over to any of the contending principal political-guerrilla groups of the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA. The MPLA which at the time controlled the northern portions of the country that included Luanda, the capital, simply declared itself the government of Angola. This unilateral action was opposed by the other rival claimants to power, inexorably sparking the start of a bloody civil war that would fatally hobble the newly independent country for the next two decades at least.

But perhaps much more vicious and with longer lasting effects was the centuries of predatory exploitation of resources and deliberate underdevelopment of physical infrastructure and the architecture of modern governance in the colonies. Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique were hardly better off as infrastructures were near primitive and the education that was allowed for the people was so crassly substandard that the countries were grossly deficient in terms of educated manpower at independence to run modern administrations. It is a miracle that these former Portuguese colonies, fatally hobbled by the cracks that were deliberately built into their political architecture, have managed to remain in existence long after independence. Portugal left an abysmal record of economic plunder, physical and social underdevelopment, and extensive destruction by war in all its African colonies.

NOTES

1. www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846733-0058.xml. (Accessed 24/12/2015).

2. Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Harold Macmillan, had, in a speech he made before the South African parliament on February 3, 1960, alluded to the inevitability of decolonization.

3. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 139.

4. See Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1972 [Revised edition, 1981]), 206.

5. Rodney, 247–48.

6. Rodney, 248.

7. See discussion of the Portuguese coup and its effect on the Angolan struggle in Lawrence W. Henderson, *Angola: Five Centuries of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 239–258.

8. Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992), 136.

Chapter 6

The United States and the Political and Economic Destabilization of Africa

US INTERESTS IN AFRICA

The United States, unlike its Western European allies, had never been known to engage in colonial adventures or empire-building, not even in Latin America which is essentially its exclusive sphere of influence. Actually, the US adhered strictly to George Washington's admonition in his valedictory address as first president, for it to steer clear of the global entanglements in which European states were then embroiled so that Americans could enjoy and maximize their development. Liberia, the country that came closest to being its colonial outpost in Africa, was actually founded by the American Colonization Society in 1822 as a settlement for freed slaves. It was administered for about twenty-five years after which it declared independence in 1847, and became, with Ethiopia which was never truly colonized, the first African country to gain political independence and the oldest African republic.

Not being a colonial power in the proper tradition in Africa, the United States had no deep historical relationship with the African continent until after the Second World War when the colonies began to gain independence. Even by the time of the independence of most of the African countries in the early 1960s, seventeen of them in 1960 alone, the United States still did not have a specific foreign policy thrust toward Africa as a whole even though it established bilateral relations and maintained diplomatic presence in many African capitals. It was perhaps contented that its major European allies who were also members of NATO were the ones firmly in charge of the continent which had for centuries been the exclusive Western sphere of domination and control. However, because African independence coincided with the height of the Cold War, the continent, according to Crawford Young, was necessarily

perceived as a "diplomatic battlefield."[1] The ideological rivalries between the contending superpowers were a major determinant of their foreign policies toward newly independent African states, and confrontation on the continent was thus a common feature of their relations. With the mortal fear of Communism and its potential for expansion always at the back of the minds of America's policy makers, Africa was regarded as much too valuable to be allowed to fall into the Soviet-Communist embrace, hence there were occasional and sporadic American interventions in the domestic politics of the African states whenever it was not sure its European partners were up to the task. The cases of US interference in the internal affairs of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Angola, apartheid South Africa, Egypt, Mozambique, Somalia, and Ethiopia poignantly illustrate America's predilection to deny the Soviet Union any say or seek to roll back Communist influence on the continent. Although African states adopted nonalignment as a common position in the East-West struggle, most of them were nonetheless press-ganged into having close and intimate relations with the Western nations and the global institutions they controlled. The few of them that fiercely expressed independent postures and ideological affinity and close relations with the Communist world inevitably became sure targets for externally induced destabilization. That was the fate that befell Patrice Lumumba's Congo and Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana. Guinea under the leadership of radical left-leaning Ahmed Sekou Toure eventually had to succumb to Western externally induced economic strangulation in the 1970s, forcing it to throw out the Soviets in favor of Western economic aid.

The United States and the Political and Economic Underdevelopment of African States

Without question, the African continent, a large landmass situated prominently between the North and South American continents to the west, and Europe and Asia to the north and east, has had a strategic value in the global calculations of all great powers from time immemorial. In the contemporary international system of the post-Westphalian era, the great powers of Europe while scrambling for Africa's vital natural resources ended up carving it into separate colonies which began to morph into independent states after WWII. Even granting independence to the colonies was more a function of compellence than altruism on the part of the colonial nations. The respective metropolitan powers did not intend to leave the continent alone even after their compelled exit; hence, they ensured the retention of political and economic structures in the former colonies as levers of control.

Even though the United States of America, unlike its European allies, did not have long-standing historical connections of its own with the continent, it nonetheless recognized Africa's strategic value to its calculations for global

hegemony and dominance, especially in the context of East-West rivalries after World War II. It realized that Africa would be a sure prize for any power that could exercise significant influence in its affairs, hence its decision to employ all means to disallow and frustrate any Communist influence or foothold there. As far as the United States was concerned in the Cold War calculations, it was better to keep the continent a permanent sphere of Western influence than allow its strategic resources to fall under the control of the Soviet Union. This also included a willingness to relax its anti-colonial stand if it would serve the purpose of keeping the continent under the control of its Western allies. The United States thus had no qualms supporting Portugal and through NATO aiding it with military and with logistical assistance in its senseless colonial wars in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique to frustrate those countries from gaining independence, its known rhetorical commitment to freedom as a right of all peoples notwithstanding. This was beside the fact that it also backed white supremacist colonial regimes in Algeria, Kenya, Rhodesia, and the apartheid regime in South Africa, among others, in pursuit of an imperialist agenda on the continent of Africa.

Although it appeared generally satisfied that its allies were in control all over Africa, the United States still did not leave anything to chance when it concerned Soviet and other communist influences. As the countries became independent in quick succession in the 1960s, the US began taking active interest in their internal affairs to prevent any radical ideological tilts toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and thus deployed CIA operatives all over the continent to do their dirty jobs. The emergence of an independent Congo under the left-leaning Patrice Lumumba did not sit well with the United States. As we have revealed in chapter 7 in this volume, the CIA was complicit in the murder of Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first post-independence Prime Minister, and also played active roles in the subsequent destabilization of that country. The CIA also ensured that emergence of any other radically inclined leaders anywhere was frustrated—Ghana, Angola, Chad, and so forth. This anti-Soviet and anti-Communist policy thrust in Africa also dictated a number of US policies in Africa: its support for the racist and noxious apartheid regime in South Africa as well as its initial opposition to the independence of Zimbabwe under black majority rule; its support for anti-MPLA groups such as the FNLA and UNITA in Angola even after the country's independence in 1975, and of course its opposition to Mozambique under the Marxist-oriented FRELIMO.

In Angola for example, the CIA according to John Stockwell's authoritative accounts, supported the FNLA with money and arms from the early 1960s but then US interest in Angola was spurred again from 1974 after the Lisbon coup when it became clear that Portugal's wars in Africa would come to an end and the countries would gain independence. Once Mozambique

gained independence, both racist regimes in Rhodesia under Prime Minister Ian Smith and South Africa were against its radical Marxist ideology, and surreptitiously combined, with US covert support, to sponsor the formation and highly destructive activities of the militant opposition group, Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), to disrupt its political stability. The United States also provided clandestine military and financial support to opposition groups to destabilize Angola after independence, and supported murderous and tyrannical dictators like Mobutu Sese Seko, Gnassingbe Eyadema, Mohammed Siad Barre, and Hissene Habre. In Chad, in particular, Hissene Habre was America's veritable weapon to checkmate Muammar Gaddafi's expanding influence in sub-Saharan Africa.

The United States, in spite of its pretensions of spreading liberal democracy across the globe, was truly never averse to encouraging and sponsoring dictatorships, as long as those dictators were not of the leftist genre. Right-wing African dictators enjoyed US support and endorsement, and even when they were not US allies, the United States felt comfortable with them and simply looked the other way as long as they were right-wing despots. Even in contemporary times, the United States relentlessly supported ruthless military-backed regimes in Egypt for decades. And when they felt that a new democratic experiment was not going the way they had wanted, the American state surreptitiously endorsed the overthrow of the democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi (of the Muslim Brotherhood) and later gave tacit approval to the charade of the election of a hastily "civilianized" Field Marshall Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as new president, an election whose outcome was well known ahead.

From the early 1980s, the world began to witness the deliberate and systematic imposition of the Reagan administration's (aided of course by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) neoliberal economic agenda on developing states accomplished through the mechanism of the expansion of World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans and economic adjustment packages. Many Third World governments were encouraged, even goaded, into borrowing from both Western controlled International Financial Institutions as well as from sovereign lenders such as the Paris Club, ostensibly for development purposes, but in actuality, tailor-made to ensnare them into a carefully constructed international debt trap peonage from which they are incapable of freeing themselves.[2] Fatally hobbled and rendered incapable of paying back the loans, the respective debtor states were further burdened with imposed Structural Adjustment Programmes designed by the World Bank and IMF economists as part of the conditionalities for them to obtain economic aid or debt relief. Though made to look like the required antidote to their economic problems, SAP was really a poison that ended up complicating their economic ailments. Countries that were forced to adopt SAP also had to accept its full range of conditionalities, which generally included

implementing policies that would reduce inflation; currency devaluation, freezing of wages and increased taxation; reduction in public spending on social welfare programs such as education and healthcare; trade liberalization that killed local industries; and privatization and commercialization of publicly owned enterprises.

After they force-fed this pill, the SAP ended up destroying the economies of the countries that implemented it, the consequences which included debt overhang, increasing centralization of power and creeping authoritarianism. Even Ghana which the protagonists of the SAP initially held up as a model success in structural adjustment ended disastrously also.

Perceptive African thinkers and analysts vehemently opposed this neoliberal agenda and cautioned African governments against what they saw as detrimental to African interests[3] but they could not succeed in dissuading autocratic African rulers whose subscription to foreign *diktat* was a sure guarantee of regime survival. In the case of Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, the largest oil producer and one of the largest economies on the continent, the Ibrahim Babangida military regime refused the IMF loan that had been under negotiation before his coming to power, due to massive popular resistance at home to any further foreign loans, but proceeded to adopt the SAP from 1986. This led to devaluation of the Naira (Nigeria's national currency), public sector wage freeze, employment freeze, de-subsidization, trade liberalization which opened the borders for an influx of foreign-made goods, and gross reduction in social welfare spending. These harsh economic measures created social crises which necessitated increased spending on maintaining security to enable the government to use force to pacify the increasingly restive populace.

As a result of its inherent harshness, governments that implemented SAP had to rely on authoritarian methods, increasingly centralizing and impounding powers that made them no longer accountable to the people but to their foreign lenders only. With such increasing powers and non-accountability came massive public sector corruption and state robbery which have succeeded in destroying each country's hope of developing. The Addis Ababa-based United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) realized that SAP would make development a total mirage and cautioned against it and suggested an alternative approach which it called *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP)*.[4] Even as World Bank and IMF economists elegantly touted the "benefits" accruable from their imposed SAP, the reality on the ground in the different countries testified to the contrary. Ghana was initially held up as an exemplar of the developmental strides that SAP represented, but even the Ghanaian government later admitted it was a gross error. It is in this regard that the lamentation of Kwamena Bartels, Ghana's

one-time Minister for Works and Housing after two decades of implementing SAP bears recall here:

> After 20 years of implementing structural adjustment programmes, our economy has remained weak and vulnerable and not sufficiently transformed to sustain accelerated growth and development. Poverty has become widespread, unemployment very high, manufacturing and agriculture in decline, and our external and domestic debts much too heavy a burden to bear.[5]

Even long before this, the AAF-SAP had asserted powerfully and eloquently that the SAP was a wrong-headed policy framework and unsuitable for the nature of African economies. The end result is the near total destruction of fragile African economies, dragging them deeper into the pernicious international debt bondage and modern-day slavery. The reality here is that America had surreptitiously used its control over the two major international financial institutions to ensure subjugation of African governments to its whims and dictates, as John Perkins has so eloquently described in his confessions.[6]

Even under President Barack Obama, an African-American, the overall US strategic objective in Africa remains the protection of its access to the continent's rich natural resources, and denial of any foothold to its adversaries. This objective was spelt out in the rationale for the formation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007. According to Peter J. Pham, the State Department's advisor to AFRICOM, this consists of "protecting access to hydrocarbons and other strategic resources which Africa has in abundance, a task which includes ensuring against the vulnerability of those natural riches and ensuring that no other interested third parties, such as China, India, Japan, or Russia, obtain monopolies or preferential treatment."[7] And in the guise of fighting the one-sided global war on terror since the United States suffered the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York—an inevitable war that America's foreign policy deliberately created[8]—it surreptitiously enlists African states where it has the above stated strategic interests and where, as Baraka above notes, "the terror phenomenon seems to develop in whatever country the United States has a strategic interest in." According to him, the US strategy is to destabilize African countries by helping "to create security emergencies that weaken the state and creates a situation where the United States then comes to the aid of the embattled states and is able to entrench itself within the life of various nations on the African continent."[9] The same conclusion was reached in Jeremy Keenan's work on the anti-terror war in the Sahara and Sahel region of Africa where he points out unmistakable involvement of US intelligence agencies with the Tuareg insurgents in the Sahel and other terrorist groups, and the subsequent launching of what the United States called the Pan-Sahel Initiative and the deliberate expansion of the "war on terror" across the entire Sahel region.[10]

Today, the United States has covertly deployed small numbers of elite Special Forces—Delta Force, Green Berets, Navy Seals, and so forth—in several African countries in the guise of helping with security sector reforms, assisting in training military personnel, and so forth. For instance, the unresolved abduction of nearly three hundred teenage school girls from a secondary school in Chibok town, Borno State, Nigeria, provided the much sought opportunity for US military intrusion into Nigeria's security and defense affairs under the pretext of offering assistance. In the process of rendering assistance, US drones were flying freely over Nigeria's air space, ostensibly to gather intelligence on the abducted girls but in reality serving the purpose of AFRICOM. This was what America could not do prior to the time because of stiff resistance to basing AFRICOM troops in Africa. A former Nigerian Army chief of staff, General Victor Malu, was summarily cashiered because he openly opposed the intrusiveness of the United States into Nigeria's security sector during the early days of the Fourth Republic.[11] I have made allusion to a conspiracy theory of Western involvement in the search for missing girls in Nigeria in a newspaper article.[12] Let me quote from my submission:

> A quick reality check will show that Africa is surreptitiously being re-colonized through a strategic military lockdown of the entire continent by France, and most especially the US which has its AFRICOM troops in about 35 African countries, ostensibly assisting these states with building their national military capacities. Among others, there is US Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa currently based in Djibouti; while drones are now based in Niger Republic and Burkina Faso, among others. This is aside from clandestine military and air bases from where drones are spying on terrorists on the continent. Those who have followed the trajectory would realize that the developments had begun earlier with the Pan-Sahel Initiative, then the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative, and others such as Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership, all of them initiated by the US.[13]

In a well-researched expose, Nick Turse asserts that "for years, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) has maintained a veil of secrecy about much of the command's activities and mission locations, consistently downplaying the size, scale, and scope of its efforts."[14] He reveals insider information that apart from their well-known and only officially acknowledged Camp Lemonnier base in Djibouti, the United States maintains secret military locations in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Seychelles, and "a string of bases devoted to surveillance activities spreading across the northern tier of Africa"[15] as well as other secretive air and naval staging posts across the length and breadth of the continent. For example, it took a while before the United States ever acknowledged that it had maintained a secret military presence of about 120 Green Beret Special Forces personnel in Somalia since

2007, but kept sealed lips about it apparently so that the government of that country facing domestic insurgency would not be seen as a US collaborator.[16]

It would appear that with China's rising global profile and its increasing influence in Africa, both the United States and its Western allies have consequently lost considerable influence on a continent that was hitherto an exclusive Western sphere of influence. With the China-Africa Forum attracting over forty African heads of state to its meetings, and considerable investment in infrastructural provision and upgrade across the continent, China is indisputably a rising threat to Western hegemony which the United States had decided to curb. Since African states are increasingly looking to China rather than to the West for economic assistance, it would appear the United States is trying to regain influence by using hard power. Unlike China, whose deployment of soft power seems more appealing to African leaders, the United States has a record of using military power to decide or to procure the outcomes it desires—including fomenting coups and violent regime change. A quick reality check would reveal that AFRICOM is the main arrowhead of US efforts to regain effective control of the continent since authoritarian and sit-tight African rulers are aware that US military presence and influence can ensure regime survival more than economic assistance from China could. In nearly eight years of his presidency, Barack Obama has presided over what Danny Haiphong terms "the rapid neo-colonization of Africa."[17] Obama has "quietly militarized" the African continent through secretive military incursions in the guise of humanitarian intervention and invoking the responsibility to protect (R2P) doctrine. His government was complicit in the overthrow and murder of Muammar Gaddafi and the eventual destruction of that country by its NATO allies.[18] Sadly for the rest of the Maghreb and Sahel-Saharan Africa, the destruction of Libya has unleashed an unprecedented wave of jihadist terrorism and the spread of weapons looted from that country's huge arsenals. Weapons looted from Libya and former Libyan mercenaries assisted in Mali's Tuareg secessionist bid in 2012 and the spread of jihad terror in the Sahel.

THE COLD WAR AND POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DESTABILIZATION OF AFRICAN STATES

The Cold War was a major determinant of American foreign policy between 1945 and 1990. There is no doubt the Second World War and its aftermath, the Cold War, had a deeply profound impact on US global policies, and its relations with African nations from the 1950s to the early 1990s. The major US preoccupation was either to roll back Communism or contain it as the case may be. In essence, it was a policy to limit Soviet global influence by confronting it wherever possible, whether in Europe, Korea, Vietnam, even

in Africa. Consumed by that narrow objective, US policy makers spared no efforts—including precipitating proxy wars in the Third World, outright interventions, orchestration of outright military coups and other violent regime changes, assassinations of foreign leaders that were perceived as radicals or pro-Soviet, manipulating the UN to serve America's selfish purposes—to checkmate Soviet and Communist influence. This singular fixation also drove US policies in Africa. Let us take a cursory look at the examples of Angola, Chad, Egypt, and Nigeria for illustration.

In Angola, not only did the United States allow NATO military assistance to be given to Portugal to prosecute its colonial war in Angola, but also its fixation on destabilizing the newly independent Marxist-leaning Angolan government of President Agustinho Neto was perhaps unmatched elsewhere on the continent.[19] In the first instance, the US in conjunction with apartheid South Africa tried to prevent the pro-Soviet MPLA from coming to power in Luanda in 1975.[20] This failed because the South African troops that were deployed in aid of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA could not dislodge the MPLA that was backed by Cuban forces and Soviet arms from the capital. A civil war that would last more than two decades immediately erupted. Not only did the US administration thereafter refuse to recognize the new Angolan government because it was supported by the Soviet Union and Cuban troops, even the US oil company, Gulf Oil (now Chevron), refused to pay accrued oil rents and royalties to that left-leaning government. It was not until the Nigerian military government of General Murtala Mohammed threatened that company with forfeiture of its Nigerian assets and operations that it paid. The withholding of the money was intended to economically asphyxiate and strangulate the new country. Successive US administrations from 1975 refused Angola recognition and instead sponsored and supported rival factions, especially UNITA, in the country's decades of civil war, while it also initially blocked its membership in the UN.[21] There was no formal diplomatic relationship between Angola and the US from its independence in 1975 until 1993 when Angola had apparently given up on its Marxist ideology. What all this indicated was America's predilection to oppose Communist presence—Soviet Union, Cuba and China—even if it meant wrecking the Angolan state in the process. United States support for Jonas Savimbi's UNITA undoubtedly prolonged the country's destructive civil war for about two and half decades.

Chad is another state that emblematized America's resolve to disallow Soviet influence and a foothold in Africa. A former French colony, it was never a stable and united country from its independence, wracked as it was by civil wars and insurgencies until Hissene Habre, a factional warlord and former defense minister, succeeded in overthrowing the government and imposing draconian rule in 1982. Hissene Habre, the veritable African tyrant who ruled Chad by fear, and which the influential *New York Times* once famously

referred to in an editorial opinion as "An African Pinochet"[22] was beloved of the US administrations from the time of Ronald Reagan's presidency through whose assistance he actually seized power in Chad in 1982. He was regarded and used as a bulwark and buffer against pro-Soviet Muammar Gaddafi who was America's mortal enemy and whose growing power and influence in Africa at that time America needed to curtail.[23] Having helped him to seize power in Ndjamena, the CIA continually provided arms and other military assistance that enabled him to fight Gaddafi, the *enfant terrible* whom the United States had accused of being a state sponsor of international terrorism. In his eight years of absolute despotism, Habre enjoyed US endorsement and support even as his country economically deteriorated, social chaos reigned and human rights were flagrantly violated. His eight-year tyranny was perhaps the most hellish in Chad's post-independence history, and a compelling example of what American policy had inflicted on Africa.

Chad was merely emblematic of US ruthless machinations to impose control in Africa. In North Africa, Egypt since the times of President Anwar el-Sadat has remained a strategic US ally in the region. United States interests in the Middle East are also intricately tied to its strategic interests in the Red Sea, stretching to the entire Horn of Africa, especially for the control of the Red Sea and the entrance into the Indian Ocean through the Gulf of Aden. As Marina Ottaway has noted, the Horn of Africa has been of interest to all great powers—Great Britain, France, Italy—since the era of the Scramble for Africa, as well as to both the United States and the Soviet Union since most African countries started gaining independence in the early 1960s.[24] This therefore explains US interests in the affairs of the surrounding countries—Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia—as well as in the regional conflicts in the region. The mid-late 1970s crisis between Ethiopia and Somalia inexorably invited the two superpowers into the boil, with both changing allegiances as ideology and strategic needs dictated. The US had to shift away from Mengistu Haile Mariam's Marxist regime and move out of its long-held military base there to Somalia, while the USSR had abandoned Mohammed Siad Barre's regime and its naval base there for Ethiopia as a shooting war began in 1977 over Somalia's irredentist claims to ownership of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.[25] For both superpowers, it was simply a case of switching sides without abandoning their strategic interests in the region.

US-Nigeria relations began on a cordial note at independence in 1960 and remained so throughout the first civilian rule until 1966. The appointment of its first ambassador to Nigeria, Joseph Palmer, was announced September 23, 1960, a few days before the country's independence. Designated Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, he presented his letter of credence and promptly began work on October 4, 1960. As a sign of the cordiality, Nigeria's Prime Minister Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa paid a

high-profile official visit to the United States at the invitation of President John F. Kennedy less than a year later in July 1961. However, strains began to develop and bilateral relations nose-dived when after the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967 the United States snubbed a Lagos request to purchase weapons to prosecute the unexpected war. This was after the British government, after which the Nigerian army was patterned, had previously turned down similar Nigerian requests.

The unexpected snub from the two major Western countries which Nigeria considered to be its friends and allies was followed by the same notice from other Western European states that they would not honor any request for weapons since, in their perception, Nigeria was perpetrating genocide under the guise of a civil war. Finding itself in a bind, the country was forced to look toward the Soviet Union for critical help. Nigeria had to seek succor in the Soviet embrace even though both remained ideologically incompatible. Although not physically involved in the war, Washington, according to a State Department official researched memorandum, nevertheless kept a close watch because it felt quite uncomfortable with expanding Soviet influence in such a traditionally Western-oriented country.[26] This was more so because Nigeria was the most populous country, an incredible prize to lose to the Soviets. Though claiming to be neutral in the war, the US nonetheless backed the federal government and sought to protect US interests as well as the millions of dollars of private American investments in the country.

APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA, ZIMBABWE, AND AMERICA'S SOUTHERN AFRICA POLICY

Even though the United States did not originally have a sound and coordinated policy dealing with Africa, its activities in the Southern African sub-region where there was a lot of revolutionary ferment were dictated primarily by the Cold War—that is, the desire to deny its Communist adversary, the Soviet Union, any influence whatsoever in the affairs of the countries of the region. US administrations since the early 1960s were uncomfortable with the radical anti-apartheid activities of the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance or collaboration with the South African Communist Party (SACP) because of the perception that the Blacks would allow the Soviets an inroad into the country and the region. It was part of the cooperation with the apartheid authorities that the CIA betrayed Nelson Mandela's movements so that he could be arrested. He was arrested, tried and convicted of terrorism and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island where he spent twenty-seven years.

It was the same perception that informed the US government's attitudes toward revolutionary struggles in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) as well as

South West Africa (now Namibia) and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. As Newsum and Abegunrin have pointed out in their study of US policies in Southern Africa, America's concern was to prevent revolutionary takeover of power, and thus strove both through propaganda and covert action to convince the other black states that only by collaborating with the minority racist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia could they ever achieve their desire for independence.[27] This was basically the position of the US administration from John F. Kennedy until Jimmy Carter, and was responsible for all the United States did to frustrate the independence aspirations of many of the states in the region, including allowing giving NATO support to assist Portugal in its colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique. It was only during the Carter administration in the second half of the 1970s that the US position concerning Africa began to improve and the fixation on Soviet influence was moderated. But this was to be short-lived as the succeeding Ronald Reagan administration simply relapsed into the Cold War default setting. As I have explained, it was the beginning of the systematic destruction of African economies through the manipulation of the World Bank and the IMF to do America's bidding.

In Southern Africa, virtually all US administrations, most especially the Reagan White House, rationalized their policies and support for racist regimes in Southern Africa as necessary to checkmate the presence and influence of the Soviet Union and Cuba. Overall, it was through armed struggles, and Soviet and Cuban support, that Angola and Mozambique eventually gained independence in 1975. Rhodesia as Zimbabwe finally gained independence in April 1980 through a combination of armed struggle, assistance from the Frontline States and the Organization of African Unity, as well as the Commonwealth whose African member-states compelled it to broker a negotiated settlement.

Even after all these, the United States refused to recognize Angola for decades, and it sponsored and armed UNITA rebels to tie the country down in a highly destructive civil war. In Mozambique, the United States was complicit in South Africa and Rhodesia's efforts to destroy the Marxist-oriented regime in Mozambique through their joint sponsorship of RENAMO and its destructive and destabilizing activities. It had to take until March 1990 before Namibia could gain independence from South Africa simply because the apartheid regime enjoyed the support and close cooperation of the United States. In any case, successive US governments simply looked the other way as South Africa engaged in destabilizing neighboring countries like Angola, Mozambique, and Tanzania.

CONCLUSION

Though it was never a colonial power in the actual sense, and did not boast of long-standing historical relations with Africa, the United States is

without question the greatest imperialist power that has also been responsible for wholesale destabilization and underdevelopment on the African continent, signposted by its deliberate and cynical orchestration of coups and counter coups, assassinations, fomenting socio-economic crises, contrived political problems and regime change. For a country that was not a colonial overlord in Africa, its combined capacity for cultural penetration, economic reach and military interventions is virtually unrivalled on the continent. In recent times, and apparently in response to China's and India's economic and diplomatic gains in Africa, the United States has been militarizing the continent through the activities of AFRICOM and intrusions into Africa's military and security sectors under the guise of offering assistance in training, and security sector reforms. Apart from a series of secret bases and deployments of military contingents in several countries, the US led its NATO allies, France and the United Kingdom, in the bombings of Libya which not only resulted in the gruesome death of Muammar Gaddafi but the near total destruction of the country. Today, Libya is a shell of a state, an enclave of warlords, bandits, and drug and human traffickers. That is the sure legacy of America's involvement in Africa and its efforts at re-colonizing the continent for the West.

NOTES

1. Crawford Young, "The End of the Post-Colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics," *African Affairs* 103, no. 410 (January 2004): 31.

2. For details of how the United States methodically entraps developing countries into the debt peonage, see an insider's detailed account by John Perkins. In his *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (New York: Plume, 2004), Perkins describes his job schedule as an "economic hit man" to be "to encourage world leaders to become part of a vast network that promotes US commercial interests. In the end, those leaders become ensnared in a web of debt that ensures their loyalty. We can draw on them whenever we desire—to satisfy our political, economic or military needs." See p. xiv. In turn, those leaders utilize the foreign backing to bolster their own political positions and ensure regime survival.

3. UN Economic Commission for Africa (1990), *African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation* (AAF–SAP), Addis Ababa.

4. For detailed analysis, see UNECA, African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation, Addis Ababa, 1990.

5. Kwamena Bartels, quoted in *New African* (magazine), London, January 2007, 12.

6. See detailed descriptions in John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (New York: Plume, 2004).

7. Quoted in Ajamu Baraka, "Iraq, Libya, Syria: Three Reasons African Americans should oppose US Intervention in Africa," (Op. ed.), www.eurasiareview.com/08072014-iraq-libya-syria-three-reasons-african-americans-oppose-us-intervention-africa-oped/. (Accessed July 8, 2014).

8. For a detailed analysis of how the US government's anti-Soviet and anti-Communist policies during the Cold War engendered the contemporary global terrorism, see amongst others, Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Late Cold War and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).

9. Baraka, op. cit.

10. See Jeremy Keenan, *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

11. Alade Fawole, "Malu and the MacArthur Syndrome," *Nigerian Tribune*, May 14, 2001, 12.

12. Alade Fawole, "Boko Haram and Western Interests in Nigeria: A Conspiracy Theory," *Nigerian Tribune*, June 17, 2014, back page.

13. Alade Fawole, "Boko Haram and Western Interests in Nigeria: A Conspiracy Theory," ibid.

14. http://www.eurasiareview.com/16042014-africom-goes-to-war-on-the-sly-oped. (Accessed April 17, 2014).

15. Turse, ibid.

16. "US military admits secret presence in Somalia," www.vanguardngr.com/2014/07/us-mi. (Accessed July 3, 2014).

17. Danny Haiphong, "The Destruction of Libya and the US Military Invasion of Africa," an op-ed article, in *Eurasia Review: A Journal of Analysis and News*, www.eurasiareview.com/06092016-the-destruction-of-libya-and-the-us-military-invasion-of-africa-oped//?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign-Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29. (Accessed 8 September 2016).

18. Haiphong, ibid.

19. For a detailed analysis of the US role in Angola prior to and after its independence in 1975, see Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American–Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1985), especially 502–537.

20. As Howard W. French has observed, newly declassified documents in Washington actually showed that contrary to the notion that the US intervened in Angola because of the deployment of Cuban forces in that country, America's surreptitious involvement actually predated entry of Cuban forces. See William W. French, "From Old Files, a New Story of U.S. Role in Angola War," *New York Times*, March 31, 2002, www.nytimes.com/2002/03/31/world/from-old-files-a-new-story-of-us-role-in-angolan-war.html. (Accessed September 12, 2016).

21. For greater detailed discussion, see William Minster, "The US and the War in Angola," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 50 (1991): 135–144.

22. "An African Pinochet," *New York Times*, February 11, 2000, www.nytimes.com/2000/02/11/opinion/an-african-pinochet.html. (Accessed 24/5/2016).

23. For a comprehensive analysis/details of how America created, cultivated, and used Hissene Habre, see among others, Michael Bronner, "The Dictator America Created, the Blood He Shed, and the Reckoning to Come," *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2014): 36–47.

24. Marina Ottaway, "Superpower Competition and Regional Conflicts in the Horn of Africa," in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, ed. R. Craig Nation and Mark V. Kauppi (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984), 165.

25. See, amongst others, Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: America-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1985), 630–653.

26. See US State Department, Archive, "Research Memorandum" from the Director of Intelligence and Research Thomas L. Hughes to the Secretary of State, titled "USSR-Nigeria: Bilateral Tensions increase as War Drags On," RSE 24, April 2, 1969.

27. H. E. Newsum and Olayiwola Abegunrin, *United States Foreign Policy Towards Southern Africa: Andrew Young and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 62–63.

Part II

REGIONAL EXAMPLES OF ILLUSIVE POST-COLONIAL STATES

Chapter 7

Nigeria

The Illusive Post-Colony

As we have made copiously clear in chapters 1 and 2 on the grant of independence, creating the colonies into viable and enduring nation-states was the furthest thing from the thoughts of the colonial powers. Britain was as guilty of this as every other colonial power. James Coleman's very illuminating insight into Britain's colonial policy and rule in Nigeria is worth quoting.

> Of course, Britain did not consciously plan to create an independent Nigerian nation when it established Nigeria's boundaries; developed a common administrative system; constructed a common transportation grid and a communications network; introduced a common currency, a lingua franca, and an educational system; and recruited a corps of Nigerian clerks and artisans who developed Pan-Nigerian perspectives and—all were simply requisite to the administration of an arbitrary chunk of Africa as an overseas dependency.[1]

Britain's colonial policies were merely emblematic of the general attitude of all the metropolitan countries to their African possessions. If Nigeria never really made it to becoming a real organic nation, we must not forget that that was the fulfillment of the actual intention of its progenitors. It would have been a surprise if it had actually become a nation, rather than "a mere geographical expression" that Chief Obafemi Awolowo said it was.[2] When Nigeria became independent, what actually happened was not real independence but what a prominent Nigeria columnist and essayist termed "the Africanization of colonial tyranny and a mere change in the personnel of despotism and extractive predation."[3]

Let us now turn to a discussion of its historical and colonial provenance to assist in putting into perspective how "post-colonial" Nigeria became the virtual shell of a state, and why it has since independence been fatally hobbled

by violent internal, often centrifugal, struggles and crises that pose threats to its corporate survival on its way to achieving real nationhood.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN AND THE CREATION OF NIGERIA AS A COLONIAL STATE

Having established earlier in this volume the rationale behind its creation, it is apposite to consider the basic character of the colonial state for the purpose of understanding how its essential characteristics and foreignness have made post-independence state-building a rather herculean task.

The artificiality of the state, the forcible corralling of disparate ethnic and nationality groups into single national compacts without addressing or resolving the challenges of peaceful cohabitation in the new nation-state has been the bane of all so-called post-colonial states across Africa.[4] Indeed, the major colonial powers—Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Portugal—scrambling to possess exclusive territories in Africa cynically carved up the continent into colonial territories and exclusive spheres of influence without reference to the people or even consideration for ethnographic realities and distributions on the ground, with the results that particular ethnic groups were often divided between a number of new countries and forced into often difficult cohabitation with others with which they did not have much in common. These ruthlessly acquired colonial possessions were later formalized and legitimized at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, a conference convened to prevent an intra-European war over territories in Africa. What the colonial state created for Africans was a massive identity crisis through forcible incorporation of several often disparate nations into single territorial compacts, a development which has sadly continued to haunt most African states since independence. Nigeria is the archetypal multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious "conglomerate society" with more than 300 ethnic and nationality groups which the British colonialists as a matter of deliberate policy refused to weld together because nation-building was never part of the objectives of colonialism.

The different portions of today's Nigeria were conquered and added to the British possession at different times. Beginning from the coastal settlement of Lagos from the 1860s, British influence and control gradually extended into the hinterlands initially through trade and missionary incursions, facilitated of course by the intra-Yoruba wars of the nineteenth century which had left the Yoruba states virtually powerless to mount any worthwhile resistance to colonial incursions, as well as by fraudulent treaties of protection, forcible acquisitions, military conquests of territories and kingdoms. The powerful Benin Kingdom was subverted and subjugated by British military force in 1897

while the Sokoto Caliphate was eventually militarily subdued and conquered by 1903. The conquered territories were then placed under different territorial administrations—namely, the Crown Colony of Lagos, the Southern Protectorate and the Northern Protectorate, all of which were later amalgamated by Lord Frederick Lugard in January 1914 and given the name Nigeria.

Though now, technically speaking, a single colony, Nigeria was administratively still divided into North and South, under different forms of colonial administration, laws and practices. Whilst British-type education and administrative systems were introduced and accepted in the South, it was a bit different in the North where the powerful emirs and Islamic clerics vehemently opposed Western education and culture. The British acquiesced and agreed to let them be, as long as that suited the colonial enterprise, and thus the North and South developed at their respective paces, but with the North severely lagging behind the South, a situation which plagued and continues to plague national unity and development. This unevenness of development along the North-South divide has been a major drag on national politics. Since independence, the country's ethno-regional and religious composition has been a principal determinant of politics and governance, with "federal character" a recurring facet in the choice of leaders and other political, administrative and technical appointments in the public sector.

A major contemporary internal security challenge that Nigeria has been facing in recent years is not just from the Boko Haram terrorism which morphed into an insurgency but also the "indigene-settler" controversy in Plateau State, the problem of nomadic and migrant Fulani herdsmen and conflict with host farming communities over grazing of animals and the incessant killings that usually accompany such conflicts. The crisis of state- and nation-building arose from the unwillingness of the colonialists to create a new nation out of the multitude of ethnic nations that they had corralled into the same compact. Indubitably, the practice of encouraging separate development along regional but also ethnic lines was a deliberate ploy to keep the people divided and unable to mount a unified resistance to foreign domination.[5] Though amalgamated into a single country in 1914, British administration still deliberately kept the different parts separate; even Southern Nigeria was further divided into East and West in 1939, thus further driving another wedge between the regions. But much more sinister, of course, was the conscious desire to keep the country disunited through deliberate promotion of cultural, religious and other primordial differences among the people. A major policy thrust of Sir Hugh Clifford, colonial Governor of Nigeria from 1919–1925, was to keep the different ethnic nations apart and allow them to develop in line with their own history and culture, and at their own respective paces.

This was not peculiar to Nigeria. Divide and rule was quite pervasive in all the colonies, for this ably facilitated domination and plunder. In British colonies,

the logic of divide and rule served as a disincentive to the unity of the disparate ethno-national groups that colonial rule had brought together. In very insidious cases such as Nigeria with over three hundred ethnic groups, British policy was to deliberately create gulfs and divisions between the various groups, such that it was difficult to form a single nationalist opposition to foreign rule.[6] As James S. Coleman has made plain, "the British themselves did little to encourage the feeling of 'Nigerian' nationality; indeed, Sir Hugh Clifford made it emphatically clear that the idea of a Nigerian nation was both inconceivable and dangerous."[7] Although seemingly altruistic on the surface, there was little doubt that Governor Hugh Clifford had deep contempt for the idea of ever evolving a new "Nigerian nation" from the nations contained therein. If anything, his policy thrust only succeeded in widening the gulf between the disparate and mutually competitive ethnic nations that British colonial adventure had brought together without their consent or input. Since its British rulers were content to keep it permanently fractured, the evolving colonial state was hardly different from a patchwork of mutually competitive ethnic nations loosely held together by colonial fiat. There is no doubt that the inter-ethnic cleavages thus deliberately created have survived and have continued to plague Nigeria after independence, more so since the so-called post-colonial elites who took over are themselves not interested in reforming or transforming the character and essence of the colonial architecture but in merely instrumentalizing it for a selfish power grab. For example, the persistent agitations for restructuring of the country have always been rebuffed by the political elites who insist that its unity is a settled matter and therefore non-negotiable.

This again, I must emphasize, is not peculiar to Nigeria; it was not just enacted in British African colonies alone but was a widespread colonial strategy. In a number of cases across the continent, nomadic groups are forced to cohabit with largely sedentary ones, creating problems of peaceful coexistence for the largely artificial states that were later cynically bequeathed to Africans. In West Africa, for example, nomadic Fulani and Tuaregs are forced into a number of territorial compacts with sedentary groups where artificial national borders restrict their migration. It is a frequent occurrence for Fulani cattle herdsmen whose nomadic culture and occupation do not regard national boundaries to migrate across borders from Mali through Benin and Niger into Nigeria and back with relative ease. The Tutsi in East and Central Africa are also nomadic peoples forcibly divided between several territorial states (DR Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi), in some of which they are even ethnic minorities. This identity crisis has been at the root of the political instabilities that have plagued East and Central African sub-regions for over five decades of independence.

What this portends is that the nation-state as we know it is not only an artificial contraption forced upon the people but it is also alien and unworkable

except by force.[8] One of the contemporary challenges that African states have ceaselessly but unsuccessfully grappled with is the crisis of collective national identity, the problems associated with peaceful cohabitation within and of migrations across artificially constructed national borders and the threats these pose to the legitimacy and survival of the modern nation-state. In the contemporary post-independence era, states such as Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Chad, DR Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi, to mention a few, have been reaping the ugly and intractable consequences of colonial state formation. In none of these states did their colonial creators make any conscious efforts at nation-building, for that was never part of the logic of the colonial enterprise, with implications that this cynical policy did not allow the multiplicity of ethnic nations forced into new state compacts to be welded together to evolve into new nations.

In virtually all African countries, ethnic, religious and other primordial and parochial identities take precedence, and are privileged over allegiance to the nation-state. These primordial identities are more permanent than the largely artificial and alien contraption called the nation-state. For example, Nigeria quickly unraveled and was almost completely sundered by a bloody civil war only a few years after independence on account of this unresolved identity and legitimacy crisis.[9] Several other countries were, and are still possibly, held together more by the authoritarian ruthlessness of their rulers than by the consent of their disparate peoples, and the subsisting identity crisis bobbles to the surface at the slightest pretexts—Chad has remained disunited and unstable since independence; Mali has grappled with Tuareg separatist agitations and war, the most recent being the creation of the Azawad Republic in 2012; Senegal has a recurring crisis in the Casamance region, and so forth.

Undoubtedly, therefore, since the British created Nigeria for extractive plunder, neither the intention nor the hope was that it could ever become an organic nation, not even a durable modern nation-state. Colonial policies were so deliberately crafted to prevent any such eventuality, and Nigerians never had the opportunity to develop and concretize such sentiments before the vicissitudes of the Second World War compelled the metropolitan nations to begin preparing their colonies for independence. Until it achieved independence in 1960, colonial Nigeria remained firmly the "mere geographical entity" that its progenitors had intended it to be.

INDEPENDENCE AND THE ILLUSION OF THE NEW MODERN NATION-STATE

By the time the Second World War came to an end in 1945, all the European states, including the colonial countries of Great Britain, France, and Portugal,

had become so badly economically devastated, and politically, militarily, and socially exhausted that they realized that colonial rule was going out of style and had to give way. The end of the global war signified the beginning of the end of centuries of imperial domination in Asia and Africa, more so that the two emergent global superpowers were not, in any case, so favorably and philosophically disposed to the idea of colonial empires. Whilst the US did not engage in colonial adventures in the strict sense, the Soviet Union on its own ideologically abhorred colonialism and regarded anti-colonialism as a sure means of curtailing and rolling back the power and influence of its Western imperialist adversaries in the aftermath of the global war. In essence, the Second World War was then a real game changer! As imperialist rule in Africa inexorably wound down after the end of World War II, the European states cleverly exited the continent by creating politico-economic institutions and structures in the colonies, and signed treaties of friendship, cooperation and alliances that unequally yoked the colonies together with the colonial metropole, that would invariably ensure the continuation of their rule through subtle and indirect means, a situation Nkrumah aptly referred to as neo-colonialism.[10] The same is summed up by Dani Nabudere:

> We know that as the European powers scrambled out of the African continent, they ensured that what they left behind would serve their interests. That is why the first line of radical African nationalists found themselves either overthrown in military coups backed by European powers, or murdered.[11]

Several early "post-colonial" leaders—Patrice Lumumba, Sylvanus Olympio, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Kwame Nkrumah, and so forth—met this Europe-determined fate before or by the mid-1960s.

As has been clearly elaborated in chapters 3 and 4 in this volume, the eventual grant of independence to colonial territories was the fallout of the Second World War rather than of any altruistic intentions on the part of the imperialist nations. So Nigeria also benefited from this situation and became an "independent sovereign" country a decade and a half after the war. It is remarkable though that throughout its existence as a single territorial state since the 1914 amalgamation proclamation, Nigeria was merely a patchwork of mutually competitive ethnic nations cobbled together by colonial fiat, and the subsisting fractures have remained a feature of its existence and politics. What happened, according to *Tatalo Alamu* quoted at the top of this chapter was that though Frederick Lugard might have succeeded in creating Nigeria, he and his successors failed to create Nigerians!

This truism in that assertion is what has been haunting and hobbling the Nigerian state since October 1960. All pretensions to the contrary notwithstanding, Nigeria has hardly transcended the status of a "mere geographical

expression" that Chief Obafemi Awolowo famously called it in his seminal book, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* first published in 1947. Real unity and oneness have remained illusory and unrealizable, no matter how much the people have tried. Nigeria remains the same artificial contraption that the colonialists whimsically created and bequeathed to the people. The people who are today called Nigerians still fundamentally prefer to define themselves by their ethnic affiliations first, which is the only identity that to them seems real and permanent, and only secondarily as Nigerians. This definition by primordial identity, though not often spoken, is what also informs behavior toward others and toward the so-called Nigerian nation itself. For example, allocation of values in the country (appointments and even enjoyment of certain constitutionally prescribed rights and privileges) is often a function of ethno-regional and religious considerations, ethnic balancing and federal character rather than merit. It usually follows clientelistic networks defined by primordial considerations of ethnicity and religion rather than rational and impersonal considerations that characterize governance in modern nation-states. This mandatory resort to "federal character" (itself an artificial nation-building device) not only breeds mediocrity, according to the former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Lamido Sanusi,[12] it also detracts from the very idea of the nation that it is seeking to build. Resort to federal character as a device obviously privileges certain individuals or groups over others in the competition for positions, resources and other values that only the nation-state can distribute; it indubitably discriminates against and disadvantages others in the process, thus doing violence and great disservice to collective loyalty and allegiance to the state. For example, the loyalty of someone who gets privileged by reason of federal character to the Nigerian state would differ significantly from that of someone who is denied his right and privilege simply on the same account. A significant implication of this is that it makes Nigeria, according to Francis Fukuyama, to lack both the "technical capacity and ability to enforce laws impersonally."[13]

Let me use a common situation to illustrate the point here. Let us take, for instance, competitive admission into the country's federal universities organized by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The JAMB regulation amongst others prescribes that certain percentages of the total candidates for admission must be on merit, state catchment and educationally less privileged states respectively. This is indisputably an affirmative action device to ensure that admission into these federally owned and funded institutions reflects the overall national composition, but it has severe drawbacks for national unity. A teenager who scores very high in the examination but fails to gain admission into a federal institution because competition is high from his state of origin but sees others who scored much lower in the same examination getting admitted will begin to question the basis of fairness and

justice, and this may affect his loyalty to the nation-state that he sees as having treated him unfairly.

Overall, the Nigerian state suffers critical legitimacy deficits; it remains hardly more than a colonial artifact, a sad reminder of the people's forcible subjugation to a pillaging foreign power. Primordial loyalty to the ethnic nation and religious community invariably supersedes allegiance to the nation-state, and this is precisely happening according to original colonial design. A casual glance at colonial politics again will elucidate why Nigeria remains such a badly fractured nation-state.

Colonial divide and rule policy effectively ensured that Nigerians had no single unified position concerning their country and its fate. Apart from the north-south divide and the different policies enunciated to govern each part and keep them separate from each other, ethnic particularism was also deliberately promoted (as we have seen in chapter 2 of this volume). The policies of Governor Hugh Clifford were intended to permanently keep the various nationality groups apart to ease colonial predation. Colonial administration, being without the consent of the people, was not for the benefit of the people but merely to facilitate resource extraction and evacuation, and also severely excluded them from participation in their own affairs. The colonial administration was headed by an all-powerful and overbearing colonial Governor whose powers derived directly from London and was answerable only to the British Crown. He governed without the consent and input of the "natives." Usually at his disposal were military and police forces for the pacification of the natives to facilitate extraction. He made and executed foreign laws and levied taxes without the people being represented in governance and administration. This uniquely colonial politics of exclusion invariably thus condemned the "natives" only to domestic opposition to foreign rule and agitation for emancipation, although initially the main interest of the emerging educated and bilingual local elites was merely to be included in colonial administration to enjoy the benefits which they believed their new status entitled them.

After the end of the Second World War, the emphasis of the educated natives was no longer just the narrow pursuit of their own parochial entitlements but had shifted to agitation for political emancipation in which they became increasingly more adept and more vociferous. This saw the formation of political associations with broad political objectives to articulate and pursue demands for political independence, as well as the establishment of newspapers and periodicals to aid their agitation. The events after the Second World War began to pave the road to eventual negotiated independence. The intensity of local agitation led to the gradual incorporation of the natives into administration, the writing of local constitutions and devolution of powers, and later the series of constitutional conferences held at Lancaster House in

London that preceded the grant of independence. These resulted in the grant of self-government status, erection of democratic political structures patterned after the British Westminster model and bequeathing of a democratic constitution to ill-prepared local ruling elites at independence. All these preparations toward independence provided the British officials opportunity to manipulate Nigerians and orchestrate the evolution of the nation-state they desired Nigeria to be. The deliberate encouragement of ethnic parochialism since the colonial days later resulted in the ethnic and regional orientation of political activities mostly in the 1950s. Most political parties emerged from ethnic and/or regional associations—the Action Group (AG) from the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* in Western Nigeria, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) dominated by Igbos from the East, while the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) emerged from *Jamiyyar Mutanen Arewa*—and thus derived the bulk of their membership and support from their respective regions. Emergence of ethno-regional political parties did not promote the sense of oneness and national unity that a new nation-state required, and this factor has continually hobbled every attempt at state-building and nation-building since independence.

At independence, therefore, the new nation-state that Nigerians inherited was still the quintessential colonial state in all but appearance. What changed, as Claude Ake has made known, were the managers of the state rather than its essence and nature. In all calculations, the new nation-state was an alien contraption; it kept intact all the paraphernalia of its progenitor—the civil bureaucracy, military, police, security and intelligence apparatuses that had served the colonial authorities so well; it was an extractive, rent-seeking and predatory state just as the colonial state had been. As time went on, it became a prebendalist enclave to be massively plundered by the local elites exactly the way the colonialists had plundered it for the colonial metropole.[14]

Nigerians inherited a nation-state that was partitioned into three regions—North, West and East—and a lopsided federal system that allowed one of the federating units to be so huge as to practically lord it over the other two put together. This tripartite nature of politics and governance came accompanied with regional parochialisms and prejudices, ethnicization of the army and other institutions of the state. The violently rigged elections of 1964 and 1965, the resultant violent military putsches of January and July 1966, and the resultant civil war from 1967 to 1970 merely underscored the evident fragility of the new "post-colonial" state. If anything, what the Nigerian civil war, an attempted fracturing of the new Nigerian nation-state did, was to powerfully bring home the grand illusion called the post-colonial state. This was indisputably the most profound evidence of the fragility of the state that British colonialism had cynically created into a patchwork of mutually competitive and often antagonistic ethnic nationalities deliberately held together held by colonial force than by the consent of the people.

Post-Independence Politics and the Persistence of Foreign Influence

It is perhaps not uncharitable to assert that, faced with the outcomes of the Second World War which necessitated the grant of independence, Britain cleverly created and bequeathed to Nigerians the architecture of a modern state that would remain securely tied to its apron-strings and remain under its firm grip even after it had achieved independence. It was not so much concerned about the suitability or otherwise of the colonial state and its lopsided federal structure for an independent Nigeria. Even when the Colonial Office in London decided to set up the Henry Willinks Commission in 1958, ostensibly to look into and address the fears of the minority ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, it still pandered to the dictates of the majority ethnic groups, most especially the Hausa/Fulani. Even though a three-man delegation from the Western Region appeared before the Commission at its different sittings in Lagos, Ibadan, Oyo, Benin City, Ilorin, Enugu, and Calabar and powerfully articulated the arguments for the creation of more states for the purpose of correcting the lopsidedness of the federation, all appeals fell on deaf ears as the Commission refused to recommend state creation as a panacea to the fears of the minorities.[15] The implication is that Nigeria's lopsided federal structure, whereby the Northern Region alone is more than 70 percent, while the West and East together constitute less than 30 percent of the total land area of the country must have been deliberately contrived to satisfy the British game plan of keeping Northern Nigeria perpetually in control of political power. Part of the grand design was the allocation of 50 percent of the legislative seats to the North, while the West and East shared the other 50 percent, a practice that was further reinforced after independence. Even more than fifty years later, the North still has more members in the House of Representatives and more local governments than the South, giving the North continuous demographic and political leverage.

As colonial rule came to an end, the British left behind a Nigeria after their image. The Westminster parliamentary model of liberal democracy and all its practices, the civilian bureaucracy which had served the colonial administration, and the military and other security structures of colonial rule were left intact and unreformed for the benefit of the new nation-state. And this was possible also because of the colonial officials' careful manipulation and rigging of the 1959 elections that ushered the country into independence in favor of the political party populated by the non-radically inclined nationalist elites that they believed they could trust to do their bidding. With a carefully chosen indigenous national government to replace the colonial government firmly in place by 1959, the processes for independence by October 1960 geared up, and the colonial officials meticulously guided the new government

along the path they expected it to follow. Any thought of reforming or redesigning the architecture of the colonial state was far from the question, since succeeding to power was now the sole objective of the new rulers. In any case, the last British Governor-General, Sir James Robertson, still exercised a good measure of control over the government, was still in charge of security, defense and foreign affairs.

As part of its mentoring activities, the colonial government bequeathed a political system, complete with a written constitution for eventual democratic rule. It was simply hilarious, if not outright hypocritical, that a colonial government that subsisted for decades on an authoritarian foundation and methodology could expect its local successors to operate a democracy simply on the basis of a written constitution. Due credit must be given to the colonial officials for not leaving anything to chance—after all, Nigeria was Her Majesty's most prized possession in Africa. Unlike the civil service which was quickly Nigerianized, indigenizing the security services took much longer to accomplish. For security and defense purposes, a large number of white British senior police and military officers were retained in the service of Nigeria even after independence. Indeed, the British maintained such a stranglehold on the Nigeria Police Force that its top hierarchy and major commands were still dominated by British officers even well after independence in 1960. For example, it was not until April 1964 that Mr. Louis O. Edet was appointed the first indigenous Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police to take over from the last British Inspector-General, Mr. J. E. Hodge.[16] It was a similar story for the army, which was firmly under British control even after independence. What is now known as the Nigerian Army was the Queens Own Nigerian Regime (QONR) since the late 1950s and became the Royal Nigerian Army after independence in 1960, until the country assumed republican status in October 1963 when its nomenclature was changed to the Nigerian Army. It was largely officered by British military officers who held most of the command positions until February 1965 when Major-General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, the first indigenous officer, took over from Major-General Sir Christopher Welby-Everard, its last British General Officer Commanding (GOC).[17]

The control of the nation's military and security paraphernalia must have allowed Britain to exercise considerable if invisible influence, most especially on the direction of Nigeria's external relations. Although the negotiated Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact, which would have allowed Britain to establish and maintain its own military and air bases on Nigerian soil after independence, came to a sorry end when the Nigerian government succumbed to domestic pressures and abrogated it in January 1962,[18] Britain nonetheless wielded some influence in foreign policy matters. The country's Prime

Minister, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations until 1961, and retained the services of some expatriate officials, Sir Peter Stallard who served as Secretary to the Prime Minister, and Mr. John V. Williams who was in the External Affairs Branch of the Prime Minister's Office, who perhaps provided some guidance.[19] It is widely believed that Nigeria's excessively pro-British foreign policy bent under Prime Minister Balewa, the sustenance of virulent anti-communist bias inherited from colonial rule, and Nigeria's refusal to break diplomatic relations with Britain over Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 as originally agreed to by African Commonwealth member-states, were not unconnected with the influence wielded by these foreign officials. Even after the violent military coup of July 1966 when army officers of northern origin wanted to declare *Araba* (Hausa word for secession), the idea was allegedly shelved on the advice of the then British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Sir Francis Cumming-Bruce.

It would seem that not even the sudden and violent termination of civil democratic rule in 1966 could diminish Britain's influence in the country's domestic affairs. Economically, Britain and Nigeria enjoyed very close relations. While Great Britain was Nigeria's largest trading partner in the world, Nigeria itself was the UK's largest trading partner in Africa. Apart from the fact of Nigeria's dependence on imported consumer and industrial goods, even Nigeria's own burgeoning manufacturing sector, the oil sector, and distributive trade and banking, were dominated by British-owned corporations and banks. Nigeria's national currency was a version of the Pound Sterling while its external currency reserves and savings were held in British banks, thus giving London a tight grip on Nigeria's economic affairs.

Membership in the Commonwealth, an organization controlled by Britain and into which Nigeria was accepted upon independence, further gave Britain opportunity to influence Nigeria's external relations along a generally pro-Western path. Not even the initial mutual disagreements during the early stages of the Nigerian civil war, when Britain refused Nigeria's request to purchase weapons for the prosecution of the war, could totally break Anglo-Nigerian relations. Since Britain's action was based on Biafra's propaganda of genocide, it had to make an about-face when the report of a Commonwealth military observer group concluded that Nigerian forces were not committing genocide but actually conducting the operations in accordance with modern standards of warfare. This was a way not to lose its most precious African friend to the Soviet Union which was then supplying it the required weapons and aircraft for the war effort.

Mutual trust and cordiality were eventually fully restored after the end of the war, and to underscore the cordiality, the Nigerian military ruler, General Yakubu Gowon paid a state visit to the UK on the invitation of the Queen of

England. British economic interests in the country continued to expand even though Nigeria had shortly after the civil war changed from the pound sterling to a new currency and had diversified both its diplomatic and economic relations and became much more nonaligned in its foreign policy. When Gowon was overthrown in a peaceful coup d'état in July 1975, a new set of military leaders came on board whose radical pan-Africanist ideas inevitably set them on a collision course with Britain, significantly over sanctions against apartheid and Zimbabwean independence. But it was the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed, and General Olusegun Obasanjo's ascension to power in February 1976, that brought bilateral relations to the lowest ebb from that time on until new civilian democrats began to mend fences with Britain in 1979. Britain's refusal of Nigeria's request to extradite former military head of state, General Yakubu Gowon, who was in exile in the UK and allegedly implicated in the coup that assassinated Murtala Mohammed, angered the Nigerian government, and began the diplomatic face-offs between Lagos and London. This chill affected Nigeria's position toward the UK over sanctions against apartheid and independence for Zimbabwe under black majority rule. In the ensuing test of wills, Nigeria nationalized British Petroleum (BP), perhaps the UK's largest investment in sub-Saharan Africa, alongside banks like Barclays and Standard, over both apartheid and Zimbabwe. In all, this bad blood continued until the exit of the military from power in 1979.

Overall, what is apparent is Britain's abiding interests in and willingness to retain a good measure of influence in its most populous and rich former African colony. It was the economic downturns of the early 1980s that brought back foreign control of the economy much more prominently when Nigeria was practically force-fed IMF/World Bank-dictated structural adjustment programs from 1986 with all their debilitating political and socio-economic conditionalities. From then on the country practically became a ward of the international community and the International Financial Institutions whose *diktat* it must swallow, and was gradually but inexorably sucked into a debt trap peonage. Its debt overhang of $32 billion had mortgaged the economy to external control, and it was not until 2005 that the new civilian administration was able to negotiate an exit from the debt after it had had to cough out $12 billion in order to obtain forgiveness for the remaining $18 billion.

Political Leadership and the Failure of Nation-Building

Perhaps arising from the manner and methods by which colonial Nigeria was put together and administered by the British officials, the earliest Nigerian nationalists and politicians themselves seemed to have openly expressed their doubts and misgivings regarding the desirability, even its feasibility and viability as a single, united nation-state. Each of the principal regional political

supremos was known to have at different times expressed skepticism concerning it, even though they all desired to be rid of British rule someday. All appearances to the contrary, not all of them believed in a united Nigeria to the same degree, except to manipulate it to obtain certain regional advantages. In reality, not only did Britain's divide and rule methodology deliberately widen the ethno-cultural and religious gulfs between North and South, educated northerners generally detested what they believed was the condescending arrogance of educated southerners, and thus did not share the same views with them concerning the fate and future of colonial Nigeria. This ethno-regional polarization became more visible from the mid-1940s with more northerners having had the same time type of foreign education their southern counterparts had. This was also the beginning of more intense nationalist activism and agitation for independence sweeping across the African continent. The educated northerners and their emirs became more forthright in their views of southerners in particular and Nigeria in general. Let us ponder on the following views of certain prominent Nigerians from the late 1940s to the early 1950s to underscore the lack of elite consensus regarding the fate of Nigeria to illustrate the point.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, in a frank and dispassionate analysis in his seminal book published in 1947, asserted, "Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no "Nigerians" in the same sense as there are "English," "Welsh," or "French." The word "Nigerian" is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not."[20] Though he was to suffer severe flagellation for this honest view for decades, there is no doubt it reflected deep understanding at the time that Nigeria was not the nation that it could still become. Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, a member of the then Legislative Council and one of the leaders of the Northern Peoples Congress, gave open expression to this same feeling when he asserted that because Nigerian peoples were "historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs," they were not on the same page as far as Nigerian unity was concerned, and in fact that the whole idea of "Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country."[21] This was not minding the fact that British colonial officials themselves had derided any notion of a real Nigerian nation ever evolving from its diverse ethnic mix. The leader of the NPC and Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, believed that Lugard's so-called amalgamation proclamation of Nigeria into a single territory was actually a mistake, what he called "the mistake of 1914." This was in response to the 1953 motion moved in the House of Representatives by Chief Anthony Enahoro asking for independence for Nigeria by 1956, a motion which caught the northern delegates unawares. Sir Ahmadu Bello reportedly harbored the notion that there should be a continuation of the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio for the conquest of the rest Nigeria which, according to him,

British colonial intervention had interrupted. His contempt for the country, or rather his preference for northern Nigeria, was not merely expressed in words alone but manifested also in his blunt refusal to become Prime Minister and govern Nigeria after his NPC had won the general election, preferring instead to remain premier of his region. Governing the North was considered much more important and rated higher than Nigeria itself.

But if we step back a little, it would be discovered that ethno-regional particularism accentuated by colonial policies was never far from the surface as far as Nigerian affairs were concerned. Post–Second World War nationalist activities were regionalized as exemplified by the emergence of regionally based political associations—AG in the West dominated by the Yoruba, the NCNC in the East dominated by the Igbo, the NPC dominated by the Hausa-Fulani, the UMBC among the Middle Belt ethnic minorities. These political formations further consolidated the hegemony of the majority ethnic groups in each region to the discomfort of their minority groups. Even the adoption of a federal structure with emphasis on strong regions was also the product of the conspiracy of the major ethnic groups to tighten their politico-economic hold on the regions. This ethno-regional nature of politics emphasized competition rather than unity, and functioned to polarize Nigerians such that they became the deciding factors in deciding major national issues.

Though the nationalists closed ranks to press for Nigeria's independence, there is no doubt these subsisting views vitiated any unity of purpose, and explained not only why self-government came to the regions at different times but also why the achievement of full independence itself had to be delayed until 1960. Chief Anthony Enahoro on behalf of his Action Group (AG) political party had moved in the House of Representatives in 1953 that independence be granted by 1956, but was resisted by nationalist leaders from the North who believed that their region was not yet fully prepared for independence. The delay of the date of independence until 1960 resulted from lack of elite consensus, not on the desirability of independence as a necessity, but rather on the modalities, steps and date. And politics after independence continued to reflect this deep-seated ethno-regional polarization, making the early 1960s a turbulent period for the country. Even the resultant NPC/NCNC coalition government was a shaky and uneasy marriage that was bound to unravel even before the military entered into the fray in January 1966.

With politics as a dangerous zero-sum, any and all attempts that could stabilize the polity and move it toward nation-building had to come to naught because there was no real commitment to it. Successive military governments from 1966 made apparently patriotic moves toward national unity, but they all ended up exacerbating existing divisions and creating new ones. From the ill-fated Unification Decree 34 of 1966 which sought to create a unitary structure for the country, to the progressive subversion of the federal principle and

structure through serial state creations, the cancellation of regional autonomy and introduction of centralization by the military, the post-civil war "no-victor-no-vanquished" policy aimed at achieving national reconciliation, the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps scheme aimed at promoting integration and unity, the policy of posting of military governors to states other than their own, the introduction of the "federal character" principle (in appointment to high-level government positions) and requirements for political parties to have national spread in order to qualify for registration, and such other seemingly innovative modalities of creating national unity, were attempted but to no avail.

Undoubtedly, all these nation-building policies and actions have catastrophically miscarried owing to lack of fidelity to the nation idea by its operators, a patent absence of strong national institutions capable of transcending and overcoming the prebendalist, clientelistic, and patronage networks which had subsisted from before independence. Francis Fukuyama pungently made this point. "The roots of Nigeria's development," according to him, "are institutional; indeed, it is hard to find a better example of weak institutions and bad government trapping a nation in poverty."[22] In the same breath, he clarifies further that "Nigeria's real institutional deficits lie in the . . . lack of a strong, modern and capable state; and absence of a rule of law that provides property rights, citizen security, and transparency in transactions."[23]

In truth, the domestic developments since independence, the zero-sum character of politicking, the serial military coups, most especially those of 1966, the resultant bloody civil war, contemporary crisis in the Niger Delta and other current challenges to the Nigerian state, are the inexorable fallouts of the unresolved crisis of the Nigerian state. Even under current democratic dispensation, adoption of a zoning formula or the "federal character principle" is enshrined in the constitution, and it was partly why a powerful northern cabal successfully prevented former Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from a minority ethnic group from the south, from becoming acting President, as prescribed by the 1999 Constitution, when the then President Umaru Musa Ya'Adua was fatally incapacitated by ill health. For the cabal, political power belonged to the North and not even the incapacitation of the sitting President would make them yield it to anyone from the south. It is within the context of this ethno-regional division and the lack of a sense of belonging and fulfillment carried over from colonial days that the rise of contemporary separatist groups and movements such as MASSOB, Biafra Zionist Movement, OPC, MEND, Niger Delta Avengers, and even the Boko Haram jihadists, can be understood.

POSTSCRIPT AND CONCLUSION

Even as recently as the year 2014 when the Nigerian government effusively celebrated the centenary anniversary of the amalgamation of North and South

as a landmark in Nigeria's history, the existing sharp divisions remained quite visible. Nigerians were generally divided as to the significance and importance of the event. On the one hand, many Nigerians questioned the desirability of celebrating a mere colonial action which was not even taken in the interest of Nigerians but for purely administrative expediency and cost-cutting to maximize colonial plunder. Others believed that the one hundred years of the cohabitation of diverse ethnic groups in one territorial compact was evidence of their unity. The latter position was far from the truth, for threats of separation and secession have remained since independence. The polarization could not even be papered over by the National Political Conference that was convened in 2014 to discuss, debate, and possibly resolve the national question. Held under a heavy cloud of suspicion and amidst great skepticism as to the intention of President Goodluck Jonathan's government, the National Conference discussed myriad issues of restructuring or re-architecting the Nigerian state, proper federation, state creation, a new constitution, rule of law, resource control and an equitable revenue sharing formula. The delegates to the conference were sharply divided along the usual ethno-regional fault lines on virtually every issue that is germane to Nigeria's corporate existence. They acted as ethno-regional representatives and staunch defenders of parochial rather than national interests. This was a sad reminder of the unfinished national agenda for which Nigerians had fought a civil war in the 1960s.

Still significantly wracked by internal divisions, separatist agitations, rising militancy and attendant criminality, industrial-scale official corruption, political uncertainties, a mono-commodity economy suffering from plummeting global oil prices which has led to economic recession and currency devaluation, and facing serious domestic security challenges, Nigeria's viability as a nation-state is questionable, and its ability to advance on the path of nation-building is feeble in the face of elites' refusal to overcome existing divisions. Thus far, Nigeria has been held together largely by the instrumentality of a national army that sees itself as the guardian of the old colonial nation-state rather than the express will of its people. In its over half century existence, its military has played the role not just of the enforcers of the will of the state but have acted as the guardians of its corporate existence—serial interventions whenever civilian politicians seemed to be derailing as in the 1960s and early 1980s, a civil war to keep the country from dismemberment, fighting domestic insurgency in the northeast corner and quelling militancy in the oil-bearing Niger Delta region.

With agitations for political restructuring and separation growing ever more strident while the elites that run the federal government rigidly insist the country's unity and sovereignty are non-negotiable, the eventual unraveling of Nigeria may be much nearer unless great care is taken to address contemporary fissiparous agitations. Its southeastern and south-south geopolitical

zones are currently on the boil, with the rise in the number of separatists and violent militant groups challenging the authority of the state and its economic viability; rise of violent fundamentalist Islamism in some parts of the North exemplified by the Boko Haram and its offshoot, Ansaru, and its dire implications for national unity and survival; pervasive insecurity, terrorism and kidnapping across the land, all of which increasingly question the survivability and capability of the Nigerian state. As it is, the Nigerian governing elites' rigid disposition regarding the indissolubility of the country's sovereignty and unity is ludicrous and flies in the face of recent developments across the globe where erstwhile multinational states once held together by force—the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia—and even liberal democracies such as Spain, Canada, and lately the United Kingdom, are grappling with increasing separatist agitations. And it is impossible to predict for how much longer mere military pacification alone would be able to hold the huge conglomerate society together in one piece if its governing elites continue to cynically abandon the nation-building option and take refuge in sheer escapism. A simple reality check will reveal that Nigeria is incapable of surviving another civil war in the face of the utter dissipation of the old "national" consensus that ensured its triumph over Biafra's attempted secession. Having lost its innocence, contemporary Nigeria is no longer the Nigeria of the 1960s, and any assumption that it can continue to muddle through without a clear resolution of its divisive tendencies amounts to infantile reasoning.

NOTES

1. James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 320.

2. Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 47.

3. Tatalo Alamu, "Devils at the Crossroads: The Neo-colonial State and Emerging Nigerian Society." *The Nation on Sunday*, June 21, 2015, 3.

4. Basil Davidson discusses this in his work, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

5. The grant of independence was delayed until 1960 because the North claimed it was not ready for it until then.

6. For a detailed examination of the rise and promotion of ethnicity and ethnic consciousness in Nigeria during colonial rule, see, amongst others, James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Okwudiba Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978); W. A. Fawole, "Colonial History and the Search for Democratic Nationhood: The Case of Anglophone West Africa," in *The Crisis of the State and*

Regionalism in West Africa: Identity, Citizenship and Conflict, ed. W. A. Fawole and Charles Ukeje (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005), 61–62.

7. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, 210.

8. See analytical explanations especially in the works of Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden*; O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191; Fawole, "Colonial History and the Search for Democratic Nationhood."

9. For the causes and triggers of the war, see John de. St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972); Chinua Achebe, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012).

10. Kwame Nkrumah discusses this characterization in his *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965).

11. Dani Nabudere, "African Unity in Historical Perspective," in *A United States of Africa*?, ed. Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: AISA, 2001), 11.

12. *The Nation*, Thursday, December 6, 2012, 1, 4, and 63.

13. Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*: *From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014), 225.

14. For a conceptual and empirical discourse on prebendalism, see Richard Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1987).

15. Akin Ajose Adeogun, "Curse of the Broken Vessel: Nigeria at Crossroads," *The Nation*, Wednesday, November 27, 2013, 22.

16. For a detailed history of the police from its colonial origins to the post-independence era, see D. M. Jemibewon, *The Nigeria Police in Transition: Issues, Problems and Prospects* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 2001). On the appointment of the first Nigerian Inspector-General, see p. 7.

17. As of January 1960, there was a preponderance of British military officers and NCOs compared to Nigerians in the army. British officers numbered 228 while there were only 48 commissioned combatant officers, although this disparity was gradually redressed until all the expatriate officers were gone by 1965. See Sam C. Ukpabi, "The Evolution of the Nigerian Army under Colonial Rule," in *Military History: Nigeria from the Colonial Era to the Present*, ed. John W. T. Gbor (Ikeja, Lagos: Longman Nigeria Plc., 2004), especially 128–131.

18. On the political objections to the defence pact, see Obafemi Awolowo, "Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact," in *Voice of Reason: Selected Speeches of Obafemi Awolowo, vol. 1* (Akure, Nigeria: Fagbamigbe Publishers, 1981), 26–35; also, Olatunde J. B. Ojo, "The Making and Termination of Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact," in *The Structure and Processes of Foreign Policy Making and Implementation in Nigeria, 1960–1990*, ed. G. O. Olusanya and R. A. Akindele (Lagos: NIIA, 1990), 253–274.

19. Olufemi Oyewale George, *From Rookie to Mandarin: The Memoirs of a Second-Generation Diplomat* (Ibadan: BIP, 2012), 31.

20. Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 47.

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Chapter 8

Mali

From Instability to Insurgency and Near Obliteration

Before its summary decapitation by armed northern-based Tuareg separatists and their jihadist supporters in 2012, the vast but sparsely populated, landlocked West African country of Mali had a rather checkered history. From the time of its colonization by France, it was never a territory that was even remotely destined for united existence. As was common with balkanization of colonized Africa into individual territorial possessions of the respective metropolitan powers, French colonization also forcibly corralled several disparate ethnic, linguistic and racial groups, with distinctive cultures and sometimes without previous history of close interactions, into a single territorial compact for the sole purpose of plunder. Mali is geographically vast, a cavernous country more than twice the size of France itself, with large swathes of its territory either uninhabited or sparsely populated by nomadic peoples, especially the large northern portion that is home to the Tuaregs, a distinct racial group from the blacks in the south. About 90 percent of Mali's population, which is predominantly black, occupies the southern portion around the capital city of Bamako. As a colonial territory it was administered by force rather than consent, and France did practically nothing to integrate especially the nomadic Tuaregs in the north of the country into the mainstream of its colonial administration. It preferred instead to hold them in subjection by military force largely because of their early resistance to foreign influence. This colonial style invariably created disunity within the territory that lasted until France's exit in 1960. This disunity that France's colonial policy had deliberately embedded in the country's political architecture survived and has remained to haunt and hobble the country since its independence in 1960.

Today's Mali was originally only a portion of the vast French colonial possessions stretching across West Africa, then known generally as "French Soudan." Toward the end of colonial rule, it became an integral part of what

the French called "the Mali Federation" that joined together today's Senegal and Mali, until independence was granted in 1960 when the federation broke acrimoniously into two separate nation-states. French colonial rule was largely imposed and sustained by military force, especially in northern Mali whose inhabitants severely resisted the imposition of foreign rule and fought a series of devastating pitched battles with French forces in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, it was not until the early part of the twentieth century before the largely nomadic Tuaregs could be brought under French rule as part of today's Mali. This mode of colonization invariably left a deep-seated schism in the country, a schism which would come to haunt and hobble the country's domestic politics after independence.

Mali was subjected to France's characteristic iron-fisted rule even as France was trying to sustain the same pretense that its colonial enterprise was a civilizing mission intended to bring the benefits of modern European civilization to primitive natives of the colony. The reality of course was that no one but France itself was fooled, as all its colonial policies in Mali purposely discriminated against the same natives and hampered their development. In pursuit of its assimilation policy, the French did everything to ridicule and destroy indigenous cultures and traditional governance systems to pave the way for the imposition of the French culture. The colony was put under highly authoritarian and unaccountable foreign rule whilst indigenous rulers were severely regulated in the affairs of their peoples and the entire population was subjected to severe repression. For example, access to modern education was severely restricted for Africans such that there were not many educated Africans in Mali until the middle of the twentieth century.[1] This also did not permit much political activity until the end of the Second World War as the few educated Africans were deliberately integrated into the colonial administration to discourage any possibility of them developing any form of radical anti-colonial political consciousness. But the outcomes of the Second World War, as we have seen in chapter 3 of this volume, considerably vitiated France's politico-economic capabilities in a way that rendered the continuation of the colonial enterprise costly and unsustainable. Though reluctant, France was compelled by both its own postwar domestic circumstances and the burgeoning anti-colonial radicalism sweeping across the African continent to begin the inevitable process of decolonization from which emerged Mali as a sovereign state in 1960. As independence approached, it was the southerners who had been exposed to western education and modern administration that were in the forefront of the nationalist political struggles, almost to the total exclusion of the nomadic Tuaregs in the vast northern region. When independence was achieved, political power, the economy and public administration as well as control of the military, were in the hands of the southern blacks, to the exclusion of the Tuaregs, thus consolidating the

racial disunity that had been carried over from colonial rule. This unresolved north-south regional and racial divide has remained the country's major albatross. It is to Mali's circumstances as an independent state that we now turn.

MALI AND ITS POST-COLONIAL INSTABILITIES

The post-colonial political instabilities that afflicted the Republic of Mali are not dissimilar from those that plagued most other so-called post-colonial nation-states of the African continent, and they have their roots in the country's colonial provenance. Mali is an artificial creation of an adventurous foreign power, its boundaries were set without due cognizance to or respect for ethnography, its multi-ethnic populations were corralled into a new territorial compact by force rather than by consent, and the seeds of disunity embedded by the arbitrary actions of the colonizing power have survived till now. As we have established in chapter 1 of this volume, the new territorial compacts that European colonial rule put together were not intended to be durable entities and their survival beyond a few years after independence was nothing short of the miraculous. Mali was not different from other colonies in that the sole *raison d'être* for its creation was also to facilitate extractive plunder.

During colonial rule, and largely on account of the Tuareg's stiff resistance to foreign rule, the French authorities resorted only to the use of military force to maintain a modicum of administrative presence in northern Mali. Rather than weld together the diverse races and ethnic groups it had brought together, France's overt reliance on military force in northern Mali severely marginalized and excluded the nomadic population, especially the Tuareg, from mainstream administration and the little modern development the French could afford. State creation for the facilitation of extractive predation, rather than nation-building, was the main preoccupation of the colonizing power, thus leaving the country bitterly divided between the north and the south. It was this fractured entity that the post-independence government inherited and which they were unable to address with any meaningful results for national unity and integration.

Right from independence, the Malian state, as Annette Lohmann has noted, "had little presence in the North and did not develop the region," and it was this severe post-independence marginalization that further exacerbated the "feeling of neglect by the northern population including the Tuareg."[2] The Tuareg problem has thus remained an albatross around the neck of independent Mali, which has had to grapple constantly with separatist agitation and a series of violent insurgent eruptions ever since. The first major insurgency against the newly independent state occurred in 1962. Instead of addressing the underlying political grievances, the political authorities used the armed

forces to violently put down the revolt. Regrettably, as always, military solutions hardly ever address the root causes of problems, invariably leaving the Tuareg to lick the wounds of their defeat, and to begin preparations to fight another day. If this happened under the first civilian administration, the situation was much worse under successive military administrations whose preference for strong-arm tactics was legendary, and whose main predilection was violently suppressing any sub-national uprisings. There were widespread outbreaks of Tuareg rebellion at different times, most notably in 1991, 2006, and the most recent being in 2012. Several peace accords were brokered by neighboring states such as Algeria and Libya, but they always left the Tuareg still holding the short end of the stick, either because they failed to address the critical issues in contention or because of the unwillingness of the state authorities to implement them fully. This failure of nation-building would later pave the way for the incursion of Islamist jihadist rebels to exploit Mali's internal problems to fulfill their own objectives of spreading jihadist tentacles and establishing an Islamic Caliphate in the so-called vast ungoverned spaces in the Sahel-Sahara belt of Africa.

Whilst the above sketches the general picture of the Mali situation, a critical look at its mode of gaining independence and the character of the African governing elites who had collected power from the departing French rulers is imperative to put Mali's post-colonial history in proper perspective. Owing substantially to restricted access to education for Africans under French rule, there was no serious political activity in the whole of French West Africa until after the Second World War when a general political party for all the French West and Equatorial African territories, *Rassemblement Democratique Africain* (RDA), was established in 1946.[3] It was launched by the Ivoirian, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, in the Malian city of Bamako as an anti-colonial formation and was instrumental in the eventual grant of independence to Guinea in 1958. This was the general inter-territorial political party to which most of the educated elites in French West and Central Africa belonged, including Modibo Keita of Mali and others who would eventually play major roles in the country's post-independence politics and governance.

Upon the dissolution of the Mali Federation (Senegal and Mali) in 1960, Mali became an independent state under the leadership Modibo Keita as its first President. Modibo Keita ruled the country until 1968 when he was overthrown in a military coup d'état by Moussa Traore. That brought an end to the country's first attempt at democratic rule. Traore imposed an extremely dictatorial military rule, banned all political activities and brooked no opposition to his draconian rule. Moussa Traore civilianized himself a decade later by shedding the uniform, and ran for the presidential office in June 1979 as the candidate of the Democratic Union of Malian People (UPDM), the only political party that was officially allowed to exist. Even though he was elected

for a six-year presidential term as a civilian, he nonetheless ruled the country with an iron hand, got himself re-elected for a second term in 1985, and railroaded the national legislature to change the constitution to exempt him from tenure limit so he could rule perpetually. Except for the change from military uniform to the civilian dress, nothing changed in terms of draconian and personalist style of rule; political opposition remained banned; the clampdown on press freedom was retained. These subsisted until widespread internal political pressures began to force his hand to make some grudging liberal democratic concessions, such as permitting multiple parties to be formed. After a violent crackdown on student demonstrations in 1991 in which soldiers fired on protestors, killing more than three hundred youths, General Moussa Traore's over two decades of draconian rule was brought to an abrupt end by a coup d'état led by the commander of his presidential guard, Colonel Amadou Toumani Toure, in March 1991.

Colonel Toure's tenure was a short and interim one, lasting barely one year, during which the political space was opened up, multi-partyism was legalized, a new civilian constitution was drawn up and the first truly multiparty general elections in Mali's history were held to choose a parliament and president within the year. A former university professor, Alpha Oumar Konare was democratically elected as President in 1992 and Colonel Amadou Toumani Toure, who led the coup that overthrew President Traore, stepped down from power, retiring from the armed forces with the rank of General. That was the beginning of Mali as burgeoning democracy. After two terms as elected president, Konare was succeeded in the transitional election of 2002 by Amadou Toumani Toure, the retired army General and leader of the 1992 coup who had joined politics as a civilian. Mali witnessed further democratic consolidation during his two-term presidency, making the global community regard the country as a model democratic state in West Africa, until the violent events of January 2012 truncated the success of democracy. It is to these that we now turn.

The Tuareg Insurgency and the Creation of the Azawad Republic

Mali, like most other African countries, is a multi-ethnic and even multiracial country, with an estimated 90 percent of its sedentary population occupying the southern part of the country. Northern Mali, the geographically vast region which covers two-thirds of the land space and shares boundaries with Niger Republic, Algeria and Mauritania, is the home of the nomadic Tuareg, which constitute only about 10 percent of the population. The implication from this curious geographical and demographic setting is that a mere ten percent of the country's population, which is nomadic, inhabits two-thirds of the country's territory, making the vast northern region sparsely populated

and a significant part of what is derisively referred to as "ungoverned spaces" of the expansive Sahel-Sahara belt. The nomadic Tuaregs are a distinct light-skinned race, different from the Negroid or black peoples of the south. The Tuareg are a nomadic Berber people generally found in a number of North African and West African countries, namely Algeria, Mali, Niger Republic, and Burkina Faso, with the bulk of them in present-day Mali. In Mali, they were never integrated into the mainstream of the country's population by the French colonial rulers, and are known to have been fighting for self-determination for several decades, even from colonial times. Main Tuareg rebellions are known to have occurred at various times in 1916–1917, after independence between 1962–1964, from 1990–1995, again from 2007–2009, and the most recent rebellion which broke out in January 2012 and spear-headed by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) nearly resulted in the total break-up of the country. Without question, the Tuareg issue is a carryover from France's style of colonial rule which failed to weld the disparate peoples together into a united country before granting it independence in 1960 and has been a persistent political headache for all central administrations in Bamako since the colonial days. According to Jeremy Keenan,

> Since Independence in 1960, the Tuareg of Mali and Niger have rebelled against their central governments on several occasions. In 1962-4, a rebellion by Mali's Tuareg was crushed ruthlessly. Major rebellions in both countries in the 1990s were forcibly repressed, with government forces specifically targeting civilians.[4]

Unfortunately for the country, neither military nor civilian repression has done anything tangible to resolve the lingering political crisis, making periodic Tuareg rebellion and agitation for self-determination a common feature in Mali. As Keenan asserts further,

> In Mali, a brief rebellion in May 2006 was followed by a two-year uprising from 2007 until 2009 when it dissipated into an inconclusive and transient peace. While the Niger and Mali governments have both been guilty of provoking Tuareg into taking up arms, all Tuareg rebellions have been driven by a sense of political marginalization.[5]

It is instructive that today that huge but sparsely populated, desert-like northern portion of Mali's territorial space is traversed, according to Winfried Veit, by a collection of "terrorists, smugglers, bandits and nomads."[6]

Until March 2012 when it nearly imploded, Mali was generally though erroneously regarded as one of those African states with a promise of democratic development and consolidation, after being a relatively stable and prosperous democracy for upward of two decades. After twenty-three years of military

dictatorship, General Amadou Toumani Toure had brought an end to military rule through a coup d'état, followed by a transition to civil rule program which culminated in multi-party general elections in 1992 from which Alpha Omar Konare, a former university professor, had emerged as President. After two successful terms as democratically elected president, Konare stepped down after transitional general elections held in 2002, and was succeeded by President Toumani Toure. Toure himself was elected for a second term of office which was supposed to end in April 2012, after which he would not have been eligible to stand for election again. But a few weeks before the expiration of his second and final term, an army mutiny which morphed into a full-blown military coup on March 21, 2012, suddenly and summarily truncated the democratic trajectory, bringing the country into serious internal political crisis which has attracted differing regional and international reactions. The grouse of the army mutineers was that the outgoing President Toure did not do enough to curtail the nomadic Tuareg insurgency in the north of the country. Accused of poor handling of the crisis, the poorly and thoroughly disgruntled armed forces personnel, wearied by fighting better armed and battle hardened insurgents in the north, returned to Bamako to overthrow the civilian government. It would appear that the immediate trigger for that coup was the reported cold-blooded slaughter of a garrison of about eighty brave but ill-equipped Malian soldiers by the Tuareg insurgents at their base in Northern Mali, an action which totally demoralized the rest of the soldiers who blamed the regrettable debacle on bad government policies and lack of the necessary military equipment.

A full understanding of Mali's post-independence predicament requires a brief look into its historical bi-partitioning by the French. Since its independence in 1960, Mali has had to grapple with the consequences of bifurcation into north and south, a carryover from the colonial days. One consequence is that while the geographically smaller south contains the bulk of the country's population, the much larger but mostly arid and sparsely populated north contains the nomadic Tuaregs who also have ethnic kinsmen in neighboring Algeria, Niger Republic, and Burkina Faso. Historically, the Tuaregs were never really truly integrated into colonial Mali, and have since independence accused successive central governments in Bamako of marginalization and neglect, and this has necessitated separatist agitations throughout the country's post-colonial existence. The Tuaregs in general make up about 10 percent of the population of this multi-ethnic nation and occupy the largely desert regions of northern Mali bordering southern Algeria, Burkina Faso, Niger Republic and Mauritania. Algeria and Niger Republic are also contiguous states with indigenous Tuareg populations and have themselves been dealing with similar separatist predilections for decades.

Rather than integrate the Tuaregs into Mali's mainstream politics and governance, the method of choice of successive administrations is the

employment of strong-arm tactics to deal with internal problems that they constitute. To the country's eternal regret, the combination of political maneuvers and strong-arm tactics has failed to resolve the lingering separatist agitations in the north. It was Bamako's inability to deal decisively with the insurgency that led to military mutiny in the capital city that later mutated into a full-blown coup d'etat that overthrew the democratic government. In the ensuing chaos, confusion and uncertainty, the Tuaregs and their National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) were emboldened to launch their insurgency again in 2012. In what could be described as a blitzkrieg, their well-armed militia forces successfully seized control of three northern regions after vanquishing government forces. It was in the midst of this sudden insurgency that the previously ill-equipped and incompetent Malian armed forces wilted, allowing the rebels to swiftly take over the entire north. With the unprecedented military successes of the Tuareg insurgents also came the declaration of secession of the entire Northern Mali as the independent Republic of Azawad. But hardly had the insurgency succeeded than several northern-based jihadist terrorist groups—for example, Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA), Signed-in-Blood Battalion, Ansar el-Din and others with connections to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)—swiftly moved in to seize control from the Tuareg separatists and promptly instituted the worst form of Sharia law. Their own aspiration for supporting the Tuaregs was not for the Azawad Republic but for a much larger Islamic caliphate covering the whole of the Sahel.

This patently opportunistic action of the jihadists was aided by the success of the NATO-backed anti-Gaddafi insurgency in Libya in 2012. The subsequent murder of Colonel Gaddafi put an end to four decades of authoritarian and autocratic rule in Libya, therefore creating an exodus of battle-hardened mercenaries and other freelance fighters who had fought in Gaddafi's mercenary army. Many of them, now equipped with their large caches of heavy weapons plundered from Libya's vast armories, moved southward into the neighboring countries of Niger Republic and Mali where domestic Tuareg insurgents were battling their own governments. The arrival of these battle-hardened fighters and heavy armaments in Northern Mali was the game-changer that enabled the Tuareg insurgency to gain much traction and to swiftly capture the entire northern territory from the control of the Malian armed forces.

Foreign Interventions and Continued Fragility: Is Mali a Failed State?

The moment a coup took place and the Tuareg separatists opportunistically exploited the chaotic situation in Bamako to launch their insurgency, the international community was stampeded into an immediate response, for a

variety of reasons that ranged from the selfish to the altruistic. Apart from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) which condemned the emerging scenario, a slew of other foreign do-gooders promptly emerged on the scene, the most prominent being France, Mali's former colonial master. France has abiding strategic interests in the Sahel, especially because of the vast uranium deposits in Niger Republic and hydrocarbon resources (oil and gas) in Algeria and Chad. French forces had been guarding the uranium mines in Niger Republic, to prevent the strategic resource from falling into enemy hands. The United States on its part has been involved in Mali, especially with its armed forces, since after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York as part of its generalized global war on terror (GWOT) declared by President George W. Bush. Surprisingly, it was the US that trained the Malian armed forces that completely wilted before the Tuareg and jihadist militias, that led to foreign interventions in that country. The point is that since there is no monolithic altruistic reason for foreign intervention in Mali, post-conflict state-building is not currently seen as a priority of any of the do-gooders.

ECOWAS, the sub-regional body, after surveying the chaotic situation on the ground in Mali, decided on April 26, 2012, that a military action was needed to restore Mali's territorial sovereignty and secure its democratic system. Since only the UN Security Council could authorize military action under the UN Charter, ECOWAS later requested its approval for the deployment of what was called an African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) into Mali, a request that the Security Council via Resolution 2085 of December 20, 2012, approved. Unfortunately, unforeseen complications intervened by January 2013 when Islamist jihadists that had displaced the Tuaregs launched their own blistering military invasion southward to capture the whole country. This was the tipping point that compelled the government of Mali to ask for immediate French military assistance to regain and restore the country's sovereignty.

Regional and International Reactions were immediate and overwhelming. At this point, the ECOWAS states, the African Union and the rest of the international community came to the unmistakable conclusion that the political and military developments in Mali posed a severe threat to international and regional security. This conclusion was not unconnected with the opportunistic involvement of well-known terrorist groups affiliated with Al Qaeda which have been perpetrating terrorist activities and hostage-taking in the Sahel for nearly a decade. After all, the international community was just trying to digest the democratic reversal in Mali and its implications when it was compounded by the secession. The United Nations swiftly and unequivocally condemned the action.[7] The immediate and firm response of the Economic Community of West African States was an unmistakable condemnation of the

coup and rejection of any unconstitutional change of government. ECOWAS leaders called for the immediate and unconditional restoration of the democratic government. In rejecting the unconstitutional change of government, the African Union affirmed the ECOWAS position. This led to the ECOWAS decision in November 2012 to dispatch a sub-regional military force of 3,000 troops to assist Mali to reclaim its territory, if the UN Security Council would give approval. The qualified approval was conveyed by December 2012.[8]

Western countries also condemned this unfortunate democratic reversal in a country that had hitherto been held up as one of the few democratic success stories in a coup-prone sub-region. While Great Britain and France condemned this development, US reaction was perhaps more trenchant, apparently because it had been cooperating with the ousted government in Bamako to fight terrorism in the Sahel. Washington's response became more vociferous when the Tuaregs and Islamist militants opportunistically seized Northern Mali and declared an independent country of Azawad. From then on, the US began to back the ECOWAS decision to use military force to resolve the crisis if peaceful means failed. As of early January 2013, the insurgency had taken a drastic turn as the Islamist militia fighters decided to extend their insurgency farther south, reportedly taking the strategic southern town of Konna in another swift military offensive. This latest offensive by Islamist rebels amounted to widening the scope of the war beyond Northern Mali which the Tuaregs had not envisaged in their original plan to carve out an independent state of their own. Indications were that since the original Tuareg separatists had been displaced from power, the AQIM-backed Islamist groups who had declared the extremist form of Sharia rule in Northern Mali did not subscribe to the limited scope of the insurgency but were perhaps bent on taking the whole country by marching southward to Bamako.

The attack and capture of Konna signaled a dramatic change of plans as a contingent of French ground forces was swiftly deployed into Mali, at the request of the authorities in Bamako, from their base in Chad to assist the Malian armed forces to recapture Konna and prevent a southward advance of the Islamist rebels. This was clearly ahead of the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) which had previously been authorized by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter via Resolution 2085 of December 20, 2012.[9] French fighter jets and bombers reportedly assisted the Malian army with air support to retake the town of Konna from the Islamists fighters and thereby halt further southward rebel advance. ECOWAS, whose troops deployment was not expected to take place until September 2013, also swiftly responded to this latest development by sending troops from Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso and Togo[10] In a swift reaction to this southward rebel offensive, the United Nations Security Council was so alarmed that it stated in a press statement on January 11, 2013, that

"this serious deterioration of the situation threatens even more the stability and integrity of Mali and constitutes a direct threat to international peace and security."[11]

French interests and concern, though predicated on being Mali's former colonial master, were not wholly altruistic. A number of French hostages were at the time being held by AQIM-backed terrorist groups in Mali, Niger and even Nigeria.[12] Following in France's footsteps, Britain also deployed aerial assistance in support of the French operation when on January 13, a Royal Air Force C17 Globemaster cargo plane, the first of two to be deployed, arrived at the Evreux airbase in Paris to provide logistics assistance to the French military intervention in Mali, although London had insisted that it would not send troops to take part in combat operations.[13]

There is also an Algerian dimension and involvement without which a complete understanding and appreciation of the Malian debacle is impossible. Algeria is a North African country that shares 1,400 kilometers of porous land border with Mali. And, like Mali and Niger Republic, Algeria has its own restive indigenous Tuareg population with a clearly manifest separatist agenda and irredentist tendencies which in the 1990s had resulted in domestic insurgency that led to a great massacre of thousands of Algerians. Algeria has therefore always been uncomfortable with Tuareg insurgency in Mali, south of its border, for the contagious effect on its own united corporate existence. An ethnic minority in Algeria, the nomadic Tuaregs have historically resented and resisted Arab domination and struggled for freedom, and possibly for the establishment of a pan-Tuareg state of their own in the Sahel. This predilection for separatism has for decades been resisted by the central authorities in Algiers, which view the excision of the so-called Tuareg-dominated Azawad Republic from Mali with considerable unease, for the possible encouragement it may give similar rebellion and insurgency in Algeria. This possibility is scary because of the involvement of freelance ex-Gaddafi fighters and an assortment of terrorist groups, some reportedly with links to AQIM.

The most recent complication in the Algerian connection to the war in Mali was the terrorist attack, murder and hostage-taking incident by a group of armed Islamist terrorists. These terrorists from their base in neighboring Libya launched a daring lightning raid into the Algerian desert gas installation, seizing and holding hundreds of Algerians and foreign nationals hostage. This audacious act was ostensibly to punish Algeria for its involvement in the international military effort to regain Northern Mali from the terrorists, especially Algeria's permission for the French air force to use its air space for operations into Northern Mali. A new and totally unanticipated dimension had thus been introduced into the Mali crisis, with severe implications not just for the whole international community but much more specifically for the neighboring countries whose troops were then in Mali.

Neighboring states such as the politically fragile Niger Republic, Burkina Faso and, most especially Nigeria with a large Muslim population and simmering domestic Islamist terrorism, have plenty to worry about. Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamist group was thought to have had links with Malian Islamists and possibly through them to AQIM. In fact, Nigeria through its then Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant-General Azubuike Ihejirika, acknowledged that the Nigerian army was on the trail of Mali-trained Islamist fighters who had been infiltrated into the country. Oil-rich Nigeria, already battling Islamist-inspired domestic insecurity, now had its worries increased. The hostage situation in the Algerian desert with nationals of several countries involved brought an unprecedented international attention to Mali and brought the situation in the Sahel-Saharan Africa into greater limelight. If anything at all, it indubitably handed over decision making concerning the future of Mali into the hands of the rest of the international community outside Africa. For instance, the assertion that was gaining currency and wider acceptance was that an Islamist-controlled Mali was a grave danger to rest of the global community.

There is no doubt that the Algerian terrorist hostage incident further complicated the Mali crisis. Following that incident, the United States, which had previously asserted that its assistance to the French and ECOWAS efforts would be strictly limited to "only logistical support and intelligence-gathering assistance," made a dramatic about-face, declaring that US soldiers would henceforth provide training for Malian soldiers possibly in neighboring countries but not in Mali itself. Germany, also providing logistical assistance to the French and West African troops, thereafter reportedly set up a base for operations in Senegal by deploying "two Transall transport airplanes from the 63rd Luftwaffe squadron to join the mission in Mali."[14] What all these imply is that two-thirds of Mali is under foreign military occupation.

CONCLUSION

The political impasse and the territorial bifurcation of Mali have yet to be fully resolved. Achieving both peace and proper unification is simply herculean. The country's vast northern region is still occupied by the restive Tuaregs although their fighting ability has so far been sufficiently degraded to keep a veneer of peace and unity, at least for the moment. The northern territory has since 2012 remained under virtual international receivership, first by the deployment of French garrisons and immediately thereafter ECOWAS forces, and the entire operations later put under the UN peacekeeping force, still keeping both the Tuareg separatists and jihadist terrorists in check. But the reality is that even with over 15,000 UN peacekeeping troops in northern

Mali as of mid-2017,[15] the situation in the country remains quite precarious. This is partly due to the non-resolution of the fundamental domestic political problems, the north-south ethnic and racial fault-lines that have been responsible for the country's fragility since independence, and which later triggered the 2012 rebellion and insurgency, and much more so by the intrusion and increasingly violent activities of a plethora of well-armed and well-resourced jihadist insurgent groups with powerful links to AQIM seeking to carve out an Islamist caliphate of their own in the vast Sahel-Sahara region. Unfortunately, the pervasive corruption among the country's political and ruling elites, and the collusion of politicians and jihadist groups in the flourishing drug trade, smuggling and human trafficking activities, are fueling insecurity and exacerbating instability, as Mali has become a major transit route for Latin American drug cartels to ship their merchandise through the desert to Europe. The Tuareg groups and jihadist terrorists are profiting massively from these enterprises, including kidnapping of expatriates for ransom. For now, it is only the massive foreign military presence that has kept the country together, and should that be removed the country might soon be back to where it was as of January 2012 before French and ECOWAS military interventions. Or even worse, Mali is likely to degenerate into a hellish territory that would be contested by separatists, jihadists, terrorists, narco-traffickers, smugglers, and bandits.

It is without question that Mali is a victim of its colonial history and trajectory, and overcoming the deeply embedded fissures and the racial schisms between the north and south that French colonial policy and administration deliberately created, can never be an easy task; in fact it has almost become an intractable one. It is doubtful that any peace deal brokered by the UN would hold for any length of time once the international military presence that has held the country together is removed. Experiences from the past have shown that negotiated peace always remained fragile and vulnerable to subversion as long as the Tuareg claim of marginalization was not properly addressed. In any case, Tuaregs in Mali always receive the encouragement and support of their racial kinfolk in neighboring Algeria, Mauritania and Niger Republic, external meddling that often complicates internal reconciliation.

But perhaps much more ominous and unsettling is Mali's reputation as the current haven and transit route for a variety of trans-border criminal activities, from trafficking in humans (men, women and children), illicit cigarette smuggling, and narcotics trafficking to and from Europe, kidnapping and hostage-taking, and terrorism. Currently awash with small arms and light weapons as well as heavy armaments, and with several jihadist movements holding sway in the expansive Sahel-Sahara region, Mali is unlikely to know peace and security in the immediate future. That it may eventually descend into a sheer Hobbesian nightmare is therefore a distinct possibility

the moment external military forces are evacuated. This is perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the swift external military interventions by the French, ECOWAS, the UN and other interested parties whose central motive does not include state-building. Unless state-building is made a core objective, the international community will watch as Mali dissolves in another orgy of violence and instability. If post-conflict state-building is not part of the deal, how will the present muscular response to the crisis address comprehensively the Tuareg demands, the Islamist terrorists, the trans-national organized criminal networks that are thriving on smuggling, narcotics trafficking, and trafficking in humans? Will they be driven into neighboring states or will they just fade away?

NOTES

1. For a historical account of Mali from colonization until independence and after, see Raph Uwechue, ed., *Africa Today* (London: Africa Books Ltd., 1991), 1240–52.

2. Annette Lohmann, *Who Owns the Sahara? Old Conflicts, New Menaces: Mali and the Central Sahara between the Tuareg, Al Qaida and Organized Crime* (Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2011), 6.

3. Uwechue, ed., *Africa Today*, 1241.

4. http://eurasiareview.com/06102012-algerian-state-terrorism-and-atrocities-in-northern-mali. (Accessed on 12/10/2012).

5. http://eurasiareview.com/06102012-algerian-state-terrorism-and-atrocities-in-northern-mali. (Accessed on 12/10/2012).

6. Winfried Veit, "Is Mali the New 'Jihadistan': Why Peace in the Sahel Region Is but a Distant Hope," *International Politics and Society*, www.ips-journal.eu/regions/africa/article/show/is-mali-the-new-jihadistan-1995/. (Accessed May 29, 2017).

7. The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2056 of July 5, 2012, "condemning the forcible seizure of power from the democratically elected government of Mali by some members of the Armed Forces of Mali on 22 March 2012," and "reiterating its categorical rejection of statements made by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) regarding the so-called 'independence' of Northern Mali, and further reiterating that it considers such announcements null and void."

8. UNSC Resolution 2071 unanimously adopted on October 12, 2012, cautiously endorsed the ECOWAS and African Union plan for military action to restore the political and territorial *status quo* in Mali.

9. UNSC resolution S/RES/2085 (2012), a unanimous resolution where all the fifteen members voted in support without any abstention or negative votes, authorizing the use of force through the AFISMA.

10. "France Rafale Jets Target Gao in Eastern Mali," BBC News Europe, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21002918. (Accessed 13/1/2013).

11. UN News Centre, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43902&Cr=#Mali&Cr1=#.UPRuAXpZ6Fk. (Accessed January 14, 2013).

12. French hostages Pierre Legrand, Daniel Larribe, Thierry Dole, and Marc Feret had been held in northern Niger since 2010; Philippe Verdon and Serge Lazarevic kidnapped in Northern Mali since November 2011; Gilberto Rodriguez Leal kidnapped in Mali since November 2012; and Francis Collomp kidnapped and being held in Nigeria by a terrorist group known as Ansaru. BBC News Europe, "French Hostages Still Being Held in Africa," http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21002918. (Accessed 13/1/2013).

13. "Mali: RAF C17 Cargo Plane to Help French Operation," www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21004040. (Accessed 13/1/2013).

14. http://www.eurasiareview.com/18012013-us-to-provide-france-airlift-help-training-for-mali-operation-reports/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+%28Eurasia+Review%29&utm_content=Yahoo%21+Mail. (Accessed 19/1/2013).

15. According to the UN, the strength of its uniformed peacekeeping force in Mali (named United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, MINUSMA) as of May 2017 stood at 15,209, comprising 13,289 soldiers and 1,920 police personnel. www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/.

Chapter 9

Somalia

From State Collapse to Rogue State

SOMALIA UNDER FOREIGN RULE

In a very apt characterization, Laitin and Samatar in their seminal work describe Somalia, the country in the Horn of Africa, as a nation in search of statehood.[1] This perhaps aptly describes the situation of Somalia today. An explanation of what Somalia is will help put this characterization in perspective. Somalia is peculiar in terms of its demography. It is the only ethnically homogenous African country whose people, the Somali, boast a common ancestry, common culture and language and professes common adherence to the one religion: Islam. While Somalia is an independent modern nation-state, the Somalis on the other hand are a nation in the truest sense of that term and are found beyond the confines of Somalia alone. Although today's independent country of Somalia may be the only mono-ethnic country in Africa, the people of the Somali stock are actually divided between or "sliced" into four contiguous countries—namely Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya, part of the ugly consequences of the colonial partitioning of Africa which took no cognizance whatsoever of the ethnographic realities on the ground.[2]

It is a fact that all modern African nation-states are artificial creations of European colonialism, and their boundaries were also determined and fixed by the colonial masters. And it is also true that most of them are hardly more than patchworks of mutually competitive ethno-nationalities that were forcibly corralled into new artificially determined territorial compacts. But Somalia's case is peculiar, in that the country originally had more than one colonial overlord; the Somali nation actually had three colonial masters simultaneously—namely France, Great Britain and Italy, which carved out and administered three separate portions. During the European scramble for colonies in Africa in the nineteenth century, the French, British, and Italians

carved up different portions of the Somali nation. The French had portions including today's independent Djibouti, while the British had the Somaliland Protectorate in the north and Italy possessed Italian Somaliland in the south. The metropolitan powers which carved up Africa into their possessions in the nineteenth century did so without any consideration whatsoever to ethnographic, cultural and historic realities of the peoples they so callously sliced up and forced together into new territorial compacts for colonial plunder. For example, a portion of Somalis are in the northern districts of today's independent Kenya. This scenario is replicated all over Africa, and that is why the balkanization of the Somali nation is not so peculiar: it is the common reality across the continent.

What took place in 1960 when Somalia became an independent nation-state was the formal merger of two formerly separate and separately administered colonial territories—namely the British Somaliland Protectorate to the north, and the Italian Somaliland to the south, into a single country. Even after that historic merger, no less than a third of all Somalis still remain in the other three neighboring countries: the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, and the now independent country of Djibouti. These are areas which Somalis in independent Somalia continue to regard as "lost lands" they still harbor aspirations to regain.[3] What this portends is that Somali irredentism has always subsisted below the surface, waiting for an opportunity to manifest. At independence, Somalia was a very poor country with extremely limited national resources for a modern nation-state. But much more than its poverty as a defining factor was the fact of its dual colonial history. Throughout colonization from the late nineteenth century till 1960, the now merged territories were administered under different colonial policies, and thus paraded differences in administrative style, different educational systems and policies, and other notable differences that have subsisted beyond independence.[4] Merging them to become a single independent nation-state in 1960 neither addressed nor erased those existing differences, some of which would come to define the country's fate later. Let us take a brief look at the conditions in both territories under their respective colonial overlords to understand the characteristics of post-independence Somalia.

The British Somaliland Protectorate covered the northwest portion of today's independent Somalia. The territory was initially taken over by Britain as a coastal outpost in order to obtain the necessary supplies and provisions, especially beef, for the military garrison it had established at Aden. Britain's military presence in Aden (now part of Yemen) was for the principal purpose of protecting commercial shipping through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to India. The garrison was thus administered from Britain's India colony. It was not until 1898 that responsibility for its administration was transferred to the Foreign Office which held it until 1905, and thereafter transferred it to

the Colonial Office in London where it properly belonged. As for what later became the British Somaliland protectorate, creating a real colony was therefore not Britain's original intention. It was the eventual European scramble for colonies in Africa in the late nineteenth century that created the imperative of turning its coastal outpost in Somalia into a real territorial possession and seeking to expand into its hinterland. Indeed, most of the direct colonial activities were initially restricted to the coastal areas largely because of stiff Somali resistance to foreign rule. As Muslims, not only did the people abhor foreign rule and culture but mounted armed resistance to British occupation, such that the British authorities had to dispatch a series of military expeditions into the interior to subdue the anti-colonial forces founded and led by Muhammad Abdille Hassan, known with the religious title of Sayid. British authority remained generally ineffectual in the interior until after the First World War, when Britain used the new technology of aircraft bombers and fighter jets to bomb and degrade Sayid's fighting forces, forcing him to abandon resistance and flee to Ethiopia for safety where he eventually died.

The eventual defeat of the armed resistance, a feat aided by the new aircraft technology, was what began proper colonial rule in Somalia's hinterland. However, Britain's belated attempt to provide Western schools and education, infrastructure and social services was still largely shunned by the people who also refused taxation that would have aided the administration. During World War II, British Somaliland protectorate was briefly overrun and occupied by Italy from 1940 to 1941, but it was later regained by the British. As the continuation of colonial empires was becoming unsustainable and no longer defensible, the British knew that granting independence to all its colonies in Africa was only a matter of time. The British government signified its intention to consider independence for its protectorate if it would merge with the Somaliland Trust Territory, formerly Italian Somaliland. And this was precisely what happened on July 1, 1960, when the Republic of Somalia was born.

Italian Somaliland, on the other hand, occupies the northeastern, central and southern portions of today's Republic of Somalia. The territory came under Italian control in the wake of the Scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century through a number of treaties signed with local rulers and was regarded as an integral part of Italian East Africa. Italy's central motive for coveting control of its portion of Somaliland was similar to Britain's: to control freedom of shipping through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea and exiting the Gulf of Aden into the Indian Ocean. Italy's interest in Somalia also increased after World War I especially because the new National Fascist Party-controlled government under Benito Mussolini had its sights on colonizing the empire of Ethiopia as a prized addition to its East African possession. Somaliland became a very strategic foothold and

launching pad in the realization of this ultimate ambition.[5] The territory, Italian Somaliland protectorate, was forcibly opened up for an influx of Europeans and Italy proceeded to build infrastructure to connect the various parts. It was from this territory that Italian forces later launched a blistering invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. After several pitched battles in which Italy deployed no fewer than 40,000 soldiers, Ethiopia was finally conquered by 1936, adding the hitherto independent empire to Italian East Africa.

With Ethiopia now added to its possessions in East Africa, Italy proceeded to establish infrastructure—roads, railways, bridges, seaports, hospitals, and schools—to link the Somali coast to the hinterland of Ethiopia itself. This move was in stark contrast to what obtained in British Somaliland which, because of its stiff resistance to foreign presence and bitter opposition to taxation, suffered severe neglect in terms of infrastructure provision. In fact, by the mid-1930s, not less than 50,000 Italian citizens, apart from over 200,000 soldiers deployed throughout the territory, had settled in Somaliland, mostly in Mogadishu which had by then become the headquarters of Italian East Africa. In Mogadishu, both the settlers and natives enjoyed relatively higher living standards than many other colonies in Africa. It is in this regard that Italian Somaliland differed from its British counterpart.

However, things began to change very rapidly, and the political equation in the entire East African region would be altered sharply and irreversibly by the fortunes and misfortunes of the Second World War, a global conflagration in which Italy and Britain would find themselves on opposing sides. On account of the presence of hundreds of thousands of Italian troops already present in Italian Somaliland after the conquest of Ethiopia, Italy was able to drive Britain out of its Somali possession, bringing British Somaliland protectorate briefly under Italian control from 1940 to 1941. The British later regained the initiative, defeating and driving Italy out of both British and Italian Somaliland, with British forces in full control of Italian Somaliland until it became a United Nations Trust Territory in 1950. In all senses, the outcomes of the Second World War summarily ended Italy's dream of colonial empire in East Africa. Though Italy's sovereignty was restored, it was stripped of all its colonial possessions in Africa—Italy, Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, and Libya, although it was made the UN trustee over former Italian Somaliland. The moment Italy was made the trustee of the former Italian Somaliland with a mandate to prepare it for eventual independence within a specified period of ten years, it began systematically to improve and upgrade the infrastructure, raise the standards of administration and of living considerably, more than the inhabitants of British Somaliland enjoyed. Both territories had different official languages, were exposed to different administrative and educational systems, different economies and infrastructure, and were different in overall development and readiness for independence. Since British Somaliland was

neither under a trusteeship nor given a deadline for independence, the British colonial authorities did not begin to foresee the need to prepare the territory for independence until 1958. This invariably allowed Italian Somaliland to be far ahead of its British counterpart in the preparations and readiness for independence. When independence eventually came with the merger of the two in 1960, it was already indisputable that the differences in colonial provenance and different levels of preparedness for independent existence were bound to impact negatively on post-independence national politics, cohesion and development. Apart from the obvious differences in the levels of development between the now amalgamated regions, adherence to an inherited system was problematic in the early days of independence. For example, while Somalis in the north preferred retention of the inherited British legal system, the people of the south preferred the Italian system they knew well. This was the unenviable inheritance of Somalis from two separate colonial masters, and no sooner was independence granted than the fractures began to play out. However, the differences were papered over by virtue of the commonality of the Somali language and subscription to the same religion of Islam by all Somalis.

Authoritarian Rule and Domestic Instabilities

Independence was proclaimed for the newly formed Somali Republic on July 1, 1960, an exercise that formally brought together for the first time under a single government and administration the former British Somaliland and former Italian Somaliland, with Mogadishu, the former headquarters of Italian Somaliland, as the new national capital. The newly independent republic had a central government under Prime Minister Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke which was a coalition arrangement between the two biggest northern based political parties (the Somali United Party and the Somali National League) and the Somali Youth League in the south.[6] All political offices were shared in this coalition government. Somalia thus began its independent existence as a democracy under a British-type parliamentary system of government. The civilian rule was, however, terminated after the assassination of the president of the republic by one of his security guards on October 15, 1969, and was swiftly followed a few days later by a bloodless coup, which brought the country under a dictatorial regime.

But even before the termination of democratic rule, the post-independence government operated under conditions of serious internal divisions and instability, arising from subsisting colonial fractures as well as the country's ambitions for a union of all Somali territories which had become a determinant of its international relations and regional policy. It appeared that the stability of any government depended on fidelity to the ideology of

pan-Somalism as well as how vigorously or aggressively it pursued it. The successive post-independence elections that were held hinged on the dream of Somali union, and governments often faced domestic political opposition based on their pursuit of the agenda. For example, the government in March 1962 was confronted with a no confidence vote when it could not successfully persuade the British government to hand over Kenya's NFD to Somalia during the negotiation of Kenyan independence.[7] The necessity for this grand pursuit as a survival strategy of the authorities in Mogadishu was responsible for Somalia's testy relations with its neighbors and resulted in skirmishes and wars with Ethiopia and disagreements with Kenya.

The 1969 bloodless coup overthrew the post-independence civilian administration, effectively terminating Somalia's first experiment with democratic rule. The new military ruler was General Mohamed Siad Barre, former army chief. His coming to power began an era of harsh military dictatorship which would later be opportunistically justified on the nebulous ideology of scientific socialism. He created the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) as the new ruling organ, and renamed the country in his new-fangled revolutionary fashion as the Somali Democratic Republic, suspended the country's constitution, abolished the national parliament and abolished the Supreme Court as well. Barre's so-called revolution was actually the beginning of the long reign of tyranny that would so comprehensively unravel Somalia two decades later to the point of state collapse and virtual disappearance from the political map of Africa.

With Siad Barre having impounded more powers to himself away from his military colleagues by forming a political party, the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party (SSRP) with assistance from the Soviet Union and disbanding the Supreme Revolutionary Council in 1976, the pressures from powerful Somali clans and other groups for the resolution of subsisting territorial claims increased. Siad Barre had no choice but to respond to these mounting pressures. While these political pressures were mounting in Somalia, its main regional adversary, Ethiopia, was in the mid-1970s going through its worst period ever after the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie by the military under Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. The socialist policies of the new military junta were generally disastrous, ethnic tensions were building up and the separatist agitations in Eritrea had resulted in full-scale war that concentrated the attention of the country's military forces. This was the moment that Siad Barre decided to opportunistically exploit to reassert Somalia's territorial claims to the Somali-speaking Ogaden in Ethiopia. With an army that had been beefed up to three times its size by the mid-1970s and equipped with modern Soviet armaments, Somalia felt ready and confident to take on Ethiopia.[8] So in July 1977, Somalia's expeditionary force invaded the disputed Ogaden region, swiftly capturing a substantial portion, about 60 percent of

the territory, within the first month. This lightning victory over the Ethiopian forces was, however, not to last long, as the tables turned sharply later, making the invasion of the Ogaden a thorough misadventure for Siad Barre and for Somalia at large.

The Ogaden Misadventure

Even after the independence of Somalia in 1960, it was clear that the desire for the union of all Somalis in all the four countries where colonial partitioning had divided them remained an abiding article of faith of all Somali leaders. The dream of re-uniting all Somali-speaking people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia into a future "Greater Somalia" was kept alive, even inscribed in the constitution of the country and "emblazoned on the Somali flag, which bore as its emblem a five-pointed star representing the segments of the Somali people."[9] The five-pointed star, in the view of Somalis, symbolizes the five territories the Somali people inhabit: British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, the Ogaden region in Ethiopia, northern Kenya and Djibouti. It was part of the drive to achieve this ultra-nationalist dream of reunification into a Greater Somalia, to correct the historical wrong of the partitioning of the people into several states that underscored Siad Barre's conflict with Ethiopia in the late 1970s.

But whilst it is indisputable that Somalis had long harbored this irredentist inclination, the colonial policies of Great Britain, especially after the defeat of Italy in World War II, did raise the specter of Greater Somalia. Marina Ottaway reports that Britain toyed with the idea of creating a protectorate of Greater Somalia that would incorporate both British and Italian Somaliland protectorates as well as other Somali-inhabited areas of Ethiopia, the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, and the French enclave of Djibouti, a proposal which angered Ethiopia, forcing it to seek alliance with the United States as a counterweight to British influence and imperialist designs in the Horn of Africa after the end of the Second World War.[10] Even when this intention did not materialize because it was rejected by the allied powers during the Paris Peace Conference of July to October 1946, Britain had unwittingly provided encouragement for what would become Somalia's attempt at territorial aggrandizement in the late 1970s. It was also reported that Britain at a point in the late 1950s actually considered slicing off its Northern Frontier District of Kenya (NFD) inhabited largely by ethnic Somalis and adding it to British Somaliland. This proposal was still on the table even as late as 1962 when a British government-appointed commission to study the matter had found that the Somalis in NFD actually wanted to be joined to Somalia before Kenya gained independence a year later, although it never actually materialized because of protests from Kenyan politicians and leaders.[11] Even though

Britain did not go ahead with the intention anymore, it was clear that the harm had already been done, as it had stoked the embers of irredentism and raised the possibility of Somali irredentism in the future. The dream of a future "Greater Somalia" that would incorporate all Somali-inhabited territories into the Somali state had been made an existential imperative from then on.

Britain's post–World War II imperial designs in the Horn, having unwittingly spurred Somali nationalism and irredentism, would start to bear negative fruits for peace and stability immediately after Somalia attained independence in July 1960 when in 1961 Somalia engaged in skirmishes with Ethiopia in the Somali-inhabited Ogaden region of Ethiopia, and later a war in 1964, with both encounters resulting in Ethiopia's victory over Somali irredentism. Similarly, fighting broke out in the Somali-inhabited Kenyan NFD in 1962 after Britain abandoned its proposal to give the territory to Somalia.[12] For another half decade, the relationship between Kenya and Somalia was in a virtual state of war until a new Somali government in 1968 reached peace accords with the neighboring countries.

Right from independence, Somalia's relations with all its contiguous neighbors, especially those with Somali-speaking territories, were generally uneasy on account of its well-known irredentist inclinations. This development would eventually bring superpower rivalry into the Horn. The Somali government in pursuit of its territorial ambitions for a Pan-Somali state sought military assistance from the Soviet Union to build and equip a large army for territorial acquisitions when the European powers refused to help. The Soviets, seeking penetration into Africa, which had been a European preserve, quickly seized the opportunity for an alliance with Somalia and a major presence in the Horn of Africa. The Soviet Union gained a strategic foothold when it was allowed to establish a naval base at the port city of Berbera in the former British Somaliland. In the same vein, and knowing what Somalia could be up to, Ethiopia also looked for more outside military assistance to modernize its armed forces to counter Somalia as well as the restiveness in Eritrea, a territory which it had annexed and which was seeking its own independence from it. Ethiopia initially received this assistance from the United States.

Interestingly, the invited presence and resultant rivalry of the two superpowers in the Horn of Africa, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, would later have unintended but great consequences for national and regional stability, more so as Somalia intensified its ambitions for Greater Somalia. At a time that Ethiopia was weakened by internal ethnic problems, separatist agitations and war in Eritrea, Somali president Siad Barre commenced his quest for territorial expansion by launching a massive invasion of Ethiopia with a force numbering 40,000 soldiers and heavy armaments, an act that would eventually turn out to be a misadventure. It was a great

misadventure in several regards. First, it was contrary to the established African position to respect the sanctity of national borders that African states had inherited from colonial rule. This position was formalized at the inception of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, in May 1963, and was forcefully reiterated at the Cairo summit a year later in 1964. What this implied was that international borders in Africa remain sacrosanct and not subject to alteration by force. On this score alone, no African country would openly support Somalia's territorial claims and forcible seizure of territory, no matter how historically justified the claims. It was on the strength of this position that the OAU threw its full weight behind Ethiopia, asking all countries to respect the territorial status quo. Without an iota of African sentiment in Somalia's favor, the rest of the international community did not also want to be found on the wrong side of majority African opinion and extant international law. Even the Soviet Union, the superpower with which Somalia had a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, was unwilling to endorse such unilateral territorial aggrandizement. These ultimately robbed Somalia of the international diplomatic, moral, financial and military support in aid of its war that it had hoped for.

Second, even though relations between the United States and Ethiopia had turned sour under Mengistu and his disastrous socialist political engineering, America was definitely uninterested in supporting Somalia's territorial ambitions. In addition, Somalia's relationship with the Soviet Union was becoming strained at the same time that Moscow's new-found relationship with the Marxist Ethiopian regime was on the upswing. The moment that President Siad Barre tore up the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union and expelled its diplomats, Moscow no longer felt any compunction in throwing its full weight behind Mengistu's Ethiopia. And that was exactly what it did by massive supply, airlift and sealift of tons of Soviet weapons and military and technical advisors to assist the Ethiopian army in its war with Somalia. This was undoubtedly the game-changer that would turn the tables on Somalia. Ethiopia also received military assistance from Cuba and South Yemen, both of which supplied combat soldiers in aid of Mengistu's Marxist regime in Addis Ababa. At the height of the operations in 1977–78, Moscow was reported to have supplied over a billion dollars' worth of weapons to Ethiopia while Cuba had about 16,000 combat troops in the country.[13] Meanwhile, Somalia had been left in the lurch by most of its erstwhile supporters. Not getting the help it had anticipated from the United States or any western nation,[14] Somalia began to suffer severe military, political and diplomatic reverses in its war of territorial expansion, and ultimately in the furtherance of its long-held dream of a Greater Somalia. Its expeditionary force into the Ogaden, which was daily hemorrhaging its economy, also suffered a humiliating defeat in the face of massive Ethiopian counterattacks

and had to announce withdrawal in March 1978. The Organization of African Unity brokered a peace agreement which both sides had to agree to, ending the war, even though minor hostilities and sporadic cross-border guerrilla attacks against Ethiopia in the Ogaden lingered for much longer.

The disastrous defeat of Somalia's invasion force into the Ogaden and its shameful withdrawal left deep-seated internal political problems in its wake for the government of Siad Barre in Mogadishu. These would so fatally hobble the regime thereafter that it only staggered on until its final exit a little over a decade later.

In the first instance, there was palpable fear that Ethiopia, arising from its battlefield successes in its counteroffensive in the Ogaden, might actually be emboldened to pursue retreating Somali forces beyond the border and invade Somalia itself. This fear was prompted not just by the massive Soviet armaments that had poured into Ethiopia but also the presence of thousands of combat troops from Cuba, Yemen and a few other Marxist countries that had emboldened the Ethiopians. Alarmed at such a prospect, even though Ethiopia had no intention to attack Somalia, the US government nonetheless took it upon itself to prevent it from ever happening.[15]

Second, the defeat of Somali forces, coupled with this fear of a possible Ethiopian invasion of the country, considerably threatened Siad Barre's hold on power, as it began to provoke and intensify inter-clan rivalries and nationalist agitations. For instance, barely a month after Somalia's withdrawal, a coup attempt was launched in Mogadishu on April 9, 1978, to overthrow Siad Barre, although he survived it after serious fighting inside the capital.[16] Interestingly, part of the main complaint of the coup plotters was that while Barre had surrounded himself with his own clansmen, he had "sent Somalis of other ethnic groups to die in the war,"[17] and they invariably accused him of deliberate clan cleansing. This was indicative of the level of unease and political tension in the country in the wake of the defeat by Ethiopia. For Somali clans with kinsfolk across the border, the defeat by Ethiopia was a mortal blow to their dream of reunification, as they were apprehensive about what fate awaited their clansmen now abandoned in the Ogaden. And this did not sit well with many. Inside Somalia itself, opposition to the regime was already becoming militant, and Ethiopia reportedly supported some of them to launch guerrilla attacks on the country and undermine Siad Barre's stability. From then on, Somalia's internal political stability and security came under increasing assaults. And the fallout from this was Siad Barre's increasing reliance on authoritarian repression to stave off domestic challenges to his power.

Combined with burgeoning dissidence and political instability was the onset of a major drought emergency which ravaged the country so badly between 1979 and 1980 that it forced the Somali authorities to declare a state of emergency and desperately seek urgent international assistance. With

border skirmishes still continuing with Ethiopia and desperate to stem the growing dissidence at home, Siad Barre took a number of political actions to consolidate power. First, in October 1980, he formally restored the Supreme Revolutionary Council, the main military ruling organ that he abolished in 1976 when he formed the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party (SSRP). Second, he carried out a thorough reorganization of the internal structure of the SSRP to make it more politically effective. This was considered imperative to the greater grassroots political support, especially in the wake of the formation of the Somali National Movement (SNM) and other dissident groups by Somali opposition groups in exile in 1981. The arrival on the political stage of these new opposition political formations that were mostly allied to clans in the north of the country began to ramp up the challenge to Siad Barre's hold on power, driving him into further repressive measures, including arrests and trials of former government ministers and senior military officers. As this internal dissidence increased, so also relations with Ethiopia were becoming testier, as Ethiopia reportedly backed a series of cross-border guerrilla attacks by Somali militant rebel groups in the Ogaden. Other armed opposition groups were becoming bolder as they launched attacks inside the country, revving up the general insecurity and making the government more unstable and losing control of parts of the country to rebels. By the mid to late 1980s, agitations for democratic reforms and an end to Siad Barre's rule had reached a crescendo. Amidst the drought emergency and refugee influx from Ogaden into Somalia, increasing internal rebel attacks, burgeoning political opposition and a worsening economic situation, Somalia was inexorably on its way to perdition, no matter the political changes that Siad Barre might make. It was already clear that his government had lost the monopoly on the means of violence, with several armed guerrilla groups and Islamic fundamentalists already mounting serious armed attacks inside the country. All efforts by government to rein in centrifugal, disruptive and destructive forces were proving increasingly abortive. Siad Barre's revolution, which had begun with the coup d'état of 1969, was already grinding toward its catastrophic denouement by the close of the 1980s decade. With waves of violence in the capital as rebel forces closed in on Mogadishu, General Mohammed Siad Barre, the ruler of Somalia since 1969, finally fled the capital in January 1991, leaving behind carnage and confusion and a collapsed nation-state.

The Overthrow of Siad Barre and National Disintegration

By the time Siad Barre's regime eventually collapsed in 1991, Somalia had actually become a failed state approaching fatal collapse. It was already a failed state because it was no longer able to fulfill the elementary responsibilities of maintaining law and order and ensuring security for life and property

within its borders. In other words, it had lost control over the territory and it no longer enjoyed the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force. In the latter years of Barre's ruthless authoritarian rule, Somalia had become a virtual Hobbesian society where life was nasty, brutish and short, as a host of warlords, clan militias, private forces and armed criminal gangs ruled the roost in what Ahmad Rashid Jamal termed "the world's most emblematic failed state."[18]

As Siad Barre's fragile regime tottered badly on the brink of collapse, the once formidable Somali army that captured the Ogaden in Ethiopia had completely disintegrated, with soldiers joining the plethora of clan militias; the national armories had been plundered and arms and ammunitions proliferated freely in the hands of bandits, crooks, local clan guerrillas and sundry criminal elements; rival militias battled for control; insecurity was pervasive; and corruption was rife while poverty ravaged the land. Unable to contain the guerrilla onslaughts of his sworn enemy, General Mohammed Farah Aideed, President Siad Barre fled Mogadishu with his loot, the country unraveled spectacularly into criminal enclaves and personal fiefs of different warlords and bandits. Mogadishu itself was divided into enclaves controlled by rival armed militias. Somalia had thus descended into a hellish existence, a completely Hobbesian nightmare from which it has yet to completely recover.

In 1991, the northwest portion of the country, the original British Somaliland protectorate where the Somali National Movement (SNM) held sway, declared its independence from the rest of the country. This act invariably sundered the country in two, returning it to the old colonial division that preceded independence in 1960.[19] Following in the wake of this new reality, the northeast portion also declared itself Puntland, a new republic under a rival militia faction. In the meantime, the remaining southern portion was still embroiled in ferocious battles between the guerrilla forces of General Aideed and the remnants of Siad Barre's collapsed army for control of the territory, without any government authority in full control of Mogadishu. In all practical purposes by 1991, the African country known since its independence in 1960 as the Republic of Somalia had ceased to exist as a single independent nation-state, perhaps the first African sovereign nation-state to vanish from the political map of the world, albeit not permanently.

Following Siad Barre's departure, the United Somali Congress (USC) announced the formation of an interim government on January 26, 1991, with Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Omar Arteh Ghalib as President and Prime Minister respectively. If anyone had imagined that the exit of Siad Barre and the imposition of another government by armed force would improve Somalia's situation, they were sadly mistaken. Notwithstanding this new government, its descent into a total Hobbesian nightmare continued, with more armed militias and clan groups controlling different clan neighborhoods

in Mogadishu and some carving out portions of the country for themselves. Somalia had over time gone from being an unstable country, to a failed state, to a collapsed one, and finally descended into a veritable enclave of warlords, militia groups, bandits and sundry criminal groups, all armed to the teeth with looted weapons.

Al-Shabaab, Domestic Terrorism, and Transnational Insurgency

With the collapse of the Siad Barre dictatorship and his flight into exile, Somalia began its inexorable descent into chaos, instability, eventual division and permanent anarchy. The country's armed forces and the police had collapsed and vanished among the various factional groups seeking control. In the absence of any central authority in Mogadishu able to exercise effective control over the whole country, Somalia was carved into zones and enclaves by a coterie of local warlords, criminal bandits, armed clan militias and jihadist elements, all fighting for control over the entire country. With several pitched battles between the various armed groups competing to take over Mogadishu, the capital witnessed unprecedented violence, lawlessness, robbery, rape, kidnapping, murder and massive infrastructural destruction.

When by the late 1990s no group had emerged strong enough to impose order completely on the country, local Islamic Sharia courts began to rear their heads to control the situation in their respective neighborhoods and impose a measure of law and order in the absence of a central police. Over time, the Islamic Courts had impounded powers unto themselves to become a power to reckon with and had established and were controlling their own private police and armed militias to enforce their rule. A new development that would alter the equation and the fluid power structure occurred in 2004 when a number of those Islamic Courts closed ranks to form a more powerful Islamic Courts Union (ICU) with enough armed strength to challenge the warlords that had hitherto controlled Mogadishu since the collapse of the central government of Siad Barre.[20] After a two-year armed struggle, the Islamic Courts Union eventually prevailed and seized control of the capital from the warlords, instituted their own governance system and began a gradual extension of their control into the rest of the country. With extreme brutality and strict enforcement of Islamic Sharia law, order was re-imposed for the first time in more than a decade and the popularity of the Islamic Courts Union began to extend beyond the capital.

Unfortunately, what would later metamorphose into the dreaded terrorist and insurgent group, the Al-Shabaab, was initially a fundamentalist faction of youths that grew out of the ICU.[21] Made up of young and educated elements in the ICU, it turned out to be the more militantly violent wing that was bent

on imposing an Islamic caliphate rule on the whole of Somalia. The group had assisted the ICU in violently taking over Mogadishu from the warlords and imposing law and order. However, the swift intervention of Ethiopian forces in Somalia's internal crisis in December 2006, ostensibly to prevent any jihadist attacks on Ethiopian territory, succeeded in the dislodgement of the ICU from the capital and from several of their strongholds. While the ICU wilted and fled before the Ethiopian forces, the Al-Shabaab fighters merely retreated inland to launch guerrilla attacks against what they perceived as Ethiopia's "Christian occupation forces" which had to be dislodged from the largely Muslim Somalia. On account of this, its appeal for the creation of an Islamic state began to resonate more among the Muslim population, raising its profile as a force to reckon with.

A wearied Ethiopian force which had not been able to snuff out Al-Shabaab eventually had to be withdrawn in January 2009 and be replaced with a multinational African peacekeeping force, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). This new force was deployed principally to garrison Mogadishu and provide security for the government and important foreign and diplomatic personnel in the capital. To achieve the objective, AMISOM had to battle and clear out Al-Shabaab and other militias from the capital. Unable to retake the capital from the peacekeeping force, Al-Shabaab was forced to be operating in the south-central portions of the country and has resorted to wanton terrorism against the peacekeepers, suicide attacks and murder against the government and Somalis in general, even launching sporadic cross-border raids into neighboring Kenya and Uganda as well. Now affiliated with Al Qaeda, it has been receiving external funding and has been able to attract more foreign fighters into its fold and has become the new face of anti-Western jihadist resistance in Africa.

CONCLUSION

The country that became independent in 1960 was indubitably a badly fractured Somali nation with its artificially generated fault lines still visible because its colonial progenitors were least concerned with nation-building. Newly independent Somalia was the archetypal colonial creation that was definitely bound to unravel after independence, fulfilling James O'Connell's "inevitability of instability" thesis.[22] In all practical senses, it was a divided and disunited nation-state that was not expected to survive for long before its inherent fault lines and cracks began to widen and destroy it. What Somalis inherited as an independent nation-state was a rickety contraption, a hodgepodge of mutually competitive clans, carelessly sewed together and donated to them as a state, in the hope that they could discover the ingenuity to make

it work. It actually required greater ingenuity than Somalis could muster to keep this curious territorial contraption together for any length of time before its inherent contradictions would begin to hobble it.

Sliced up into different but contiguous nation-states, Somalia has historically harbored nostalgia for the Greater Somali nation to be championed by independent Somalia. Britain's imperial designs toward the end of colonial rule in Africa which hinted at the possibility of a Greater Somalia protectorate did much to promote and encourage this idea. Somalis are convinced that it is their lot, their bounden national duty, to champion this effort since other Somali speakers are mere minorities in their respective countries. This apparently noble dream was compounded by the national predilection for territorial aggrandizement. From the beginning of its sovereign existence, Somalia's international relations and foreign policy were predicated almost wholly on the pursuit of this grand pan-Somali ambition, an unrealistic pursuit which by the late 1970s had become too dangerous for Somalia itself. It is this foreign policy thrust that has always put it at odds with its neighbors, especially with Ethiopia and Kenya, which are uncomfortable at any notion of Somali irredentism in any form. Having become a defining characteristic or definitive article of faith of all Somali governments since independence, this ultra-nationalist pursuit of pan-Somalism has also repeatedly been its major undoing, responsible for aggravating its domestic political instabilities and inviting frequent external meddling in its national affairs.

Its eventual tragic collapse as a viable nation-state, and its dissolution into its original constituent parts, (although these so-called new states have not been recognized by the international community), were the predictable outcomes or result of the manner of its creation, a tragic heritage of cynical colonial architecting. Carved up and controlled by a plethora of ruthless warlords and armed clan militias, Somalia has become a pathetic rogue state exporting terrorism and insurgency across borders and thus a constant source of regional irritation, instability and insecurity to all and sundry in East Africa and the Horn.

NOTES

1. See David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987).

2. See A. I Asiwaju, ed., *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884–1984* (London: Hurst, 1985).

3. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: The Free Press, 2005 [2006 edition]), 465.

4. Raph Uwechue, ed., *Africa Today* (London: Africa Books Ltd., 1991), 1664.

5. Uwechue, 1665.
6. Uwechue, 1667.
7. Uwechue, 1667.
8. See Marina Ottaway, "Superpower Competition and Regional Conflicts in the Horn of Africa," in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, ed. R. Craig Nation and Mark V. Kauppi (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984), 172–182.
9. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 465.
10. Ottaway, "Superpower Competition and Regional Conflicts in the Horn of Africa," 168.
11. See Ottaway, "Superpower Competition and Regional Conflicts in the Horn of Africa," 170.
12. Ottaway, "Superpower Competition and Regional Conflicts in the Horn of Africa," 170–171.
13. Joachim Krause, "Soviet Arms Transfers to Sub–Saharan Africa," in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, ed. Nation and Kauppi, 140.
14. For details of US promises under President Carter to supply arms to Somalia but wariness of getting involved in a regional conflict while the Soviets and Cubans poured arms and troops into Ethiopia, see Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1985), 630–653.
15. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 642.
16. Uwechue, *Africa Today*, 1669; Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 642.
17. Uwechue, *Africa Today*, 1669.
18. Ahmad Rashid Jamal, "Identifying Causes of State Failure: The Case of Somalia," *Atlantic Community*, August 13, 2013, www.atlantic-community.org/identifying-causes-of-state-failure-the-case-of-somalia. (Accessed 08 June, 2017).
19. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 470.
20. Rob Wise, *Al-Shabaab*, (Case Study Number 2, AQAM Futures Project Case Study Series) (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2011), 3.
21. Wise, *Al-Shabaab*, 2.
22. O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191.

Chapter 10

Algeria

Descent into Dictatorship

ALGERIA: THE QUINTESSENTIAL SETTLER-COLONY

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria is a North African country that shares its coastal boundary with the Mediterranean Sea. It is the largest Arab country in Africa and by far the largest French colony in Africa as well. It can be described as the quintessential French settler-colony in Africa, ranking with other veritable settler-colonies like those of Portuguese Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, and the British settler-colonies of Kenya and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). One common thread that ran through all these named settler-colonies in Africa was that all, without exception, had to gain independence only by resort to armed struggles, either because their colonial masters would not grant it, as in the cases of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, or because settler elements hijacked the colonies from the colonial metropole, as in the cases of Kenya and Rhodesia. This case of Algeria combined both elements; the first was France's pretense that Algeria was legally part of France (*Algérie Française*) and thus the notion of it ever being detached or excised from France was completely out of the question; and the second was that French citizens and other European settlers tried to forcibly hijack the territory by preventing France from granting it independence. The country only achieved independence from France in 1962 after nearly a decade of one of the bitterest and most gruesomely murderous anti-colonial wars ever fought in Africa, in which over a million Algerians lost their lives.[1]

Settler-colonies by their nature and character were different from other regular colonies. In the ordinary colonies, as we have made clear in chapters 1 and 2 of this volume, the sole *raison d'être* for European presence was extractive predation for the benefit of the development of the metropolitan country,

and the erection of the colonial state structure was simply to facilitate this. In the settler-colonies, however, the basic motive of the colonizing power was far more sinister, transcending mere economic predation alone; it was that its nationals would also settle, occupy and claim possession of the territory as integral part of their homeland. This was the reason Portugal poured its citizens in their hundreds of thousands into its African possessions on the pretense that those African possessions were mere overseas extensions of mainland Portugal. The British colonialists also appropriated both Kenya and Rhodesia as an integral parts of Great Britain and thus bluntly refused any notion that they could ever be independent countries. It had to take a resort to bloody armed confrontations between the indigenous peoples, or "natives" as they were derisively called, and the settlers in those colonies before they could secure independence, hence the individual histories of independence struggles in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde are written in blood.

Algeria was the archetypal settler-colony; it was classified as an overseas *Département* in the same manner as any of the other *Départements* in mainland France, and thus outwardly enjoyed a similar status. Even though the French maintained the pretense that Algeria was an integral part of France, it was also true that France's colonial officials reserved the most brutal and draconian treatments for its native Arab and Berber Muslim populations because of their resistance to imposition of alien rule and culture on them. Characteristic of French colonialism everywhere in Africa, which is predicated on the notion of the superiority of French culture, French rule in Algeria commenced with the summary deposition of the *Dey* of Algiers immediately after its conquest by French forces in 1830, and was followed by other policies and official acts that were intended to destroy the indigenous cultures of the people and subjugate them to foreign rule. While it may be true that the French technically made available the rights of French citizenship to Algerians, the conditions for attaining that status, as *Africa Today* has noted, were deliberately "kept so stringent as to make this almost impossible for a practicing Muslim."[2] This is not surprising, as this was exactly the case in other French and Portuguese colonies in Africa where colonialism was rationalized on the basis of the assumed superiority of European culture. In any case, Algerians (Arabs and Berbers) who are mostly Muslims were bitterly opposed to the renunciation of their Islamic faith and were thus unenthusiastic to embrace French citizenship on the terms and conditions set down for them. And the French reacted brutally to any expression or manifestation of nationalism, and all protests and uprisings were always brutally suppressed by military force. And to stifle any development of nationalist consciousness, French citizens and other Europeans poured into Algeria in large numbers, expropriated vast lands from the people and firmly consolidated their brutal

suppression of the natives by military reprisals. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, French forces had successfully occupied and pacified the vast interior of Algeria and facilitated the influx of foreigners into the Algerian hinterland where they appropriated lands from the people. Apart from the white settlers who enjoyed privileged lifestyles in the urban settlements along the Mediterranean coast, the vast majority of the indigenous people of Algeria who inhabited the cavernous hinterlands benefited very little by way of exposure to Western education, despite France's overt romanticization of its colonial enterprise as a "civilizing mission." And the few Western-educated Algerians who had been absorbed and incorporated into the colonial administration were derided by their fellow Algerians as *beni-oui-oui* (i.e., yes-yes-people). In fact, the stranglehold of the settlers on Algeria's affairs—public administration, military, security and intelligence services, commerce, banking, the media—was so total and comprehensive that by the start of the Algerian revolution in 1954, only few *beni-oui-ouis* held any positions at all.[3]

FRANCE AND ALGERIA'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Algeria was indisputably a victim of its colonial provenance. Its conquest by France was an extremely violent and bloody affair, its administration for 130 years was by brutal armed suppression of the hapless population by the colonial rulers who were acting on behalf of both the metropolitan authorities in Paris and French nationals and other white European settlers who had poured into Algeria in their hundreds of thousands and had occupied what they chose to regard as an extension of mainland France across the Mediterranean Sea. These foreign settlers were the ones that dominated public administration and commerce to the exclusion of indigenous Algerians and were able to elect deputies to represent their narrowly based interests in the French National Assembly in Paris. Since ordinary Algerians who did not embrace French citizenship merely had the status of colonial subjects, they could not vote in any of the elections. Invariably, the only eligible voters for any election were French and other white European settlers, further alienating the people of the territory from having any input into the governance and administration of their country.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, there was only a handful of Western-educated indigenous Algerians in the country since most Muslims had bluntly refused to renounce their Islamic faith and culture to embrace French citizenship. It was, however, from their small ranks that the demands for gradual reforms and an inclusive administration of the colony began. As was the case in most other colonies in Africa, the foremost demands of earliest Western-educated and bilingual African elites were usually for the

recognition of their new status and inclusion in the mainstream of colonial administration rather than for outright independence. The Algerian nationalists of the early twentieth century did not also advocate for excision from France but political liberalization that would involve them in the administration of the territory. A number of them, including the famous Ferhat Abbas who would later play a prominent role in the anti-colonial struggles, were persuaded that French citizenship was all that Algerians needed, not secession from France. Even then, these modest demands for inclusion alarmed and panicked the French settlers who could not countenance Muslims being empowered in anyway. Feeling threatened by this apparent "nationalist" stirring, the French and other European settlers (all of them collectively known as *pied-noirs*), stoutly opposed granting any reforms that they thought might empower the people, and from then on every agitation was ordered brutally put down by armed force. The powerful message, loud and clear, was that since Algeria was France, non-French citizens could therefore not expect to enjoy the rights due only to citizens. In the face of official suppression and accompanying brutality, thousands of Algerians were forced to escape abroad to avoid compulsory military service in the French army during the First World War, although hundreds of thousands of indigenous Algerians were eventually conscripted into the army. But the circumstances of the war and the changes it wrought on the international system had clearly discernible, if unintended, effects on the colony of Algeria too.

Undoubtedly, the outcomes of the First World War brought such unanticipated but monumental structural changes to the political map of the world and its erstwhile power configuration, perhaps the most impactful being the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and the consequent emergence of new states from their ruins in Europe and the Arab Middle East. Being Muslims, and generally resistant to alien culture and lifestyle, Algerians were intrigued and influenced more by developments in the other surrounding Arab and Muslim nations, such as the independence of Egypt from Great Britain in 1922, the rise to power of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Turkey in 1923, and other stirrings in the Muslim world to draw inspiration from. From the initial formation of movements such as *Jeunes Algeriens* pressing for reforms in the years before the outbreak of World War I, other equally reform-minded movements and political groupings, notably *Etoile Nord Africaine* (the North African Star), *Parti Populaire Algerien* (PPA), *Union Populaire Algerien* (UPA), were also formed by indigenous Algerians in the inter-war years. After the Second World War in 1945, the demand for self-determination and independence had clearly replaced the pre-war conciliatory demands for political reforms. Their demand was thenceforth for total independence of Algeria from France, and evacuation of all foreign settlers, a demand to which the French authorities responded with characteristic

brutality, arrests and detention of nationalist leaders, unleashing of the police and soldiers on protesters, perpetrating cold-blooded mass murders in the process.

Perhaps the most emblematic of French high-handedness was the "Setif Massacres" of May 1945. According to the historical accounts, Algerians had on May 8, 1945, trooped out in large numbers in the market town of Setif in celebration of the victory of the Allied forces over Nazi Germany in Europe. Germany had surrendered a day earlier, sparking the jubilation, and the Algerians in that town were marching through the streets, chanting independence slogans and waving nationalist flags. They were confronted by armed police who fired into the crowd and killed several of them. This event sparked several days of violent riots during which several white settlers were attacked and murdered. The colonial authorities' characteristic brutality was on full display, as police and soldiers massacred Algerians in their tens of thousands. By the time the week-long riots had ended and the colonial guns had fallen silent, Algerian casualties killed in cold blood were numbered in the tens of thousands, some accounts putting it as high as 45,000 dead. This was part of the systematic brutality that had hallmarked French rule in Algeria right from the conquest of Algiers in 1830 to the country's independence after a decade-long war in 1962. Even though French authorities did everything to downplay its brutality and scale of destruction, anti-French sentiments began to run high among the people, and especially among the returnee Algerian soldiers (more than 200,000 Algerians were reputed to have served with the French in Europe, with as many as 60,000 of them killed or taken prisoner by Germany) who had valiantly and proudly fought alongside the French army in WWII against Nazi oppression. The 1945 massacre was the game-changer that would further radicalize and embolden Algerians to press for independence rather than for accommodation with France. It was also the beginning of the genocide, torture, mass executions, rape, and massive physical destructions that French occupation forces would later perpetrate during the Algerian war of independence between 1954 and 1962 during which nearly a million and a half Algerians would be slaughtered.

Algerians had to resort to armed struggle to gain independence since decolonization was never in the remotest contemplation of France, the colonial master. The radicalization of Algerians after the Second World War was not well received by the French, especially the settlers, who continued to make legislation and take actions that were deliberately aimed at stifling all nationalist and anti-colonialist activities in the colony. Frustrated that they were unable to make any headway by peaceful political actions alone, frontline Algerian nationalists gathered to form the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) and its armed wing, *Armée de Libération Nationale*, and thus with several urban attacks against military and other official installations in Algiers on

November 1, 1954, ignited the revolution that would expand into the war of independence. This was the start of the most horrendous anti-colonial war on the African continent which would culminate in Algeria's independence eight years later in July 1962. France's response to these initial attacks was swift and violent, and as the war expanded with further deployment of hundreds of thousands of French troops and soldiers from its other African colonies, it became a bloodbath with over a million casualties. At the height of the war, French forces in Algeria numbered about 500,000 soldiers.

It was understandable why France had to throw everything it had to contain the war in Algeria. The anti-colonial war in Algeria had to be brutal and bloody because France badly needed to hang on to its most prized African colonial possession which it had officially and legally classified as an integral part of France, and for which any thought of independence or secession was out of the question. Though terribly humiliated and weakened from the vicissitudes of the Second World War, France's ability to remain relevant as a major power also rested on its vast colonial empire in Asia and Africa. Unfortunately, the start of the revolution in Algeria was barely five months after France was humiliated out of its colony in Indochina at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in May. Still smarting from its diminished standing at the end of the Second World War, the ignoble loss in Indo-China was a severe blow to French national pride and prestige in the community of great powers. To lose Algeria so soon after was completely out of the question, not only because of the further injury that it would cause to its national pride but also the bandwagon or ripple effects such would create in its other African colonies where nationalist rumblings had been noticeable since the end of the Second World War. The French war in Algeria emblematized the savagery that France was capable of: with French forces numbering about half a million men at the height of the war, pitched battles were ferocious, involving wanton slaughter of civilian populations, massive physical destruction, use of torture, rape, executions in concentration camps and other heinous atrocities, to the chagrin of the rest of the civilized world. The FLN was no less brutal in its terroristic tactics against the settlers and Algerians they perceived to be colonial collaborators.

It was clear that France was fighting a war it could not win, no matter how much force or brutality it deployed, and the war was putting considerable strains on domestic politics at home in France and its international image as well. In the first instance, Morocco and Tunisia, two neighboring Arab Maghreb countries, had gained independence from France in 1955 and 1956 respectively, creating explicit incentives for the Algerians to press forward, knowing that victory was possible if they persisted. Secondly, the rise of General Gammal Abdel Nasser as a new charismatic ruler in Egypt and his appeal for Arab nationalism had become a shining example for Algerian

nationalists. The FLN was now receiving assistance and encouragement from Nasser's Egypt. All these had combined to embolden the FLN to demonstrate the necessary courage to establish the *Gouvernement Provisoire de la Republique Algerienne*—the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria (GPRA)—as a government-in-exile next door in Tunis, the capital of the contiguous Arab country of Tunisia by September 1958. Also in Algeria itself, the French settlers were fearful of the fate that awaited them should Paris make any concessions toward independence. This therefore prompted political maneuverings by the settlers in Algeria to attempt hijacking the territory from France rather than allow it to become independent.

The domestic strains and stresses and the grumblings in Algeria eventually led to the demise of the French Fourth Republic and the recall of General Charles de Gaulle from retirement to head a new government in Paris in 1958. The hope and expectations of the settlers was that General De Gaulle, hero of French resistance during WWII, would not grant independence but instead reaffirm the notion that Algeria was French. But the unfolding circumstances in France, Algeria and across the globe made such expectation unrealizable no matter how favorably disposed De Gaulle himself might have been. The French Fifth Republic could not sustain the notion of *l'Algerie Francaise* (French Algeria) for much longer, and the political hard line gave way to pragmatism. It was already a fact that the Algerian provisional government had been recognized by Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, China, and other radically inclined newly independent countries in Africa as well. And by 1960 the United Nations General Assembly had also acknowledged the right of colonial peoples to self-determination, unleashing a global wave no one could stop, and making France's continued claim to Algeria no longer sustainable in the eyes of the international community. In 1960 alone, no fewer than seventeen colonial territories became independent, serving as a profound inspiration for the aspiration of all peoples in Africa for independence. Algerians were not unaffected by this new wave of decolonization, the wind of change that British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan had earlier spoken about.

The new government in Paris made moves to swiftly end the war and bring Algeria to full independent and sovereign status. Though there were series of assassinations, attempted assassinations, military mutinies and attempted coups against the French government, it was clear that Algeria's progress toward independence was no longer reversible. After two referendums in France and Algeria ratifying the demand for self-determination, a cease fire agreement was signed at Evian-les-Bains in France on March 18, 1962, and was subsequently overwhelmingly approved by French voters in a final referendum in April. After over six million of the Algerian electorate had voted for self-determination on July 1, 1962, Algeria finally declared independence from France on July 5, 1962, ending 132 years of French colonial rule which

had begun with the conquest of Algiers and deposition of its ruler in 1830. Although now independent, the very ugly scars of the oppressive colonial rule remained indelible on the political fabric of Algeria, and would inexorably be a significant determinant of how the new country would navigate the future.

Post-Independence Politics and Developments

It is inescapable that the scars of colonial brutality and years of war and its destruction would remain to haunt any post-independence country. This has been the fate of all decolonized states in Africa, and Algeria is not an exception in this regard. But the colonial impact is much more deep-seated in those countries that have had to fight gruesome wars to gain independence, and Algeria is a veritable example.

Following its independence in July 1962, almost a million French and other white European settlers, fearing reprisals and retribution, fled Algeria within the first few months. And this was not unexpected. This sudden exodus of skilled technical and administrative manpower had grave and disruptive implications for smooth governance and administration under indigenous rule in the immediate aftermath of independence. Among those who fled also were large numbers of Algerians, the so-called *beni-oui-ouis* who had collaborated with the colonial authorities and several thousands who had served in France's colonial army during the Second World War and later fought against their own fellow citizens during the revolution. Generally regarded and derided as colonial collaborators and traitors to their own people, there was palpable distrust, anger and hatred directed at them, especially at military auxiliaries who had fought alongside French soldiers. Under the prevailing hate-filled domestic atmosphere, it was reasonable to expect that newly independent Algeria would have to reckon with the ghosts of the colonial past, and settle accounts with Algerian citizens who had served and collaborated with the French colonial administration, especially those auxiliaries who had helped the French forces in the perpetration of their heinous war crimes against the people. While thousands of them had managed to escape to France along with the white settlers in order to avoid reprisals, tens of thousands of them who were not so lucky were mercilessly slaughtered by the FLN and Algerian lynch mobs in the months following the declaration of independence. Algeria's past had caught up with it, and its immediate post-independence history had inescapably to be drenched in rivers of blood!

If to judge merely by the modalities for obtaining independence alone, it was obvious that Algeria was bound to have it rough; Prime Minister Ahmed Ben Bella and his fellow revolutionaries who had taken over the mantle of governance directly from the departed French colonialists were not trained in the art of democratic governance, not even by the remotest experience in

the colonial days. This deficiency arose from the nature of French colonial policy and practice which had severely excluded the vast majority of the Algerian population from the mainstream and whose brutalities had triggered the violent revolutionary demand for independence. As James O'Connell had famously noted, post-independence instability in these new states was inevitable because the new holders of power had emerged not from democratic tutelage and preparation but rather from oppositional and agitational politics.[4] The new Algerian ruling class and frontline leaders had at best only a narrow experience in revolutionary armed struggle which itself tolerated no opposition. Having now achieved independence by armed struggle, the new civilian leadership was profoundly ill-prepared for democratic governance, for nothing in their entire colonial experience had even remotely taught them. In any case, the FLN itself was a secretive and exclusionist outfit, and continued to remain so even after it had formed a government in exile and had no history of democratic elections or practices. It was this revolutionary outfit and its armed wing that took over the reins of power and had to govern the newly independent state by the only method they were familiar with: by authoritarian impunity. One-party rule was promptly instituted with the FLN the only legally allowed party, the National Assembly approved a new constitution that stipulated a presidential system of government, and Ahmed Ben Bella was elected first president of the republic.

But even as he impounded more powers to himself, the subsisting divisions and suspicions, the personal ambitions within the ranks of the FLN did not abate. For example, Colonel Houari Boumedienne, the Army Chief of Staff and Vice President of the Republic, had been well known as a politically ambitious military officer; he had once in the past been accused of an attempted coup against the Provisional Government on account of which he was summarily dismissed at the end of June 1962. He would eventually succeed in that personal endeavor in June 1965, when he ousted President Ben Bella from power and threw him into detention, and that was the beginning of military dictatorship in Algeria. From Boumedienne, who ruled with an iron fist from 1965 till his death in 1978, power passed on to another military officer, Colonel Chadli Benjedid, whose regime experienced perhaps the most debilitating economic downturns due to a sharp fall in oil revenues and with attendant social and political upheavals in the 1980s, perhaps the worst in the country's history.[5] Economic crisis triggered serious domestic problems which began violently to shake the one-party state apparatus that the FLN had erected since independence. Opposition elements that had hitherto operated underground had by then become emboldened, and in the process Islamist extremists who had previously been plying their trade underground also became increasingly radicalized, to the point that the government was no longer able to rein in the whirlwind of violence sweeping across the country.

Chadli Benjedid's valiant attempt at introducing some form of political liberalization was perhaps too little and already too late, and the genie of violence let out of the bottle could no longer be contained. From then on, Algeria rapidly and inexorably descended into more violence and careened into more political instability; election victory and annulment, military coup, and brutal eradication of all Islamist opposition groups from the early 1990s, once again drenched Algeria in blood.

FIS AND DESCENT INTO DICTATORSHIP AND ANARCHY

Algeria from colonial times could boast no experience whatsoever in democratic rule. The right and privilege to participate in the exercise of democratic choice of leaders were only extended to European settlers and perhaps a handful of the *évoluée* who had accepted French citizenship. And since Algerians generally disdained and shunned French citizenship, such rights and privileges eluded them. Having been ruled since 1962 by a succession of authoritarian civilian and military leaders, mostly from the same revolutionary political party, the FLN—Ben Bella, Houari Boumedienne, Chadli Benjedid, Liamine Zerual, and Abdelaziz Bouteflika—Algerians have never truly experienced genuine liberal democracy in practice. The FLN which had controlled the nation since independence was truly and quintessentially totalitarian—it controlled the state, politics, the economy, agriculture, education, religion, and every other thing; it even made Islam a state religion, appointed and licensed Imams and preachers it approved of, made the Arabic language the official national *lingua franca* to the severe exclusion and anger of the Berbers whose own language is spoken by a fifth of the country's population. In all of this, the Algerian armed forces always wielded immense supervisory powers over the affairs of the country. Perceiving themselves to be the guardians of the Algerian state, the armed forces therefore exercised an overbearing influence on the state, and could summarily nullify whatever policies or actions they did not agree with. As Martin Meredith has noted, the military hierarchs exercised a virtual monopoly on public life and "made itself the country's central institution, wielding power with ruthless determination from behind the scenes."[6] Even when elections were supposedly held to choose leaders, they were hardly more than getting the electorate to ratify the single candidates that the FLN would put forward. In reality, Algerians had never had a say in how their country was governed.

But this was set to change, as both internal dynamics inside Algeria itself and external political developments across the globe that were unfolding at such a frenetic pace by the late 1980s, made it inevitable that Algeria would have to move away from its rigid one-party authoritarianism to embrace

some form of political liberalization, including recognizing and legalizing rival political parties. Over time, the authoritarian excesses of the FLN began to be questioned, the Berbers were expressing discomfort with their marginalization, Islamist radicals and their incendiary preaching were on the rise; new political groupings were becoming emboldened to publicly declare their existence, coupled with severe economic downturns in the late 1980s arising from dwindling oil revenues. For an oil-dependent economy, this was a severe blow. It was only a matter of time before the three-decade old authoritarian ramparts erected by the FLN would begin to unravel in the face of mounting internal problems.[7]

Also at the international level, the growing unrest in the Palestinian territories against Israeli occupation, the armed struggles against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 which invited massive Western military intervention into the Middle East region, were some of the significant events in the Arab and Muslim worlds that helped to fuel growing internal Islamist radicalism and violence in Algeria. It was no longer a question of whether but when Algeria would institute the necessary political reforms amidst burgeoning democratic ferment across the globe in the late 1980s.

Propelled forward by this inexorable democratic ferment, the Algeria of President Chadli Benjedid began the gradual political reforms that would birth liberal democracy, albeit briefly, culminate in multi-party electoral contests in the early 1990s, and inexorably lead to Algeria's descent into chaos, bloodshed and greater repression. As events would prove later, Benjedid's embrace of political liberalization and Algeria's romance with liberal democracy were unfortunately destined to be short-lived. His attempt to end the one-party rule of the FLN brought greater woes to the country. Having separated the FLN from the state and eased its control over state institutions, his encouragement of multi-partyism coincided with the era of much more radicalized and emboldened religious extremist groups whose open advocacy of violence against secularism was resonating widely with the vast numbers of discontented people. The *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front) was the main Islamist political formation which had become a prominent force to reckon with in Algerian politics and also the principal opposition to the FLN.[8] With growing violent demonstrations, attacks, murders and assassinations, it was already clear that the FIS was in the process of seizing the political center-stage from the FLN leviathan which had by then become thoroughly discredited and weakened. If anything at all, for the FLN it was a case of the chickens coming home to roost, as the FIS comprehensively deployed the same terror tactics that the FLN had used so effectively in governance for three decades.

In the ensuing first round of parliamentary elections held in December 1991, the FIS recorded an overwhelming and decisive victory over the ruling

FLN and other parties, sending a powerful signal that the second round slated for January 1992 was merely to solidify the victory of Islamists and the final ignominious ouster of the FLN from power after three decades.[9] Unable to stomach the take-over of power by violent Islamist extremists, elements within the military hierarchy, especially powerful remnants of the FLN old guard who had fought in the revolutionary war in the 1950s, closed ranks to carry out a military coup that removed Chadli Benjedid and forcibly reversed all the reforms Algeria had known since the late 1980s, including the banning of the FIS.[10] Algeria's brief romance with political reforms and democratization had thus ended abruptly even before it had a chance to fully take off.

What replaced this termination of the experiment at democratization was, expectedly, another round of repressive authoritarian rule of the military hierarchs who were characteristically incommoded by opposition and, in this instance, temperamentally intolerant of Islamist extremism. The armed forces merely relapsed into its natural default setting: rule by fiat and extreme violence to counter the widespread violence in the aftermath of the abrupt annulment of the FIS electoral victory. Crushing the vanquished FIS therefore became the *raison d'état* for the new rulers, and Algeria dissolved inexorably into more political instability, violence, and domestic terrorism from which it has yet to fully recover, even before the post-9/11 wave of transnational organized terrorism being championed by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb began in earnest.

AL QAEDA AND THE RISE OF JIHADIST TERRORISM

It would be counterintuitive to imagine or expect that the FIS, even though badly wounded by the military onslaughts, would simply fade away from Algeria's political scene after the annulment of its historic electoral victory. What happened instead was that the FIS and other Islamist groups simply coalesced around the same objective, and unleashed ferocious violence and, according to Meredith, "waged a campaign of assassination, bombing and sabotage, aiming to force the government to accept Islamist claims to power."[11] The collaboration of Islamist groups eventuated in the formation of the armed extremist group known as the *Groupe Islamique Armée* or Armed Islamic Group (GIA) whose core objective was to employ terror and violence to seize state power. Its tactics included high-profile assassinations of government and military officials, police personnel, kidnappings of foreigners and expatriates to isolate Algeria from the rest of the world and discourage tourism and foreign investment. In particular, expatriates in the oil industry were targeted to force a shutdown of the oil sector and deal a mortal blow to the economic jugular vein of the oil-dependent country.[12] Algeria had thus

descended into multidimensional political violence and terrorism reminiscent of the revolutionary campaigns of the 1950s. Its casualties were put at over 30,000 dead in the first two years of the violent upsurge[13] and between 150,000 and 200,000 by the end of the 1990s.[14]

As Jeremy Keenan has pointedly observed, "Algeria is a classic *rentier* state, in that it is heavily reliant on the revenues derived from its oil and gas production."[15] This invariably connotes the country's vulnerability to external manipulation and control by the consumers of its produce. Algeria is neither unique nor peculiar in this regard, as this is generally the fate of all primary commodity producing countries, most especially the Third World producers of hydrocarbons that depend exclusively on Western technology and expertise for production, as well as for the consumption of the products. Nigeria, Angola, and other African hydrocarbon producers or petro-states are classic examples.

Immensely rich in hydrocarbon resources (oil and gas) which account for about 90 percent of its foreign earnings, and being the second most populous Arab country after Egypt, Algeria naturally attracts the interests and attention of the outside world, especially the Western nations which require unhindered access to its oil and gas. It also attracts the attention of fellow Arabs and Muslims who have supported and sponsored radical Islamism against the state on the side of the FIS and GIA. Foreign fighters, especially former Mujahideen fighters from the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, have also been attracted into the Algerian boil, and no less complicating the situation was the explicit recognition and endorsement given by Al Qaeda to several of the extremist jihadist groups operating in the Maghreb region. All these later dovetailed into America's unilateral declaration of the global war on terror in Africa after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, a development which would signal an increased US-Algeria collaboration in the anti-terror campaigns.[16]

In the first instance, the European countries across the Mediterranean that depend on Algeria's oil and gas would not have been favorably disposed toward having an Islamist regime signposted by violent extremism controlling those vital hydrocarbon resources. As far as these Western nations were concerned, Algeria's oil was thicker than the blood of Algerians. Whilst they might not have openly endorsed the Algerian government's violent conduct, it is logical that they did nothing to stop the carnage so long as those official strong-arm tactics guaranteed the flow of oil and gas. That may also explain why there was not any serious backlash against the regime in the international community.[17]

Algeria's internal political turmoil and terrorism have been on for nearly three decades although the Islamist forces have been severely and substantially degraded to afford some measure of stability. However, increasing

foreign interest in the country has also resulted in the entrance of a number of violent jihadist groups into the fray, especially on the heels of the Arab Spring which swept from power erstwhile immovable despots in neighboring Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. But much more importantly were the Western-instigated murder of Muammar Gaddafi and the consequent destruction of Libya through US-led NATO bombings. Not only is this a major source of provocation and irritation in the Arab Muslim world, it has also provided opportunities for all manner of jihadist movements to ply their violent trade in the Maghreb. Perhaps the most prominent in this regard is the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), a branch of the global franchise with North Africa as its area of operation. The activities and violent operations of AQIM have also encouraged and spawned an assortment of other lesser jihadist groups which are now holding sway in the Sahel-Sahara belt stretching from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. With the destruction and instability in Libya, ex-Gaddafi mercenaries and sundry criminal elements who plundered Libya's vast armories after his death have since relocated into the expansive but sparsely populated Sahel-Sahara region to continue their jihadist onslaughts against the governments of surrounding states, notably Algeria, Mali, and Niger.

Algeria suffered deadly attacks on account of this development, especially on account of its involvement in the multinational efforts to stop the breakup of Mali by Tuaregs and jihadists in 2012. One such notable consequence of Algeria's connection to the war in Mali was the January 2013 hostage-taking incident staged by a group of armed Islamist terrorists at an Algerian desert gas plant located close to the Libyan border. An AQIM-affiliated terrorist group based in neighboring Libya carried out an audacious raid into the Algerian desert gas installation, seizing and holding hundreds of Algerians and foreign nationals hostage.[18] This daring act, according to terrorist sources, was to punish Algeria for its involvement in the international military effort to regain Northern Mali from the terrorists, especially Algeria's permission for the French air force to use its air space for operations into Northern Mali. The Algerian military's Special Forces launched a daring rescue operation to free the hostages and retake the gas plant. In the process, not less than sixty-seven people were killed, half of them expatriate oil workers.

Many countries in the Sahel-Sahara belt of Africa are today at the mercy of a plethora of violent Islamist and jihadist groups operating in the sparsely populated but vast "ungoverned spaces" where state presence is often minimal and ineffectual. Algeria, Mali, Niger Republic and northern parts of Nigeria have been severely afflicted with increasing terrorism and insurgency in the wake of NATO's bombing and destruction of Libya. Nigeria has suffered from domestic Boko Haram terrorism which later morphed into transnational insurgency affecting the neighboring countries of Niger,

Cameroon and Chad; Mali was nearly sundered in two in 2012 by Tuareg separatists and jihadists who instituted the worst form extremist Islamist rule, until foreign military interventions, first by France and later ECOWAS and the United Nations saved it from total collapse. Algeria is still coping with its own domestic political and terrorist problems which are posing considerable security challenges.

CONCLUSION

Post-independence Algeria is inescapably a victim of a combination of its own historical and contemporary circumstances. The link between Algeria's past and its present is too strong to be casually dismissed in any analysis. To do so will not only be cynical but it will also be morally and intellectually fraudulent. First was its colonial history, as we have made clear in the preceding paragraphs. Its history was written in blood right from the time of its conquest by the French forces in 1830, and throughout the 130 years of ruthless colonial rule. Ruthless repression was the characteristic attribute of French rule in its African colonies, and Algeria was not an exception. In fact, what made Algeria's case more pathetic and gruesome was its official and legal classification as an extension of France, a classification so repugnant to Algerians who are also Muslims that very few ever applied for French citizenship. Being Muslim Arabs and Berbers, they were never going to trade their Islamic faith for French citizenship, and thus were treated as inferior to the settlers and therefore severely excluded by the French authorities from the affairs of their own country.

In all its colonies in Africa, the underlying philosophy of French rule was the assumed superiority of French culture which must be imposed on all "inferior" races. Predicated on this specious ideology, a major prescription of French policy was the deliberate destruction of existing cultures in all the territories in order to bring the "benefits" of French civilization to them. Algeria to them was a special concern, since it was legally classified as part of France. The implication from all this was that since the French were not going to grant them independence, and being regarded as inferior peoples who would never be allowed to be involved in the governance of their country, Algerians were inescapably consigned to agitational politicking, a factor which eventually made resort to revolutionary war to seek for independence quite seductive. In reality, the state that Algerians inherited after independence was the quintessential authoritarian and unaccountable state, and converting it into a liberal one would have been a Herculean task, even with the best of intentions.

Second, and a logical progression from its colonial history, was the revolutionary manner by which it secured its independence. Algerians, led by

the FLN, fought a bitter revolutionary war for independence between 1954 and 1962 during which both sides employed the most ruthless sanguinary methods imaginable. By the time the guns fell silent eight years later, over a million people had been killed, and wanton physical destruction left behind in its wake. Gaining power by revolution, the newly installed FLN rulers promptly relied on the very authoritarian and exclusionist methodology that had served them well during the war, and promptly declared a one-party state that brooked no opposition. From then on, the country was governed by a succession of authoritarian civilian and military despots who exercised a virtual totalitarian stranglehold on both public and private life. Even religion was not excluded from state control.

Perhaps the third factor that accounts for Algeria's contemporary nation-building and security challenges is its natural resources endowments in oil and gas. These two vital energy resources on which Western industrialization and civilization depend and on which Algeria itself relies for the bulk of its revenue have made it what Jeremy Keenan famously calls a classic *rentier* state. This is not peculiar to Algeria, as all African resource-dependent states suffer the same vulnerabilities of being hostage to the depredations of external powers. Being a major gas and oil supplier to Western Europe invariably makes the country too strategic to be allowed to fall into "enemy" hands that would adversely affect the flow of these vital energy resources. Consequently, when it appeared that its experimentation with political liberalization and democratization was going to turn over the country to Islamist extremists, Algeria's FLN old guard closed ranks with Western support to subvert the exercise and restore the country to its well-known authoritarian pathways. The military hierarchs who had seized control again embarked on the most ruthless pacification to eradicate Islamic extremism from the country's body politic. The Algerian civil war of the 1990s was merely a re-enactment of the bloodbath that had been its hallmark since colonial times.

NOTES

1. Although there is controversy as to the exact number of deaths, some estimates put both the actual battle deaths and civilian casualties at more than a million Algerians. See among other detailed accounts of Algeria's war of independence, Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962* (New York: Viking, 1978), republished by New York Review of Books, 2006.

2. Raph Uwechue, ed., *Africa Today* (London: Africa Books Ltd., 1991), 447.

3. It was recorded that only an insignificant eight positions out of 864 in the upper echelons of the administrative set-up were held by Muslim *beni-oui-ouis* by the start of the revolution. See Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: The Free Press, 2005 [2006]), 47.

4. See the seminal analysis by James O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191.

5. See Jeremy Keenan, *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa* (New York: Pluto Press, 2009), 132–138, for Algeria's economic crisis of the 1980s.

6. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: The Free Press, 2005 [2006]), 447.

7. For an incisive analysis of Algeria's economic crisis of the 1980s, see Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 448–49; also Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*, 133–136.

8. Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*, 134–135.

9. Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*, 138.

10. A detailed and systematic analysis of how Algeria descended into further political crisis is provided by Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*, see especially 138–157.

11. Meredith, 457.

12. Duncan Clarke, *Africa: Crude Continent: The Struggle for Africa's Oil Prize* (London: Profile Books, 2008 [paperback edition, 2010]), 232.

13. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 458.

14. Clarke, *Africa: Crude Continent*, 232; see also Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*, 132.

15. Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*, 134.

16. Details of Algeria's involvement and collaboration with America's Global War on Terror (GWOT) are available in Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*.

17. Keenan provides critical insight into Western support for and collaboration with the Algerian authorities ostensibly to combat Islamist terrorism. See Keenan, *The Dark Sahara*, 138–141 and 150–151.

18. Several international news agencies reported this incident. See BBC News Africa, January 21, 2013 and CNN reports of the same date.

Chapter 11

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Colony that Never Became a State

The Central African country known as the Democratic Republic of Congo has since its independence been one of Africa's failed or non-performing states. Wracked by violent internal divisions at independence, it was never able to attain proper and enduring statehood because its inherent internal contradictions fatally hobbled it from being an effective modern nation-state. According to Duncan Clarke,

> The Congo has rarely been a land of peace. Its enduring history has been menace and still is today. Its people have weathered slavery from several quarters (Arab and Portuguese, Belgian and African). The contemporary economic structure is one of a failing state, its past glories long eroded, with new edifices now needed to patch together this impoverished quilt of fragmented subsistence entities.[1]

The above quote from Duncan Clarke most aptly summarizes the condition and reality of today's independent country now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, or DR Congo. Democratic Republic of the Congo is, not surprisingly, perhaps the only former colony that never made it to becoming a real state before it spectacularly failed and finally collapsed. It became independent on June 30, 1960, arguably under the most inauspicious circumstances. Instead of transforming from a colony to a state—an entity according to Fukuyama, that parades "a central authority that can exercise a monopoly of legitimate force over its territory to keep the peace and enforce the law"—Congo imploded from the day of its independence from Belgium and has remained little more than a veritable enclave of local ethnic warlords and sundry bandits, with no central government actually in full control of the vast territory. After the collapse of its long-time dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997 and the outbreak of its second civil war a year later, the

country was later occupied and carved up into spheres of influence, control and plunder by the armed forces of several selfish neighboring states, triggering what was cynically dubbed "Africa's world war." It was, if anything, stillborn, thus never became a real state in the proper definition of the term before it violently unraveled and almost vanished totally from the world's political map. Perhaps emblematic of its existence and instability is the serial change of its name, from its pre-colonial appellation of the Congo Free State, to its colonial title of Belgian Congo, to Republic of Congo (Leopoldville) after independence in 1960, to Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1965 to 1971, to its christening as the Republic of Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko from 1971 to 1997, and to its current name, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo or DRC) after Mobutu's ouster. Even today, more than fifty-five years later, it remains still a caricature of a state, an entity that survives on life support, and a vast territory that has never really been under any central control since its independence, and as Duncan Clarke remarked, "its presumed status as a functioning state is a charade belied by episodic collapse and internal fragmentation."[2]

If anyone is in doubt that the Democratic Republic of Congo never really became a nation-state in the proper sense, then let us take a look at this confession of an informed American based on declassified documents of the CIA's activities in the newly "independent" Congo in the 1960s. According to Stephen R. Weissman,

> Not only was US involvement extensive; it was also malignant. The CIA's use of bribery and paramilitary force succeeded in keeping a narrow, politically weak clique in power for most of Congo's first decade of independence. And the very nature of the CIA's aid discouraged Congolese politicians from building genuine bases of support and adopting responsible policies. The agency's legacy of clients and techniques contributed to a long-running spiral of decline, which was characterized by corruption, political turmoil, and dependence on Western military intervention. So dysfunctional was the state that in 1997 it outright collapsed—leaving behind instability that continues to this day.[3]

If anything, that hapless country was hardly more than a playground for CIA officers to conduct their silly anti-communist experiments in Central Africa. Quoting an official memo from the CIA Director Allen Dulles to the CIA station in Leopoldville (as the Congolese capital Kinshasa was then known) it was clear that the US administration ordered or at least sanctioned the removal by force of the Congolese Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, whom it suspected might make the country a communist outpost. It read, "We conclude that his removal must be an urgent and prime objective and that under existing conditions this should be a high priority of our covert action."[4]

This was exactly the same conclusion reached by Meredith, that "with the active encouragement of the CIA and the connivance of UN officials, Colonel Joseph Mobutu, the 29-year old army chief of staff, who controlled the Leopoldville troops, stepped forward and declared that he was neutralising all politicians until the end of the year and assuming power himself."[5] A little trip down the country's history may assist to put its current ugly plight in proper perspective.

THE BELGIAN CONGO

Congo's perpetual political instability and permanent underdevelopment cannot be understood nor fully comprehended independently of its immediate pre-colonial and colonial provenance. This historical origin which set the trajectory for post-independence politics and development is well captured in several works.[6]

Unlike other African colonies of the major European powers, Congo was not originally established as a colony but rather as a personal estate, a private possession by King Leopold II of Belgium after the Berlin Conference of 1885. Known then as the Congo Free State, King Leopold so mercilessly plundered the resources and instituted by far the most horrendous genocidal rule against the Congo population such that a whopping ten million people reportedly perished under the harshest form of slavery and forced labor to satisfy Leopold's lust for personal aggrandizement. No other territory in Africa came even close to the deprivation imposed on the Congo and its people. The country is blessed with vast deposits of industrial diamonds, cobalt, copper, uranium, coltan and other vital natural resources such as rubber which was then in very high demand and which Leopold needed to exploit for personal wealth accumulation.

When the territory was eventually taken over from Leopold by Belgium and it officially became a colony, and its name formally changed to Belgian Congo, its misfortunes did not change for the better. In fact, as Meredith further observes, "the colonial state that replaced it was rigidly controlled by a small management group in Brussels representing an alliance between the government, the Catholic Church and the giant mining and business corporations whose activities were virtually exempt from outside scrutiny."[7] What happened was that colonial plunder by the Belgian state merely replaced the erstwhile private plunder by King Leopold, and the ensuing colonial administration was as ruthless and vicious as Leopold had been. The colony was tightly controlled by a retinue of Belgian administrators backed by the *Force Publique*, comprising locally recruited foot soldiers and commanded and

officered by Belgians, which ruthlessly enforced foreign will over the natives and mercilessly crushed every attempt at rebellion or political uprising.

INDEPENDENCE AND STATE COLLAPSE

Belgian colonial rule formally came to an end on June 30, 1960, when the Congo was declared independent as the Republic of Congo. Undoubtedly, independence was granted under the most dubious and inauspicious circumstances, for with the benefit of hindsight, it would appear the colony was ill-prepared for independent and sovereign existence. Indeed, the country must be the only one that went straight from colony to state collapse without the usual intervals of statehood and state failure. It never had the chance to become a state, much less a failed one! This was not a fault of the people as much as it was the deliberate design of the colonial power, as Belgium was not much different from its fellow European colonial powers in terms of the underlying philosophy of the colonial enterprise and the forced necessity to grant independence after the end of the Second World War. Before leaving the continent, all colonial powers ensured that they would have a tight grip on the former colonies after independence, since the grant of independence was, *ab initio*, not an altruistic exercise. As Dani Nabudere puts it, "we know that as the European powers scrambled out of the African continent, they ensured that what they left behind would serve their interests."[8] As for the Congo, Meredith also notes that the Congo had become a pathetic sight barely a fortnight after independence, with a total collapse of all security apparatuses, the attempted secession of Katanga from the country, while the sudden flight of all expatriates left it without qualified administrative personnel to sort things out.[9] In fact, Belgium was already making plans to oust Prime Minister Lumumba from power.

The political instability which seemed to have been embedded in the very fabric of Belgian Congo did not abate after the grant of independence. In any case, the reality is that among African colonies, that country was perhaps the most ill-prepared for independence. Not being originally a colony in the actual sense of the term, the idea that it could ever become independent was far-fetched. But as the grant of freedom became inevitable, Congo's internal condition was indisputably the most depressing of any African colony. Throughout its existence under Belgian rule, the Belgians scrupulously prevented the spread and availability of formal Western education to the people, inhibiting the creation of an educated African middle class capable of being inserted into the political and administrative systems of the colony. As a result, it was deficient and ill-prepared in terms of availability of local educated manpower to take over from the Belgians. Even the few nationals who

had acquired some level of Western education had been severely excluded in the running of the colonial state and its government, and were inexperienced and therefore severely handicapped to run a newly independent state. According to some accounts, as of the date of independence in June 1960, there were fewer than thirty Congolese university graduates, (Walter Rodney actually put the number of university graduates at only sixteen for a population of about 13 million),[10] and there were no Congolese doctors, or secondary school teachers. In fact, "there was not a single Congolese university graduate until 1956 . . . and there were only three African managers in the entire civil service."[11] If the public service lacked experienced Congolese in its ranks, the military that was bequeathed at independence was no better, as there was not a single Congolese officer in the entire force. Joseph Desire Mobutu, who would later play a significant but ignoble role in the domestic politics and ruin of the country, had only risen to the rank of Sergeant-Major in the *Force Publique* as of 1956, before Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba appointed him chief of staff with the rank of colonel in 1960. It is worth noting also that Congo lacked the most elementary knowledge or experience in governance and parliamentary life, as only about three Congolese nationals occupied any top rank in the civil service out of an establishment of 1,400.[12] What this portended was that Congo was only nominally independent but was in reality still a colony, an enclave under the firm political, economic and military grip of the Belgians who manned every department of government and administration.

Declared independent on June 30, 1960, in response to growing nationalist agitations sweeping across the African continent, the Congo began its independent sovereign existence under the most chaotic and impossible of circumstances that would eventually make it a failed state. As Kenny and Norris noted, "just days after independence in 1960, Congo suffered a series of interlocking and escalating crises: an army mutiny by Congolese soldiers, riots targeting foreigners, flaring ethnic tensions, and Belgian-backed rebels in the copper-producing province of Katanga threatening secession,"[13] compounded by a CIA plot which in September 1960 resulted in the arrest and murder of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba because he was regarded as a Soviet sympathizer whose policies would give the Communists a foothold in the Congo.[14] A form of parliamentary system of government was cobbled together, with a rickety and uneasy power-sharing arrangement between the Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba of the *Mouvement National Congolais* (MNC) on the one hand, and President Joseph Kasavubu of the *Alliance des Bakongo*, on the other, whilst the rest of the civilian bureaucracy, the police and the army remained firmly under the control of Belgians. Embedded in the rickety political architecture was what James O'Connell famously referred to as the "inevitability of instability,"[15] for under surreptitious Belgian

encouragement and instigation, the mineral-rich province of Katanga led by a politically ambitious Moise Tshombe declared secession from the country only a few weeks after independence, throwing the country into the internal political turmoil that has remained its major plague till today. In the wake of this ugly development and its ensuing civil war, Prime Minister Lumumba was advised to ask for United Nations assistance to prevent the disintegration of the country. In response, the United Nations deployed a multinational peacekeeping force into the country to prevent its breakup. It was in the midst of the engulfing confusion, instability and civil war that both Prime Minister Lumumba and President Kasavubu in September 1960 each claimed to have dismissed the other from office, leading to the serious constitutional crisis that an equally ambitious Colonel Joseph Mobutu, who was only a few months earlier appointed as the chief of staff of the new *Armee Nationale Congolaise* by Lumumba, would temporarily intervene in the country's internal politics. In the ensuing political melee, Prime Minister Lumumba was arrested in September 1960 with the connivance of the US CIA and the Belgians who both resented his communist leaning, and he was eventually executed by separatist Katangese forces in January 1961. From then on, the country went from one internal crisis to another until 1965 when Colonel Mobutu actually seized power to impose some order on the chaos that was the Congo.

After his first brief intervention in the political process in 1960, Colonel Joseph Mobutu (later General Mobutu Sese Seko) held sway directly as a military ruler and later a civilianized despot in the Congo, later renamed Zaire, a country he ruled for thirty-two years, from 1965 to 1997. It is perhaps not totally uncharitable to assert that by the time he had finished with the country and was overthrown by Laurent Kabila, the country itself was finished! He had so mercilessly plundered the country that he was at one point declared richer than the state itself. As part of his silly experimentation, and embracing what he called African authenticity, Mobutu not only changed his own name to Mobutu Sese Seko but also changed the country from Democratic Republic of Congo to Republic of Zaire, and the capital from Leopoldville to Kinshasa, in 1971. He also declared the country a one-party state, civilianized himself, and became the head of state. In the thirty-two years during which he held absolute power, Mobutu ran perhaps the most kleptocratic government in Africa, impoverishing the country and mortgaging it to Western, principally US, interests.

Not only was he a famous stooge of the US Central Intelligence Agency whose services were required to keep Angola destabilized,[16] he was also a darling of several Western countries whose embassies in Kinshasa kept him well-oiled with bribe money.[17] He held the country in thrall by a combination of armed coercion, cooptation and corrupt inducement. As a major ally

of the United States, he was the toast of Presidents Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, who hosted him at different times in the White House. His friendship with Washington as a reliable Cold War ally and bulwark against Communist influence in Central Africa made him virtually untouchable. He also served as a US tool for the destabilization of Angola in the 1970s, as disclosed by John Stockwell.[18] As a result, the United States backed him militarily against every form of domestic uprising and helped to stabilize his autocratic and corrupt regime. When the two famous insurgent invasions of the country by ex-Katangese exiles, termed Shaba I and Shaba II, happened in 1977 and 1978 respectively, it took the swift intervention of his Western patrons, France and Belgium and some African countries like Senegal and Morocco backed millions of dollars of American military weapons and logistical and airlift assistance, to shore up the response by a weakened army that had been demoralized by his years of kleptocratic rule.[19] But the end finally came for him at the end of the Cold War when the Western nations no longer seriously needed fraternizing with African dictators, and the United States cynically looked the other way as the Laurent Kabila-led insurgents chased him out of power without lifting a finger to assist him as they used to do in the heyday of the Cold War. Mobutu systematically hobbled by catastrophic health challenges, "Mobutu's Zaire," as Filip Reyntjens has aptly observed, "was the epitome of state collapse: minimal state functions were no longer performed; empirically speaking, the state had ceased to exist."[20]

Laurent Desire Kabila's insurgent forces, backed by Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda forces and resources, launched a daring offensive from their base in the eastern part of the country to overthrow the government, and in no time entered the capital, Kinshasa, forcing Mobutu to flee into exile after a failed peace negotiation that was brokered by the South African President, Nelson Mandela. Kabila entered the capital and declared himself as president, and changed the name of the country back to its original name, Democratic Republic of Congo. Unfortunately, what Kabila inherited was a collapsed state, weakened by years of authoritarian rule and kleptocracy, unresolved ethno-regional cleavages and other fissiparous tendencies.

AFTER MOBUTU: DR CONGO AND "AFRICA'S WORLD WAR"

If anyone had hoped that peace and stability would be restored to that hapless country after Mobutu's thirty-two-year rule had come to an end in mid-1997, it turned out to be a forlorn hope. The domestic insurgency that succeeded in unseating his thirty-two-year dictatorship itself faced daunting challenges and complications occasioned by both complex internal circumstances and

geopolitical developments within the immediate Central African sub-region and other interests from the wider international community. Laurent Kabila's new regime had had barely one year of respite before the country was plunged into another major war, this time sparked by disagreements with the same eastern neighbors, most especially Uganda and Rwanda, that had earlier backed his insurgent overthrow of Mobutu. These two neighboring states harbored individual designs on the vast country.

In the first instance, Congo is a victim of its own rich natural resources endowment, vast mineral deposits—copper, gold, diamonds, cobalt, uranium, and oil—which make it attractive to other countries that want to plunder these resources. Both Uganda and Rwanda, having their eyes on exploiting these vast mineral resources to shore up their own poor economies, thus began taking sides, sponsoring and arming a plethora of anti-Kabila rebel groups especially in eastern Congo to facilitate their plunder. According to Filip Reyntjens, it was the Congolese who invariably funded their own destabilization.[21] Rwanda, in particular, also had a much more specific rationale for invading the Congo: it desperately wanted to exact revenge on the thousands of Hutu paramilitary fighters, the infamous *Interahamwe* who perpetrated the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda who had taken refuge under Mobutu's regime in the Congo and who were launching cross-border raids into Rwanda. To stem these attacks, elements of Rwandan forces occupied parts of eastern Congo to secure the common border. In addition, the United States, which had supported Mobutu's thirty-two-year reign of terror, ostensibly because of his anti-Communist disposition, was not too comfortable with Kabila, and thus also surreptitiously aided Uganda and Rwanda against Kabila. As far as the US administration was concerned, Uganda's Yoweri Museveni and Rwanda's Paul Kagame were America's two favorite leaders in Central Africa.

Another neighboring country, Angola, was interested not necessarily in Angola's resources as much as getting rid of the UNITA rebel forces using southern Congo as a sanctuary and launch pad for incursions into Angola. Its support for the government in Kinshasa was predicated on the need to snuff out those rebel forces, and the presence of its troops was strictly for this purpose. What invariably happened was the spilling of Angola's own civil war into the Congo. In another sense, the raging hostility and hatred between the Ugandan and Sudanese governments also spilled over into and was being fought partly in eastern Congo. The conflict between the two was over Museveni's support for South Sudanese fighters battling Khartoum for independence while Sudan was supporting the Lord's Resistance Army's terrorism inside Uganda. Invariably, the complex scenario playing out in Congo was a combination of external invasions, internal civil wars and the surreptitious carving up of the country into zones of occupation where the authority of the government in Kinshasa could not reach.[22]

Shaky and unstable, and seriously in need of assistance to forestall his ouster by foreign-backed rebel forces, Kabila himself reached out for support which he got first from Angola, Burundi and Zimbabwe, and later from Chad.[23] Thus was the beginning of the Congo's full-blown second war in 1998.[24] It was the most brutal war which at its height involved the armed forces of nine African countries and more than twenty different domestic armed rebel groups that raged from 1998 until 2003. Cynically dubbed "Africa's World War" because of this multinational involvement, it recorded over six million deaths and more than two million internally displaced.[25] But what made the war infinitely more complex, as Filip Reyntjens noted, was that there were "several wars within the war."[26] Apart from the armies of the different countries, there were several rebel forces and ethnic militia groups settling local scores within the context of the larger war. In those years, each if the fighting forces and rebel groups engaged in the mindless plunder of Congo's vast mineral deposits, thus fueling further political instability and economic decay.

Unofficially partitioned into zones of occupation by the respective fighting forces and armed rebel groups, the Congo has hardly been a united entity ever since. Even though all foreign armies have been withdrawn since the signing of a peace agreement in 2002, Congo remains unstable and fractured, with government authority under constant challenge in large swaths of eastern Congo where a plethora of foreign-backed militia groups continue to hold sway. Amid a cloud of political uncertainties, Laurent Kabila was assassinated on January 16, 2001, even whilst the war was still on, and his son, Joseph Kabila, who was at the time Chief of Staff of the Land Forces, took over the reins of power and has ruled the country till now. He later became a democratically elected president after winning in a run-off vote in 2006, and was re-elected in a controversial poll for the second term in office in 2011. His sixteen-year rule has been dogged by wars, insurgencies, mutinies and coup attempts such that the Congo has rarely been ruled as a united and stable entity since Mobutu's ouster in 1997.

CONCLUSION

In Francis Fukuyama's view, "a modern state without rule of law or accountability is capable of enormous despotism."[27] Although Fukuyama's apt assertion describes the state in most of post-independence Africa, it is perhaps more apt for the Congo, a colony that never made it to becoming an actual state before its implosion and precipitous descent into lawlessness and authoritarianism. The ingredients for its instability and collapse had been carefully and cynically embedded in its very origins. To have turned out differently would not only have been a surprise but it would have run against the grain of common sense. Like most other colonies in Africa, the colonial

adventure that brought them into being was neither altruistic nor even capable of creating durable and enduring states out of them.

Ill-prepared to survive and thrive as a sovereign state at the time of the grant of independence in 1960, the Congo suddenly imploded immediately and practically died at birth. Unable to institutionalize modern nation-state governance in line with the Westphalian model, what changed in the Congo was not the system of governance as inherited from King Leopold's time but a mere change of guards, a replacement of Belgians by locals. Severely excluded from politics and governance under colonial rule, the few local elites who collected power from the departed Belgians had no choice but to continue with exclusionist governance as usual, invariably but inevitably sundering the country along ethno-regional fault lines. Political instability in the Congo was quite easily foreseeable and predictable: it was a colony cobbled together for private plunder, and later officially appropriated for state pillage by Belgium with the least consideration for the creation of a durable state structure and institutions. The truth is that the Congo has understandably never been an effective state throughout its existence—no single government since independence has been able to make and enforce law and maintain the peace effectively over the entire defined territory of the Congo.

For more than half a century of existence, the Congo has been ruled by autocratic and unaccountable governments, from Mobutu who ruled for thirty-two years between 1965 and 1997 to the Kabilas (father and son) since 1997. It has never developed into a real state, first because of the absence of popular legitimacy for the rulers, and second, because no government since independence has exercised a monopoly over the legitimate means of coercion over the vast territory. Since the outbreak of a multi-pronged civil war in the mid-1990s which brought the armies of about nine countries into the fray, large swaths of the country have fallen under the control of a plethora of self-seeking warlords, guerrilla forces and those Fukuyama termed "predatory militias,"[28] often sponsored and supported by interested neighboring countries, especially Rwanda and Uganda. No government in Kinshasa has ever been able to lay claim to full control of the entire territory. Even long after the formal withdrawal of foreign armies from the Congo, peace and stability have remained elusive because the plethora of rebel movements have continued with the plunder of the country's vast mineral resources to fund their operations and render the country perpetually unstable. The final *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo* submitted to the UN Security Council in October 2003 not only indicted a number of countries, especially Rwanda and Uganda, and several companies, it also linked the continuation and virtual intractability of the conflict to the "illegal exploitation" of the resources which provide funding for the flow of arms into

the country.[29] The reasons why the Congo has remained a pathetic case are not difficult to fathom: it has been systematically plundered by its neighbors and their internal collaborators.[30]

Even five and half decades after independence, the latest available global rankings by several organizations put the Democratic Republic of the Congo among the worst countries in virtually every category of ranking.[31] These have been quite consistent for a number of decades. For example, while the 2014 UNDP *Human Development Index* ranks the Congo 186 of the 187 countries profiled, the 2013 *Failed States Index* puts it in number two position of failed states. The Congo has remained a shell of a state because that was the design of its progenitors, helped along by internal misrule and foreign powers which are more interested in the plunder of its rich natural endowments than its survival.

Without mincing words, it is doubtful if the Congo can rise to the stature of a real state in the near future. While its politicians and elites continue to plunder it mercilessly from within, the hoard of external predators also remain relentless in their exploitation and deliberate encouragement of the instability that facilitates extractive predation. If Joseph Kabila manipulates the constitution and political system to give himself an unconstitutional third term in office by 2016, the country's fracturing will become exacerbated. If he leaves peacefully, it is unlikely that the Congo's plight will witness any great improvement anytime soon because his successor will suffer the same lack of countrywide acceptability and legitimacy that all its past leaders have faced.

NOTES

1. Duncan Clarke, *Africa: Crude Continent: The Struggle for Africa's Oil Prize* (London: Profile Books, 2008 and 2010), 63.
2. Clarke, *Africa: Crude Continent*, 64.
3. Stephen R. Weissman, "What Really Happened in the Congo: The CIA, the Murder of Lumumba, and the Rise of Mobutu," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2014), m.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141523/Stephen-r-weissman/what-really-happened-in-congo. (Accessed 9/8/2014).
4. Quoted in Weissman, "What Really Happened in the Congo."
5. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: The Free Press, 2005), 107.
6. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 94.
7. Meredith, 96.
8. Dani Wadada Nabudere, "African Unity in Historical Perspective," in *A United States of Africa?*, ed. Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2001), 11.
9. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 103.

10. See Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1972 [Republished by Panaf Publishing Inc., Abuja, Nigeria, 2015]), 298.

11. Charles Kenny and John Norris, "The River that Swallows all Dams," *Foreign Policy*, May 8, 2015. www.foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/08/the–river–that–swallows–all–dams. (Accessed 11/5/2015).

12. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 101.

13. Kenny and Norris, "The River that Swallows all Dams."

14. For graphic details of the CIA's involvement in the political destabilization of the Congo, see Stephen R. Weissman, "What Really Happened in the Congo." See also, William Blum, *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions since World War II* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004), 156–163.

15. James O'Connell, "The Inevitability of Instability," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 181–191.

16. John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1978).

17. Meredith, *The State of Africa*, 108.

18. See Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*.

19. For details of US and other foreign assistance during the two Shaba invasions, see Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1985), 623–630; also William Blum, *Killing Hope*, op. cit., 259.

20. Filip Reyntjens, "Briefing: The Democratic Republic of Congo, from Kabila to Kabila," *African Affairs* 100, no. 399 (April 2001): 317.

21. Reyntjens, "Briefing: The Democratic Republic of Congo," 312.

22. A major study by the International Crisis Group has detailed the involvement of multiple nations in the Congo. See ICG, "Scramble for the Congo: Anatomy of an Ugly War," Nairobi/Brussels, ICG Africa Report No. 26 (December 20, 2000).

23. For aspects of the multinational involvement in the second Congo war, see Gerard Prunier, "Rebel Movements and Proxy Warfare: Uganda, Sudan and the Congo (1986–99)," *African Affairs* 103, no. 412 (July 2004): 359–383; concerning Chad, which had no national interest of its own in Congo but deployed forces on the side of the Kabila government, see p. 378.

24. See a brilliant expose by Congolese journalist Antoine Lokongo, "The Suffering of Congo," *New African* (London), no. 388 (September 2000): 20–23.

25. The countries whose armed forces were involved in the fighting included Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, and Chad.

26. Reyntjens, "Briefing: The Democratic Republic of Congo," 311.

27. Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: From Pre-Human Times to the French Revolution* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2011), 19.

28. Francis Fukuyama, *Political and Political Decay*: *From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014), 290.

29. UN, *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo* (October 2003).

30. The graphic details of the complex wars inside the Congo can be found in the study by the International Crisis Group, *Scramble for the Congo: Anatomy of an Ugly War, 20 December 2000*, ICG Africa Report No. 26, Nairobi/Brussels.

31. See among others, *Transparency International*'s "Corruption Perception Index," UNDP's annual Human Development Index, Democracy Index, Failed States Index, Index of Economic Freedom, Global Peace Index, etc. of various years.

Chapter 12

Mozambique

From Revolutionary Possibilities to Contrived Instability and State Failure

Mozambique, formerly known as Portuguese East Africa, one of Portugal's African possessions that obtained independence in the mid-1970s after a prolonged armed struggle (the others being Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde), was an archetypal Portuguese colony. Like Portugal's other possessions in Africa, Mozambique was not regarded as a colony in the conventional sense but a mere overseas extension of Portugal itself. Never treated as a colony, Portugal thus never for a moment imagined any separation from its control, never contemplated the possibility of independence, even as other African countries gained independence in quick succession in the 1950s and 1960s.

Portugal and Mozambique have a very long historical relationship dating back to the late fifteenth century whilst the trade in African slaves was the main preoccupation for centuries. The aftermath of the abolition of the slave trade was the forcible imposition of colonial rule. Portugal embarked on subduing most of the kingdoms and brought them under its rule during the scramble for and partition of Africa. It accomplished this fully by the early twentieth century.

As a classic Portuguese colony, Mozambique experienced Portugal's harshest and most brutal colonial and racist policies.[1] Education for the Africans was not the concern of the colonial authorities and thus the people were denied access to modernization in any form. With the majority lacking access to education, Mozambicans were never introduced nor integrated into the administration and public service of their country, a factor that would haunt the country after independence. Mozambique lacked an indigenous workforce and had to rely on Portuguese settlers. As *Africa Today* also noted, Mozambicans "had no political rights and were treated not only as subjects of Lisbon but also as serfs by the settler colonialists."[2] The implication was that

Mozambicans were generally condemned only to agitational activities and political resistance to Portugal's colonial oppression, activities which were often ruthlessly crushed by military and police might. It was not until the 1950s when Mozambican intellectuals in the diaspora and students studying in Portugal's higher institutions began more systematic resistance campaigns against Portuguese rule and agitation for independence, especially as they saw independence being granted to other territories in Africa. Portugal's response was usually brutal suppression of all political activities since it was not willing to contemplate the grant of independence to any of its African possessions. This obduracy was at the roots of Portugal's long and often senseless colonial wars in its African colonies that only culminated in independence for all of them—Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, and Mozambique—in the mid-1970s.

Even though political activism and resistance to colonial rule had begun in the late 1950s, real and coordinated anti-colonialism did not begin in the territory until the coming together of several groups in mid-1962 in Tanzania to announce the formation of a Marxist-oriented political organization, the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), under the leadership of Eduardo Mondlane. With Portugal's crackdown continuing, it became apparent to the members of FRELIMO and all Mozambicans that independence was never going to be obtained through any constitutional means but through an armed uprising. In the first instance the political body language of the dictatorship in Lisbon gave every indication of Portugal's obduracy even as fellow European colonial countries were granting independence. Second, the peculiar character of settler-colonialism wherever practiced by any colonial power—in Algeria, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Zimbabwe—was intrinsically incompatible with negotiated independence. All the above named countries without exception obtained independence only through the instrumentality of armed struggle. Realizing the futility of ever obtaining freedom by peaceful means, FRELIMO was compelled to launch its armed struggle in 1964, and thus began a decade long brutal war of independence which only ended on June 25, 1975.

PORTUGAL, FRELIMO, AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Beginning from 1933 when the Portuguese politician, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar assumed power as Prime Minister in Lisbon, the stage was gradually set for what would inexorably become a notorious settler-colony which would have to fight a grueling war to gain independence, the same independence that many other colonies in Africa accomplished by peaceful negotiation and dialogue. Salazar's era in Portugal introduced by far the harshest form of colonial

rule in Mozambique. Not only was Salazar a fascist dictator *par excellence*, his regime also inflicted the most harrowing experiences on the peoples of the colonies in Africa because the affairs of the colonies were dictated and controlled directly from Lisbon. Mozambique was not an exception in that the colonies were regarded and administered directly as overseas territories or provinces, mere extensions of mainland Portugal by which Portugal sought to present itself to the rest of the world as a transcontinental nation-state.[3]

As part of his colonial policies, Salazar officially allowed and actively encouraged migration of Portuguese nationals in large numbers into African colonies or "provinces" (as the Portuguese used to pretend that they were) on the promise of the best jobs and privileged lifestyles, a move which virtually introduced and systematized sinister settler-colonialism and the worst form of racist abuses to be visited on Africans. In response, thousands of Portuguese nationals poured into Mozambique and the other colonies of Angola and Guinea-Bissau. Like all the other Portuguese possessions, Mozambique thus became home to a large number of Portuguese settlers who had come to regard themselves as belonging to the country, with many intermarrying with the natives and producing a mulatto population as well.

Colonial Policy: *Assimilado*

It must be stated that it was not just the influx of Portuguese settlers into its African colonies but the overall ideology that underpinned its colonial rule that made Portuguese colonialism particularly brutal. Officially rationalized, at least to themselves, as a mission to bring the benefits of "civilization" to "primitives" in Africa, Portugal instituted and based its colonial rule on what was known as *Assimilado* (or assimilation in the English language). It sought to create Portuguese men and women out of Africans who were able to fulfill a number of criteria. In their thinking, these "new Africans" to be minted from that policy would adopt Portuguese ways of life and thereby become Portuguese in every sense except the color of their skin. This same excuse to "civilize" and bring Africans of their "primitivism" was a common ideological and moral justification by which all the colonial powers sought to rationalize the brutality of the colonial enterprise to their own peoples. Those Africans who, having met the set criteria and having, as a result, been qualified by the Portuguese as "civilized," were thereafter entitled to become *assimilados* or people who have been assimilated into the civilized way of the Portuguese. This was exactly the same way the French sought to create those they called *évolués* in the French African colonies—those Africans who have evolved. Though a number of Africans strove and qualified as *assimilados,* the reality was that they were never fully integrated or assimilated into the white society which they desired. Having repudiated and become sorely

detached from their African cultural roots, these *assimilados* became even more frustrated as the rights and privileges they believed they were entitled to were denied them. Caught in the middle, they were neither accepted by the Portuguese into the so-called "civilized" group nor trusted by their "non-civilized" African kinsmen especially in the initial days of the active struggles against foreign domination from the early 1960s.

Indeed, the Portuguese colonial rulers were extremely careful not to integrate many *assimilados* into colonial governance and administration so that they would not eventually become the source of educated opposition to ruthless foreign domination and extractive predation on which the entire imperial outreach was based. The rights and privileges extended to the *assimilados* were few and highly restricted both by law and practice because not only did the Portuguese not believe in their own propaganda and rhetoric of a colonial rule as a "civilizing mission" but they could not bring themselves to accept that "primitive" Africans could actually become truly "civilized." This discrimination by the Portuguese and alienation from the African majority could have been responsible for the influence and frontline participation of Mozambique's educated elites in the demand for independence from the early 1960s.

As in all the African possessions of other European colonizing states, the idea of development was not a part of the colonial "civilizing mission." The colonial state architecture was a minimalist state, sufficient enough to facilitate resource extraction, tax collection, maintenance of law and order. As Nkrumah has noted in his seminal book, *Africa Must Unite*,[4] the colonial power had no corresponding responsibility whatsoever to the peoples of the colonies and therefore development was out of the question. The colonial state apparatus existed solely for the facilitation of resource extraction. Whatever governance paraphernalia and infrastructure that were put in place—a government, security services, roads, railways, and so forth—were simply for the selfish purpose of resource extraction, not state-building. (See chapters 1 and 2 in this volume.)

As independence came to countries on the continent from the mid-1950s, and mostly in 1960 when a whopping total of seventeen countries became sovereign independent states and members of the community of nation-states, the people of Mozambique as expected also yearned for exactly the same national freedom. Portugal's adamant refusal to contemplate any such possibility led to the formation of FRELIMO in 1962 from a number of previously existing political groupings among indigenous Mozambicans under the leadership of a Mozambican intellectual, Eduardo Mondlane, to employ political action to press Portugal for independence. Unable to make real progress concerning obtaining independence by peaceful political action, FRELIMO was forced to adopt armed struggle in 1964. FRELIMO's move was compelled by the fact that help was not forthcoming from the Western nations

who supported Portugal's ruthless fascist rule in both Mozambique and Angola as long as Portugal's presence in the Indian and South Atlantic oceans guaranteed the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to Western Europe and North America. With military assistance from the Western nations, and with the US allowing NATO to support Portugal in its African colonial wars, it became clear that Mozambicans would have to look elsewhere for support and assistance, hence developing closer relations with the countries of Eastern Europe and Communist China. This also led, under foreign guidance, to FRELIMO's increasing reliance on Marxist-Leninism for ideological direction and guidance, and adoption of Marxist-Leninist policies and strategies which combined to make the Western governments and their racist allies in apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia quite uncomfortable.

1974 Lisbon Coup and Independence for Colonial Territories

The end of the colonial system came into sight only when internal political changes and a coup d'état in Portugal in April 1974 forced policy changes on the colonial power. Christened the Carnation Revolution, a radical wing of the country's armed forces, wearied by more than a decade of colonial wars, staged a putsch in Lisbon which overthrew the *Estado Novo* (New State), the fascist dictatorship that had governed the country for more than three decades since the 1930s. The armed forces movement which staged the coup wanted Portugal to withdraw from its colonial wars and grant independence without further delay to its colonies.[5] This feat was achieved in 1975 with the independence of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Angola, and Mozambique. The junior armed forces officers at the center of the putsch had become thoroughly disillusioned from endless colonial wars in which thousands of them had been drafted to participate, wars which had by then become unwinnable. Also, Portugal had by then become militarily and politically exhausted from the several simultaneous wars in Africa, but the regime in Lisbon was unwilling to accept the reality. (See chapter on Portugal in this volume.)

EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE, INSTABILITY, AND CIVIL WAR

Mozambique's initial domestic and foreign policy thrusts after independence attracted mostly negative outside attention, especially from the Western world that was alarmed at the new country's outright jettisoning of capitalism for socialism, a development by which countries such as the USSR, China, and Cuba, rather than Western European states, became its closest friends and

allies.[6] This move to and embrace of Communism was a consequence of the procedures by which the country had secured its independence. And once that independence was attained in June 1975 after grueling armed struggles during which only the countries in the Communist fold supported it, the FRELIMO-led national government moved rapidly to institute a most radical form of Marxist-Leninist rule, outlawing political activities and invariably instituting a one-party state into the bargain.[7] These moves were accompanied by a rash of other radical policies that sought to reshape the national economy away from the capitalist mode, and an introduction of a host of social reforms, all of which caused a mass exodus of the remaining Portuguese settlers who had formed the bulk of the newly independent country's administrative and technical manpower.[8] Even though these political and socio-economic changes were not totally unexpected, considering the deep-seated Marxist ideological leaning of FRELIMO from its founding, the resultant effect was a near total crippling of the country's economy and the creation of internal political discontent which was later to be exploited and manipulated by outside interests to cause instability and a civil war. This rigid ideological direction gave ammunition to both internal opponents and external forces to destabilize the country and cause a devastating civil war. In less than two years after independence, not less than 85 percent of the Portuguese settlers who had been incommoded by these sharp Marxist-Leninist policies had left the country, creating a severe shortage of skilled manpower needed to run a modern state.[9]

This graphic situation after independence was hardly a conducive condition for a post-colonial state to survive and thrive even if it had no external enemies to contend with. Unfortunately, the newly independent country had both regional enemies (South Africa and Rhodesia) and extra-African powers who abhorred its Marxist ideological orientation and its jettisoning of capitalism, to contend with. It was perhaps naïve of the new rulers of the country to imagine that the West, the United States especially, would remain supine and allow its rivals—USSR, China, and Cuba—to dominate the space.

But it was not internal policies and developments alone that brought the destabilization and near-crippling of the country, its economy and infrastructure. A number of external factors and actors were also at play.

In the first instance, it would appear that Mozambique, from its ascension to sovereign status, became an instant and unfortunate victim of geopolitical circumstances of its contiguous neighbors, namely the rapidly unfolding armed struggle for independence in the neighboring settler-colony of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where white settlers had since 1965 hijacked the colonial territory from Great Britain and instituted a minority racist government, and in South Africa, an independent country but under the most sinister form of racist rule known as apartheid. Mozambique shares long contiguous land borders with these two countries, each of which was undergoing intense

internal political upheavals and revolutionary ferment. Mozambique because of this geographical situation could neither remain totally insulated by the armed struggles for independence being waged by both ZANU and ZAPU against the racist rulers in Zimbabwe, nor the intensification of the anti-apartheid activism of the African National Congress inside South Africa. The internal political upheavals in both of Mozambique's immediate neighbors were causing population movements, displacements and a refugee flow. Mozambique's territory, because of its revolutionary history, was therefore a natural sanctuary for freedom fighters and others escaping from oppression in both Rhodesia and South Africa.

In any case, as a country that itself obtained independence through armed struggle, it bore the revolutionary obligation of being sympathetic to the revolutionary activities for the liberation of its neighbors where majority blacks were being oppressed by racist minority regimes. It was both a moral burden and ideological obligation that Mozambique could not readily shy away from even if it had intended to. Its subscription to the Marxist-Leninist ideology and all its egalitarian promises and prescriptions created an inescapable ideological desideratum for its involvement. Its own independence from a sinister form of Portuguese settler-colonialism was a veritable success from which other independence movements in the sub-region readily drew inspiration and strength. The revolutionaries in the neighboring states therefore rightly expected Mozambique to be a natural ally and to provide assistance, sanctuary and succor for fellow freedom fighters. This geographical proximity inevitably drew the country into the vortex of the armed struggles in these two neighboring states, an involvement for which it had pay a hefty price as the years progressed.

Besides this, the Rhodesian authorities on their own deliberately decided to draw Mozambique into their internal imbroglio as a means to weaken and destabilize the newly independent country and render it incapable of providing the requisite inspiration and assistance to the revolutionary forces in Rhodesia. In February 1976, just barely seven months into its sovereign existence, Mozambique was subjected to often brutal and highly destructive air and land attacks and raids into its territory ordered by the Ian Smith racist minority regime in Rhodesia. These serial raids and assaults were often targeted at critical installations such as bridges, lines of communications, power infrastructure, railway lines, and other sensitive national infrastructure. For the Ian Smith regime in Rhodesia, this was a just payback for Mozambique's adherence to the implementation of the UN sanctions and the closure of its border against landlocked Rhodesia, thereby denying it access to the Indian Ocean which it had hitherto enjoyed before Mozambique's independence.[10] Rhodesia's only remaining access to the sea was through South Africa. By helping to cripple the Mozambican economy and infrastructure and keeping

the country under sustained military raids and incursion, Ian Smith had hoped to render it incapable of assisting the ZANU and ZAPU armed resistance to internal colonialism in Rhodesia.

In addition to these highly destructive and disruptive military incursions into Mozambique, the racist Smith regime also collaborated in the establishment in 1975 of the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), a right-wing, anti-Communist political and guerrilla group that was used to start a civil war against the new country that would last a decade and a half. It is on record that its formation, which also included some disaffected FRELIMO fighters in its ranks,[11] was actually sponsored and coordinated by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) which also armed its fighters. This was Rhodesia's method of creating a "Fifth Column" inside Mozambique to keep the country destabilized internally whilst it continued its military raids into the country from outside.[12]

The apartheid government of South Africa on its own part was also interested in wrecking Mozambique's capacity to render assistance and succor to anti-apartheid forces and was desperate to make that country look like a bad advertisement for black majority rule as a disincentive to a similar development in their own country. Helping to destroy the neighboring country would have fed directly into the apartheid propaganda that black peoples were incapable of governing independent nation-states and therefore should not be trusted with the fate of South Africa. The South African interest in Mozambique should also be put in the context of geopolitical developments within the Southern African sub-region that had begun to unfold since the mid-1970s. First, the independence of Mozambique and Angola under Marxist regimes in 1975, which were also receiving assistance from the USSR and Cuba, created profound discomfort for the apartheid regime which perceived that the two countries held revolutionary prospects for the increasing armed struggles for black majority rule in neighboring Zimbabwe, as well as encouragement for Namibians struggling for independence from South Africa. With this unfolding scenario South Africa risked being encircled by a constellation of revolutionary states, a development that could sound apartheid's death knell. South Africa's general policy was to engage in a campaign of regional destabilization by supporting the UNITA opposition forces in Angola and the RENAMO militants in Mozambique. Mozambique was particularly strategic because it shares a stretch of land border with South Africa and as a coastal state enjoys invaluable access to the Indian Ocean.

Led by Alfonso Dhlakama since 1979, and with help from Rhodesia and South Africa, RENAMO's armed wing launched a bruising campaign of destabilization inside Mozambique which eventually resulted in a bloody civil war that kept the newly independent country destabilized and unable to make real progress for nearly two decades. The civil war did not abate despite

the Nkomati Accords reached with South Africa in 1984 for the apartheid authorities to cease their support for RENAMO in exchange for Mozambique to expel the exiled ANC partisans operating in that country. It was not until 1992 that a UN-supervised peace accord was reached to bring the civil war to an end and to disarm the rebel fighters. The formation, existence and destructive activities of RENAMO were actually the handiwork of Rhodesia later supported by apartheid South Africa to render Mozambique prostrate. The agreement that ended the war was also made possible by the internal changes taking place in South Africa where apartheid was rapidly winding down after the unbanning of the ANC and the release from prison of Nelson Mandela and all his fellow partisans who were serving life in jail in Robben Island prison. This invariably made it possible for the FRELIMO government to stop the cross-border activities of ANC fighters and the flow of arms from Mozambique to South Africa.

Even though the entry into force of the UN-supervised 1992 peace accord ended the civil war and temporarily disarmed most of the RENAMO fighters, that guerrilla organization remained a constant menace not only to the government but also to the country even well after it had transmuted into a political party. Its acts of destabilization did not cease even though it had elected members in the national legislature. Unable to win a presidential election, Alfonso Dhlakama continued to employ the armed members of the group to cause terror and mount destabilization campaigns against the government, sparking renewed clashes with the country's armed forces again in 2012. RENAMO's anti-government destabilization attacks have continued unabated till now even after another peace deal was reached with the central government in 2014.

CONCLUSION

From all available evidence, Mozambique was an unfortunate victim of a combination of circumstances outside its control: first, its colonial provenance and the inability of its colonial master to bring any progress to it even after half a century of rule; second, the reluctance of Portugal even to consider the grant of independence, inevitably forcing Mozambicans into armed struggles to fight for freedom which all other countries around them were already enjoying; third, having to receive aid and assistance only from the well-known anti-colonialist nations of USSR, China, and Cuba, a development which attracted the mortal enmity of the West which then plotted its destruction; and, fourth was its geographical contiguity with the racist countries of South Africa and Zimbabwe, compounded by emerging geopolitical developments in the Southern African sub-region at its independence in the mid-1970s.

This powerful combination of internal and external factors fatally hobbled the newly independent country, a country which its colonial progenitor had deliberately plundered and left incapable of functioning as a modern nation-state. Walter Rodney's observation aptly summarized its plight: "at the end of five hundred years of shouldering the white man's burden of civilizing 'African natives,' the Portuguese had not managed to train a single African doctor in Mozambique."[13] What Portugal bequeathed to Mozambicans after more than a decade of grueling colonial war was a dummy, a caricature of a state that managed to survive even beyond the expectations of its progenitors. Mozambique is a victim of its colonial history, and its underdevelopment cannot be fully comprehended and explained outside this history nor its future be suitably determined without taking it into consideration.

NOTES

1. *Africa Today*, editor-in-chief Raph Uwechue (London: Africa Books Limited, 1991), 1353.
2. *Africa Today*, ibid., 1353.
3. The myth of the tri-continental state came about because Portugal sought to regard its overseas possessions—Brazil in South America, and Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and Sao Tome and Principe in Africa—not as colonies but as extensions of the Portuguese homeland in Europe, i.e., Portugal extending physically from Europe into both South America and Africa. It was, if anything, hardly more than a myth to hoodwink the rest of the world.
4. Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books, 1963).
5. Margaret Young and Tom Hall, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence* (London: Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1997), 36.
6. Young and Hall, *Confronting Leviathan*, 61–88.
7. On how and why Mozambique turned to Marxist-Leninist rule after independence, see Young and Hall, *Confronting Leviathan*, 61–88.
8. See Oscar Gakuo Mwangi, "Mozambique's Foreign Policy: From Ideological Conflict to Pragmatic Cooperation," in *Globalization and Emerging Trends in African States' Foreign Policy-Making Process: A Comparative Perspective of Southern Africa*, ed. Kowar Gombe Adar and Rok Ajulu (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2002), 119.
9. *Africa Today*, 1356.
10. See Mwangi, "Mozambique's Foreign Policy," 122.
11. RENAMO's first leader was Andre Matsangaissa, formerly a prominent FRELIMO member and senior official of its armed wing who became a dissident. He was to be succeeded by Alfonso Dhlakama from 1979.
12. See Stephen A. Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique: The Frelimo–Renamo Struggle, 1977–1992* (Solihull, UK: Helion and Company, 2014).
13. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1974 [Revised edition, 1981]), 206.

Chapter 13

Contemporary Nation-Building, Governance, and Security Challenges in Africa

The analyses in the preceding chapters have succeeded in debunking the long-held notion of African post-colonial states—exposed the falsehood that the territorial states became post-colonies once they achieved independence. The so-called African post-colonial state is a mere illusion for, apart from the change in the racial composition of state managers, it has remained a caricature of the real state. Crawford Young illustrates this more poignantly in his assertion that the defining attribute of the successor African state was "the wholesale importation of the routines, practices, and mentalities of the African colonial state into its post-colonial successor."[1] He notes further what he calls the "silent incorporation of many defining attributes of the colonial state in its post-independence successor,"[2] effectively debunking the characterization of Africa as a post-colonial society. This assertion tallies with, or simply validates, Nkrumah's intellectual and experiential conclusion that what Africa has are neo-colonial, not post-colonial, entities merely parading the outward trappings of sovereignty.

But as Crawford Young would argue further, even the so-called post-colonial or neo-colonial entities have since the 1990s also lost even the very definition that they are states through "the dramatic erosion of stateness itself in many cases" by virtue of the dynamics of the post-Cold War global power reconfiguration.[3] The African state since the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, has become a victim of internal and external pressures once the quintessential African tyrants were summarily robbed of the foreign backing that had kept them in power for three decades. They suddenly became victims of hitherto suppressed domestic political upheavals, separatist agitations (Senegal, Mali), terrorism and insurgency (Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo), which have succeeded in unraveling several of them and opened them up to serial

instabilities. The collapse of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of its gigantic military alliance, the Warsaw Pact, led to the massive looting and release into the open market of the alliance's weapons stockpiles located or pre-positioned in many former communist countries that have continued to fuel domestic insurgencies in several countries across the African continent. Today, warlords, mercenaries, private militias, jihadist forces and terrorist groups and sundry armed criminal gangs such as smugglers, narcotic-trafficking syndicates, human traffickers, and pirates roam freely and terrorize and hold many states in thrall. Most states have lost the traditional defining characteristic of the state—that is, the monopoly of the instruments of violence—to sub-national groups and non-state actors in their respective domains, as well as to transnational organized criminal networks.

A casual glance at the recent 2016 *Freedom House*'s Freedom in the World 2016 titled "Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies: Global Freedom under Pressure," will readily convince even the most optimistic observer of African politics that all is not well with politics, governance and freedom in most countries. Of the twelve countries adjudged as "worst of the worst" designated globally as Not Free, six of them—Somalia, Eritrea, Western Sahara, Sudan, Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea—are in Africa.[4] Democratic governance is generally on the decline, human rights observance is waning, press freedom under severe curtailment, while insecurity is pervasive across the continent.

AFRICA AND THE CURSE OF FAILING STATES

If the nation-state was a curse to Africa, as Basil Davidson has pointed out in his seminal work on Africa, then the specter of failing and collapsing states has become a much bigger contemporary affliction that Africans have unsuccessfully been grappling with since the end of the Cold War. Liberia perhaps set the ball rolling with the Libyan-backed insurgency to unseat the regime of President Samuel Kanyon Doe from power. Led by an erstwhile government official, Charles Taylor, the insurgents began their attacks in December 1989 from across the border in neighboring Cote d'Ivoire, and by mid-1990 had spread so rapidly such that the government had lost total control of the whole country except the capital city by the time the West African sub-regional economic grouping, ECOWAS, launched a peacekeeping effort in August the same year. For the next seven years, Liberia almost totally ceased to function as a viable state as it was under virtual ECOWAS receivership. Sierra Leone, a next-door neighbor, also dissolved in an insurgency that was similarly aided by Libya and it took ECOWAS intervention again to restore some normality. Across the continent in the Horn of Africa, Somalia also began its inexorable

descent into violence and state collapse with the overthrow of the Mohammed Siad Barre dictatorship. Somalia has yet to recover fully as a sovereign state since then. In the Central African sub-region, President Mobutu Sese Seko's thirty-two-year kleptocratic dictatorship began to unravel with Laurent Kabila's invasion, and it finally came to an end with the ouster of the tyrant in 1997.

The unfortunate and uncomfortable reality in Africa today is the progressive failure of liberal democracies, as many ostensibly democratically elected governments operating the Western liberal version of democracy have been failing, signaling an unfortunate return to autocratic, authoritarian and sit-tight rule across the continent. Angola, Cameroon, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea, to name a few, parade all manner of illiberal democratic rule under sit-tight rulers. Only a few countries such as Ghana, Senegal, Botswana, South Africa, Nigeria, Benin Republic, can be counted to still remain firmly in the democratic fold and have not yet succumbed to the prevailing authoritarian political virus.

Democracies are failing because the structures of democratic governance were so poorly constructed and have remained at best faulty or rickety structures. The modern governance systems that the colonialists hastily created and bequeathed to Africans shortly before the achievement of political sovereignty were themselves grafted on fundamentally authoritarian foundations and thus had no chance of surviving beyond a few years. Those to whom governance was initially handed were themselves ill-trained in democratic governance and thus even with the best of intentions could hardly have run them effectively. What happened shortly after independence was that the new African political elites simply reverted to the default colonial setting of centralized rule where power was concentrated in the hands of the colonial governor who ruled without consultation or responsibility to the people. In many cases, political opposition was swiftly outlawed or, at the very least, so fatally hobbled by use of both legislative and executive powers such that they ceased to be effective. Several of them also succumbed to military dictatorship for decades.

Not even the advent of the "third wave" of democracy in the early 1990s has made much difference to the ingrained authoritarian foundations of modern governance in Africa. Many countries that transitioned from one-party and military rule after the Cold War are now merely struggling to keep democracy from totally falling apart. Nigeria, for example, was fortunate to have escaped what could have been a major catastrophe in 2015 when it successfully held an election that for the first time in sixteen years transferred power from a ruling party to the opposition, a feat unprecedented in its history since 1960, and which the defeated president graciously accepted.

Democracy, as Larry Diamond and others have observed, is on the retreat or in recession across the globe, and Africa is not exempted from this negative development. According to his survey, out of twenty-five identified democratic breakdowns across the globe between 2000 and 2014, eight of them were in Africa.[5] This, as Diamond observed elsewhere, is because "some of the new democracies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eurasia lack the classic facilitating conditions for democracy—a sizeable middle class, high levels of education, a prior history of democracy."[6] Today, many democracies in Africa are even less than electoral democracies, as even the right of the people to participate in the very elementary task of choosing and replacing their leaders has become a mere charade.[7] In many cases, electoral systems are so bastardized such that they merely serve to legitimize the autocracy of the sit-tight rulers.[8]

Even though coups and violent regime changes have declined considerably across the continent, they have been replaced by brazen election-rigging, authoritarian lawlessness and corruption which have rendered democratic rule gravely shallow and illiberal.[9] Many African states parade what Lilia Shevtsova refers to as "imitation democracy" where authoritarian regimes use so-called democratic methods to promote the personalist agenda of the rulers.[10] Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, and Cameroon, to a large extent, exemplify this ugly trend. Egypt after the Arab Spring has relapsed into the worst form of illiberal and repressive civilian democracy under President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi, former army Field Marshal who overthrew a democratically elected government, transformed into a civilian, contested and won a fatally flawed election. With the exception of a select few countries like Mauritius, Ghana, Senegal, Botswana, democracy is either on the decline or gradually being rolled back everywhere on the continent. With a host of so-called democratically elected rulers manipulating democratic methods to illegally extend their rule, the chances of their countries developing and overcoming their inherited structural problems is remote. Sit-tight rule is characteristically accompanied by autocracy and intolerance of centers of opposition such as opposition political parties, the mass media, labor unions, and civil society, thus rolling back democracy. Zimbabwe remains an exemplar in this democratic regression. State-building becomes a herculean task while building a nation out of the multiplicity of ethnic groups that colonial fiat had corralled together into a single country. Separatist agitations continue to resonate loudly in many states which seem to be held together not necessarily by the consent of the respective peoples but by the state's apparent monopoly of the means of violence. Even Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is currently reeling under domestic insurgency launched by the Boko Haram jihadists which had until lately succeeded in putting large swaths of the country under its own

flag, as well as separatist agitations for the re-creation of the defunct Biafra Republic in the eastern part, and restless militant onslaughts against the authority and economic jugular of the state in the oil-bearing Niger Delta. As things stand, agitation for restructuring the country is gaining increasing resonance across the country, although the federal government still holds on to the antiquated and unreasonable notion that Nigeria's corporate unity is non-negotiable.

Apart from those states that have failed or are on the verge of failure, many others have also suffered fatal collapse—Somalia is currently an enclave of warlords and of Al-Shabaab jihadist terrorists; Eritrea is a hellish dictatorship from which thousands are fleeing to neighboring states and making risky journeys across the Mediterranean to Europe in search of refuge; Egypt is reeling under the most ruthless civilian dictatorship ever; Democratic Republic of Congo (democratic in name only) is still convulsing very badly under domestic upheavals that are not only products of its provenance but some of which are often directly sponsored or aided by neighboring countries and external forces interested in exploiting its vast strategic mineral resources; Mali summarily unraveled in 2012 when Tuareg separatists and Islamist jihadists colluded to launch a murderous insurgency in a separatist attempt to carve out a new Azawad Republic from it, until African and extra-African military interventions prevented it from totally vanishing from the map; even now that country is under virtual international receivership; Libya has been completely destroyed as a viable state, and is now hardly more than an enclave of warlords, jihadist terrorists, bandits, human traffickers; Nigeria was until recently convulsing badly under the grip of domestic terrorism which morphed into a murderous insurgency; its economic jugular is currently being threatened by so-called Niger Delta Avengers blowing up oil pipelines and other critical oil industry infrastructure to cripple the nation's economy. This is the critical summary of a continent in the throes of the crisis of state- and nation-building which is further compounded by the crisis of governance and security.

As *Freedom House* has noted, apart from several countries battling with leaders that are illegally extending their term limits (Burundi's Pierre Nkurunziza, Rwanda's Paul Kagame, Congo Republic's Denis Sassou-Nguesso to name a few), "nations across the Sahelian belt from Mali to Kenya continue to grapple with threats from Islamist militants."[11] A large swath of the Sahel-Saharan belt has been designated as "ungoverned spaces," where national authority is hardly effective and where sundry criminal syndicates and jihadist groups such as Ansar el Din, MUJAO, and so forth, hold sway. This has become much more pronounced since the demise of the Muammar Gaddafi dictatorship which led to the looting of Libya's vast arsenal of weapons by terrorists who now operate freely in the Sahel-Sahara belt from

the Atlantic to the Horn of Africa. It is on account of this development that countries such as Mali, Niger Republic, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Somalia, and Kenya face severe jihadist insurgencies that cause insecurity and political instability. Several others such as Cote d'Ivoire, Algeria, and Kenya have suffered serial terrorist attacks in recent times.

Africa's fate remains rather grim, much more so now that both legitimate and illegitimate African rulers are fast jettisoning the liberal Western democratic nations for new Asian masters and subtle colonizers. African leaders, perhaps tired of the hypocrisy, sanctimonious preachments and *diktat* from the West and the international financial institutions they control, are now being charmed and seduced by the fast-growing Asian economic powerhouses like China and India. China is currently assuming the role of the new boss in Africa.[12] In 2015, both the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in October, and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Johannesburg, South Africa in December, attracted about forty African heads of state each, making them the largest gathering of African plenipotentiaries outside the annual meeting of the Africa Union.[13] Africans have invariably exchanged masters, with China gradually upstaging the Western democracies as the new boss. For example, China is currently engaged in numerous infrastructural construction projects in several countries across the continent, apart from offering loans on soft grounds and constructing and donating the Secretariat to the African Union in Addis Ababa. This clever deployment of what Joseph Nye calls "soft power"[14] has given China considerable political and economic leverage in Africa. Unfortunately, while China may be contributing significantly to infrastructural upgrade, it cannot yet assist Africa in matters that have to do with political development and deepening of democratic rule. Not being a democracy itself, China is not bothered about democratic rule, good governance and human rights, and is therefore not incommoded in helping autocratic leaders fritter away the few democratic gains that Africans had recorded through epic struggles over the past two decades. This is understandable because China's most pressing interests in Africa are to corner the continent's rich resources for its own development at home and to establish the necessary political influence for its facilitation, although other military and strategic interests would later follow. In this regard, China is hardly different from the old colonial overlords except in its tactics. A simple reality is that China is the new "colonial" overlord in Africa.

NATION-BUILDING IN THE POST-COLONY

Nation-building was thought to be an imperative, a necessary step for Africans to take, on a continent whose modern states are creations of colonial fiat

which both deliberately and inadvertently "sliced" existing nations (apologies to Wole Soyinka) between different new territorial states. These new territorial arrangements, which came about without the input or consent of the peoples being so cynically carved up, simply bundled together numerous but historically distinct and culturally diverse peoples without any attempts made to integrate or weld them together into a shared feeling of oneness and a coherent common identity. The slicing up and joining together of diverse peoples in these arbitrarily created colonial states is responsible for Anthony Asiwaju's famous reference to them as "partitioned Africans."[15] This is the root of the fragility of African states, most of which are today going through serious internal convulsions and grappling with centrifugal and often violent political upheavals arising from the inherent structural defects deeply embedded in their colonial architecture.

Nation-building, as Ibrahim Gambari has posited, is "the product of conscious statecraft, not happenstance" and above all is also "about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, a collective imagination of belonging."[16] Overall, it is about "building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose."[17] This involves consciously creating or turning multinational or conglomerate societies, that most countries in Africa are, into organic nations, and this has been a profound failure. It is in this regard that African states have failed so miserably. Most of them are held together not by the express will of their diverse populations but by the instrumentality of coercion, and thus have remained fragile and rickety since independence. It must be understood that though nation-building was not in the original agenda of their colonial progenitors, the succeeding African managers of the new states have themselves grossly failed to create the enabling political, economic, social and psychological environment that would facilitate the development of a shared national identity and common feeling of oneness. Nigeria sadly remains "a mere geographical expression" which one of its foremost nationalists had called it in his seminal book as far back as 1947.[18] Even Somalia, perhaps the only mono-ethnic country in Africa, has itself badly fractured along the clan and other fault lines that were partly carried over from its colonial provenance. It is a typical example of the failure of nation-building in Africa.

Perhaps a poser for further critical interrogation is why nation-building has been a virtual impossibility in Africa. I will proceed to offer just two suggestions, deferring the rest for further deep study. The first point implicates colonial rule and its reliance on divide and rule methods to keep the peoples permanently disunited and unable to create a united platform against colonial dominance. Notwithstanding the different appellations the respective colonial powers gave to their style of rule, the underlying philosophy and goals were

the same. The second point is an indictment of the immediate post-independence African rulers themselves, especially the first set of leaders who collected power directly from the departing colonial officials.

In the first instance, it has been established beyond any doubt, and judging from the empirical and emblematic case of Nigeria, that neither state-building nor nation-building was in the agenda of colonial rule. According to James Coleman in his seminal study,

> Of course, Britain did not consciously plan to create an independent Nigerian nation when it established Nigeria's boundaries; developed a common administrative system; constructed a common transportation grid and a communications network; introduced a common currency, a lingua franca, and an educational system; and recruited a corps of Nigerian clerks and artisans who developed Pan-Nigerian perspectives and aspirations—all were simply requisite to the administration of an arbitrary chunk of Africa as an overseas dependency.[19]

This apt conclusion is further validated by Francis Fukuyama's observation that the "colonial powers made no pretense that they were occupying foreign countries in the interests of the indigenous inhabitants, though they tried to justify their behavior to themselves in terms of their civilizing mission."[20] Consequently, the creation of the colonial state arose principally out of the need to have an overarching state authority that would make and enforce the necessary laws and administer the territory for the facilitation of resource plunder. It is thus no wonder that much of what passed for administration in the colonies included employing high-handed military and security forces to enforce foreign will over the natives. The ensuing state architecture was at best tentative, just barely enough to sustain achievement of plunder by the cheapest means possible. Virtually all the independent countries in Africa have both visible and invisible fault lines—ethnic, racial, religious, sectarian, and geographic—deliberately created for them or encouraged under colonial rule which have been the main sources of their weakness and fragility. Let us look at the examples of Chad, Senegal, Mali, and Nigeria for illustration.

Chad, for upward of three decades after its independence in 1960, remained violently fractured along the north-south regional and ethnic fault lines that French colonial policy had deliberately created, such that the northern section of the country that was classified by France as "useless Chad" never became reconciled with the south called "useful Chad"; it was crippled and almost totally dismembered by decades of insurgency and war among its mutually competitive and destructive ethnicities. Chad's disunity and political instability are a function of this deliberate colonial orchestration, its underdevelopment a by-product of this disunity which has made welding the disparate ethnicities into a nation an impossible task. Senegal and Mali are two other former French colonies that are still grappling with violent outbursts of

separatist agitations in their respective territories—Senegal in its Casamance region and Mali in its Tuareg-dominated northern region. As we can recall, whilst Senegal has thus far successfully curtailed the agitation for separation, Mali on the other hand violently imploded in 2012 when Tuareg separatists and Islamist jihadist elements launched an audacious military assault and briefly succeeded in carving out an independent republic from the country, until external military interventions restored its sovereignty. Democratic Republic of Congo is the archetypal non-state; unlike others, it never really transitioned from colony to state before its catastrophic implosion less than a month after independence in 1960.

The case of Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is also instructive in this regard. What Nigerians inherited at independence in 1960 was a rickety state architecture with very obvious ethno-regional and religious fractures, a "mere geographical expression" which required visionary leadership to weld together into a united entity. A large multi-ethnic conglomerate brought together as one in 1914, its northern and southern components were nonetheless administered separately until it gained independence. Its fragility is also a product of its colonial origin, and the mutually competitive regions and their respective majority ethnic groups have not subsumed their particularities and parochial interests under a new multinational commonwealth. For decades, politics was a violent zero-sum game, violent military putsches had ethno-regional colorations, and a bloody civil war almost succeeded in deleting the country from the world map. Those primordial lines of division that were deliberately accentuated by the colonialists have remained and are the basis of some of the contemporary separatist agitations and violent unrests in several parts of the country. Unfortunately, all the official attempts to discuss and debate the basis of Nigeria's corporate existence through constitutional and political reform conferences with the objective of finding durable solutions to the fissiparous tendencies plaguing it, the most recent being the 2014 national political conference, have been frustrated and truncated by primordial considerations. There is hardly any central government since 1960 that did not directly or surreptitiously promote ethno-regional particularism. This validates Adebayo Williams's observation that whilst Frederick Lugard might have succeeded in creating Nigeria, he and his successors failed woefully to create Nigerians!

I said earlier that the second point indicts African political elites. The nationalists and other political elites who later became rulers immediately after independence were simply so eager to take power from the colonialists that they never remotely thought of reimagining or reinventing the state to overcome its inherited inadequacies and shortcomings so as to make it suitable for the need of Africans after independence. It was Kwame Nkrumah's famous admonition to seek first the political kingdom after which all other

things shall be added that resonated widely across the continent, as nationalists in the various colonies sought independence, sometimes through revolutionary uprisings, without any critical and sober appraisal of the nature and character of the colonial state they were about to inherit. Thinking about its suitability or otherwise for the needs of Africans was not an issue, as the principal if not the only concern was how the emergent educated and Westernized elites would take over from their colonial rulers. Having thus collected political power, the new African ruling elites wasted no time in instrumentalizing the state for personal and primordial advantages and personal aggrandizement. They began the systematic manipulation of ethnic and other primordial sentiments and symbols to guarantee regime survival and longevity, and in the process drove a huge wedge between ethnic and nationality groups because those who feel marginalized believe they suffer on account of their primordial origins. This inherited divide and rule strategy encouraged political instability, zero-sum politics, insurgencies and civil wars, as we have witnessed in several countries, including Nigeria.

GLOBALIZATION AND THE FATE OF THE AFRICAN STATE

Three significant and interesting consequences of the end of the Cold War for Africa which have been noted by two scholars are relevant for our analysis here. The first, as noted by Crawford Young,[21] is the unwillingness of extra-African powers to intervene militarily in support of friendly regimes (a departure from what was a distinct feature for three decades from 1960 to 1990, especially by France), thereby leaving contemporary African despots to henceforth fend for themselves in the face of domestic insurgencies. According to him, domestic insurgencies successfully effected regime change in no fewer than eight countries from 1990, namely Chad and Liberia in 1990, Ethiopia and Somalia in 1991, Rwanda in 1994, and Sierra Leone, Congo-Kinshasa (now DR Congo), and Congo-Brazzaville in 1997.[22] All the authoritarian rulers of these states were unceremoniously removed because their erstwhile foreign backers were no longer interested in sustaining them. Mobutu's case was perhaps the most pathetic, for the US that had supported him through all the domestic insurgencies since the 1960s no longer considered it fashionable to fraternize with despots in the new global dispensation when it was busy handing out liberal democracy like t-shirts after the collapse of the Soviet communist empire.

The second but related development is noted by Yusuf Bangura, and that is, that the new domestic insurgent groups seeking regime change in many countries no longer depend on external backing to operate and be effective. The

new reality is that the nature and character of contemporary domestic conflicts, insurgencies and civil wars have changed considerably from what they used to be in the first three decades of independence. As Bangura has observed,

> The closing years of the twentieth century have witnessed a spectacular rise in new modes of armed conflict which challenge standard conceptions of modern warfare. Most wars in the 1990s have been fought within countries rather than, as was hitherto the case, between states; the narratives of doctrines of major world powers no longer define the ideologies and objectives of warring groups; small, highly mobile weapons, often supplied by illicit private dealers, seem to play a much bigger role than heavy conventional weapons in fuelling wars; combatants deliberately target civilians rather than armed opponents in prosecuting goals; and atrocities are freely committed as part of strategies aimed at publicizing political statements.[23]

Unlike the national liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s which had to depend on foreign support for ideological direction, external diplomatic and political recognition, money and weapons, contemporary insurgent groups—as exemplified by the likes of Charles Taylor's NPFL, Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola—do not suffer similar constraints; they simply seize the natural resource-producing areas of their respective countries (rubber, timber and diamond, crude oil and other valuable minerals) for money to fund their operations and procure weapons from the numerous illicit arms merchants peddling weapons looted from abandoned former Warsaw Pact arsenals located in former East European countries. Even modern terrorist and insurgent groups that are operating across the continent such as AQIM, MUJAO, Ansar Din, Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab, have their respective independent sources of financing and weapons supplies. The implication of this new development is that all the sub-national actors and insurgent groups that had hitherto operated clandestinely have now become emboldened by the monumental changes at the end of the Cold War to come out into the open and challenge the authority of the state.[24] This freedom from foreign control makes them infinitely more dangerous and much more effective to accomplish desired objectives than their predecessors. Now, the situation has even been further compounded after the NATO-supported ouster of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and the consequent looting of Libya's vast stockpiles of Soviet-made heavy armaments and light weapons which have fallen into the hands of diverse terrorist and jihadist groups across the Sahara and Sahel from Algeria to Mali, Niger and Nigeria. Herein lies the strength of new insurgent groups to create security challenges and violently threaten state survival in Africa.

The third contemporary development is the practice of insurgent forces launching their attacks with active support from and collaboration with

neighboring states.[25] This practice was first manifested when Tanzania launched a blistering military invasion of Uganda in 1979 to unseat President Idi Amin although the full implication of this phenomenon for future development in Africa was hardly correctly apprehended at the time. It has taken on a whole new dimension in the post–Cold War era with NPFL's invasion of Liberia in 1990 using Cote d'Ivoire as a staging post and with military and logistic support from Muammar Gaddafi's Libya; and RUF's insurgent invasion of Sierra Leone was also launched from Liberia with full support from Charles Taylor; Laurent Kabilla's invasion of Zaire received active support from the neighboring countries of Rwanda and Uganda; the armies of about eight African countries at some point invaded and occupied large portions of eastern DR Congo in support of different local insurgent groups; the Rwanda Patriotic Front's invasion of Rwanda was launched from and with the assistance of Uganda. These are just a few of the examples of African states actively promoting and supporting domestic insurgencies in neighboring countries. It was rumored also that the Tuareg separatists in northern Mali got assistance from their ethnic Tuareg kinfolk in neighboring countries of Algeria and Niger Republic.

Perhaps a more ominous development is the trans-nationalization of terrorism and insurgency which now threatens the corporate survival of many sovereign states. Terrorist and insurgent groups now operate freely across porous and ill-defended national borders, especially in the vast so-called "ungoverned spaces" in the Sahara-Sahel from southern Algeria into Mali, and across from Mali through to the Horn of Africa where several of these roam freely, operate across national boundaries and coordinate their activities with each other. (Ansar el-Din, MUJAO, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, etc.) In particular, Boko Haram over time mutated from a purely domestic terrorist group into a transnational jihadist movement threatening Nigeria's contiguous neighbors of Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroon, eventually prompting a coordinated multinational military response. In the Horn of Africa, Al Shabaab's activities have spread into Kenya, now posing a significant challenge to contiguous neighbors of Somalia. All these are in addition to the burgeoning pool of now jobless ex-fighters in the various intra-state conflicts and insurgencies, especially in Libya and Mali, turning to mercenary work and freelance terrorism, narcotics and human trafficking and other forms of criminality that pose threats to nation-states.

CONCLUSION

Arising from the above discussion, the most pressing questions to ask include: what is the fate of the territorial state in Africa against the backdrop of these contemporary developments of the post–Cold War era? What chances are

there for the survival of territorial states in the face of these myriad internal and external challenges to their sovereignty? Do African ruling elites fully grasp the severity and immensity of the threats to the survival of their states? Are they capable of addressing and facing up to these challenges? What are they doing to address separatist agitations and build durable states? Is nation-building ever conceivable against the backdrop of contemporary challenges?

It would appear that there are more questions than answers. And this has to be so because it is impossible, without the gift of clairvoyance, for any analyst to address them with any certainty. The power to predict with accuracy is also inhibited or vitiated by the fact of the diversity and complexity of the emerging variables, the evident weakness of state governance institutions, as well as the divisive and exclusionist policies of the current crop of African rulers, many of which have themselves become a significant part of the problem, if not the problem, of their respective countries. Any conclusions as to the future of the state in Africa and the prospects of building durable nations from the current multinational conglomerates can at best only be tentative. Even though the temptation to be pessimistic about the future is quite strong, one must nonetheless also recognize the infinite possibilities of state re-invention.

As we have shown in the previous chapters, whilst it remains incontestable that African countries inherited weak states and extremely weak governance institutions, it is also indubitable that their leaders, or rulers to be more precise, have over time become dangerous dinosaurs haunting and destroying their countries. As things stand, there are not less than eighteen maximum rulers, democratic pretenders and unrepentant despots who have been in power for between ten and forty years. Whilst Mohammed Abdelaziz of Western Sahara (Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic) tops the list, having been in power since the territory declared itself independent in 1976, the current audit (as of mid-2016) paints the following graphically disturbing picture: five presidents have been in power for between 30 and 40 years; seven have been in power for between 21 and 30 years, while six have been in power for between 10 and 20 years. This brings to eighteen the number of rulers who have held sway for more than a decade. Unfortunately, a number of them have manipulated the constitutions and parliaments to grant themselves tenure extensions, while several may yet emulate this ugly trend. Aging dictators with anachronistic ideas and methods unsuitable for modern times, such as Eduardo dos Santos, Obiang Nguema Mbasago, Robert Mugabe, and Paul Biya to name a few, remain a significant part of Africa's blighted political landscape. In virtually all the countries where rulers have had more than a decade in the saddle, economic corruption is rife, anti-democratic and other political excesses such as repression of opposition, muffling public opinion and press freedom, gross abuse and violations of human rights and denial of fundamental freedoms, and so forth, are quite pervasive. In many of them also,

separatist agitations and other fissiparous tendencies are gaining greater currency because of the discriminatory and exclusionist policies and conscious manipulations of ethnic and other primordial symbols for regime survival. States are often held together more by force and intimidation than by the freely expressed will of the people. Unfortunately, these countries also consistently rank the lowest in annual UNDP human development rankings with practically no hope of improvement in the immediate future. For example, of the forty-four countries listed in the Low Human Development category of the 2015 UNDP HDI, thirty-five of them were from Africa. This is a depressing picture. What fresh or innovative ideas and initiatives therefore can this ghastly coterie of despots bring to bear on the current plight, and the future, of their respective countries, since their principal preoccupation seems to be regime survival? This is a powerful basis for skepticism.

One possible scenario is that if a country like Nigeria can get its act right, deepen its democracy, enthrone good governance and ensure economic development, and remain a united corporate entity, its success may serve to motivate others to begin the process of internal rebirth and political re-engineering that would facilitate eventual nation-building. The extent to which democracy will be given a real and honest chance to thrive and deepen in the African countries remains a matter for speculation.

NOTES

1. Crawford Young, "The End of the Post-colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics," *African Affairs* 103, no. 410 (January 2004): 23–24.

2. Young, ibid., 24.

3. Young, 25.

4. www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016. (Accessed June 2, 2016).

5. The eight countries are: Central African Republic (2001), Guinea-Bissau (2002), Kenya (2007), Madagascar (2009), Niger Republic (2009), Guinea-Bissau (2010), Burundi (2010), and Mali (2012). See Larry Diamond, "Facing Up to the Democratic Recession," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (January 2015): especially 145.

6. Larry Diamond, quoted in *Stanford News*, September 25, 2015, http://news.stanford.edu/2015/09/25/democracy-in-decline-092515/. (Accessed 1/6/2016).

7. W. Alade Fawole, "Voting without Choosing: Interrogating the Crisis of 'Electoral Democracy' in Nigeria," in *Liberal Democracy and Critics in Africa*, ed. Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo (London: Zed Press, 2005). A typical example of the powerlessness of the electorate to decide who governs them was played out in December 2016 when President Yahya Jammeh of Gambia lost an election, initially accepted

the outcome as the will of the people, only to make an about-face a week later repudiating popular will. It had to take an ECOWAS military action to compel him to step down.

8. Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Burundi are emblematic of this bastardization of electoral processes to legitimize sit-tight rule.

9. Concerning the specific case of Nigeria which emblematizes descent into illiberal democracy, see W. Alade Fawole, "The Authoritarian State, Illiberal Democracy and Electoral Contestations: The Nigeria Experience," Keynote Address delivered at the Opening Ceremony of the Conference on *Contending Issues in Nigeria's Electoral Processes: The 2007 General Elections*, organized by the Department of Political Science, University of Lagos, at the Excellence Hotel, Ogba, Ikeja Lagos, September 26–27, 2007.

10. Lilia Shevtsova, "Is Democracy in Retreat?" *The American Interest*, June 4, 2013, www.the-american-interest.com/2013/06/04/is-democracy-in-retreat/. (Accessed June 1, 2016).

11. Freedom House, 2016 report, www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016. (Accessed June 2, 2016).

12. See Alade Fawole, "China, Africa and New Collective Clientelism," *The Nation* (Lagos), Wednesday, December 23, 2015, 48 (back page).

13. Fawole, "China, Africa and New Collective Clientelism," 48.

14. Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

15. A. I. Asiwaju, ed., *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884–1984* (London: Hurst, 1985).

16. Ibrahim Gambari, "The Challenges of Nation-Building: The Case of Nigeria," Text of First Year Anniversary Lecture of the Mustapha Akanbi Foundation, delivered at Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, February 7, 2008, www.mafng.org/anniversary/challenges_nation_building_nigeria.htm. (Accessed July 16, 2016).

17. Gambari, "The Challenges of Nation-Building."

18. See Obafemi Awolowo's characterization of Nigeria as a "mere geographical expression" in his book, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947).

19. James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 320.

20. Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014), 313.

21. Young, "The End of the Post-colonial State in Africa?" 43.

22. Young, "The End of the Post-colonial State in Africa?" 44.

23. Yusuf Bangura, "Understanding the Political and Cultural Dynamics of the Sierra Leonean War: A Critique of Paul Richards's *Fighting for the Rain Forest*," *Africa Development* XXII, nos. 3 & 4 (1997): 117.

24. See Stephen Ellis, "Africa after the Cold War: New Patterns of Government and Politics," *Development and Change* 27, no. 1 (January 1996): 6.

25. Young, "The End of the Post-colonial State in Africa?" 43–44.

Conclusion

The Illusive Post-Colonial State

What Hope for Survival?

AN ILLUSIVE POST-COLONIAL STATE?

It is to Nkrumah's conception of neo-colonialism as it relates to Africa that we must logically turn to understand the plight of the illusive post-colonial states on the continent. His firm conclusion, which indubitably describes the African state, is that "the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside."

The preceding theoretical discussions in Part I of this volume, as well as the analyses of the internal developments within the selected countries across the sub-regions that illustrate this condition in Part II, clearly confirm our assertion that it is an erroneous belief that Africa is a post-colonial society. From all the evidences adduced, Africa's contemporary nation-states concretely approximate the neocolonial entities that Nkrumah theorized about and described in his seminal works.[1] Though technically independent in that they have governments that are ostensibly controlled by local leaders but are in reality not sovereign, because their political and economic systems and policies are controlled from the metropolitan capitals of their former colonial overlords, and from that of the United States which, though not a colonial power, has nonetheless emerged as the greatest modern imperialist nation of all. Yes, it may be true that old-fashioned and direct colonialism has ended with the attainment of flag independence, but neocolonialism, its replacement, is far more insidious, sinister, manipulative and generally more destructive of the nation-states. Part of the problem is that, unlike in the colonial era when each territory was subject only to its own colonial overlord, today all of the fifty-four independent African states are, without exception, exposed

to multiple foreign masters that control and manipulate their governments, their internal politics and foreign policies as well as their economic systems, such that their independence is nothing but a sham. For the purpose of maintaining effective control over them, the various foreign imperialist powers deliberately help to exacerbate existing ethno-national divisions within each conglomerate society, the same divisions that colonial rule also earlier on exploited to prevent the evolution of any united and nationalist feelings. It is thus no wonder that existing ethno-national fault lines have become the albatross around the necks of the independent nation-states that hobble all efforts toward nation-building and achievement of national inclusiveness.[2] Even for a mono-ethnic nation-state like Somalia, domestic politics and national unity have been rendered problematic and virtually impossible by existing lines of division brought about by its colonial provenance.

The cynically created identity crisis alluded to earlier in this work has remained a poignant reminder of the artificiality and fragility of the so-called post-colonial state in Africa. Unfortunately, it is also the crisis which domestic ruling elites in the different states have woefully failed to address and resolve but have instead been exploiting for self-aggrandizement and regime survival. Indeed, the deliberate manipulation of identity differences and other primordial symbols, such as religion, is at the root of the contemporary political instabilities plaguing many African states, and which various interested foreign powers willfully exploit. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this identity crisis.

The once peaceful and apparently united Cote d'Ivoire suddenly exploded in political turmoil a few years after the death of its first post-independence ruler, President Felix Houphouet-Boigny who had ruled the West African country for over three decades until 1993. His successors, most especially Henri Konan Bedie, began to cynically manipulate ethno-regional and religious divisions and other primordial symbols for selfish advantage in their political contestations for the highest office, thus exacerbating latent identity differences. Henry Konan Bedie instituted the concept of "*Ivoirite*" (or Ivoirian-ness), initially an expression of cultural nationalism, with which he sought to prevent his popular rival, former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara from the northern region, from being considered eligible to contest the presidential election, claiming that Ouattara was not a proper Ivoirien because of alleged foreign parentage. The resort to this xenophobic political philosophy sparked such political outrage that it shattered the façade of peaceful cohabitation that Houphouet-Boigny had succeeded in maintaining since independence in 1960. What followed logically was a series of political upheavals, disruptions, economic stagnation, violence and death on a scale that was unprecedented in Cote d'Ivoire's hitherto peaceful political history. While Houphouet-Boigny had deftly managed ethnic divisions and prevented

a needless identity crisis from surfacing to affect domestic peace and progress, his successors wittingly threw the once peaceful country into needless and avoidable crisis by their diabolical resort to destructive primordial politics.

Chad, also a former French colony, remained for several decades disunited and unstable because of the identity crisis that the French had deliberately constructed into its national fabric by their deliberate division of the country into "useful" south (made up the black-skinned people who had embraced Christianity, Western education and lifestyle) and "useless" north (made up of a multiplicity of fair-skinned Arabized groups divided into several sultanates which had stiffly resisted foreign rule). French rule was thus maintained in northern Chad only by military force, because colonial authority was not accepted by the Muslim sultanates, a development that the newly independent nation-state had to grapple with. At independence, political power and control of the country, its economy and security apparatuses, were in the hands of southerners, who also happened to be mostly Christians, without much input from the Muslim northerners.[3] Unable to heal the ethno-regional divisions that had existed from colonial times, the southern and Christian-dominated national government under President Francois Tombalbaye, in a country that is 55 percent Muslim, could only maintain a semblance of governmental presence in the turbulent and uncooperative northern region by retaining inherited French military garrisons in Northern Chad continuously until 1968, in the first instance, and intermittently from 1969.[4] All these internal divisions gave France, the former colonial master, the much needed chance to retain considerable presence and influence over the politics and governance and, of course, the resources of the country, until it was later supplanted by the United States which assisted Hissene Habre to power and to institute the most ruinous draconian rule over the hapless country.[5]

Nigeria is indisputably the most populous and pre-eminent country in Africa. But the poser is: do "Nigerians" truly own the Nigerian state? This question is apposite, for as Adebayo Williams, a Nigerian scholar and public intellectual is fond of reminding us, though Frederick Lugard might have succeeded in creating Nigeria, he definitely failed to create Nigerians! He merely corralled multiple ethnic nations into a single compact for purely administrative convenience and without the slightest intention of evolving a real nation-state.[6] The colonial governors who came after him also failed in the same manner. In fact, they deliberately encouraged and by their policies promoted rabid inter-ethnic disharmony. But then, the post-independence ruling elites themselves have also woefully failed to create Nigerians out of the multiple nationalities and ethnic groups existing in the same new compact. This failure is largely because it is impossible, no matter how much they tried, because they themselves are hardly more than mere agents and operatives of neocolonialist forces at whose behest they serve.

Nigeria may just be emblematic, but indeed, it is an inescapable reality that the forcible corralling of diverse and mutually competitive and antagonistic entities into new territorial compacts by colonial fiat cannot lead to the evolution of new nations. The impact of this colonial provenance is not the only reason, but the post-independence intrusion and political and economic stranglehold maintained by the metropolitan states in the domestic affairs of the so-called post-colonial states are, also, similarly destructive. As the preceding chapters in this volume have clearly exposed, the activities of Great Britain, France and their Western allies, most especially the United States of America, are deliberately targeted at preventing the emergence and survival of durable states in Africa.

Even today, the central strategic objective of the United States on the continent of Africa remains the protection of its access to Africa's rich natural resources. This core objective is clearly spelt out in the original rationale for the establishment of AFRICOM in 2007 by Peter J. Pham, the State Department's advisor to AFRICOM, as consisting of "protecting access to hydrocarbons and other strategic resources which Africa has in abundance, a task which includes ensuring against the vulnerability of those natural riches and ensuring that no other interested third parties, such as China, India, Japan, or Russia, obtain monopolies or preferential treatment."[7] And in the guise of fighting the one-sided global war on terror—a war that America's foreign policy deliberately created[8]—it surreptitiously enlisted African states in which it has the above stated strategic interests, and where, as Baraka notes, "the terror phenomenon seems to develop in whatever country the US has a strategic interest in."[9] According to him, the US strategy is to destabilize African countries by helping "to create security emergencies that weaken the state and creates a situation where the US then comes to the aid of the embattled states and is able to entrench itself within the life of various nations on the African continent."[10] The same position has been arrived at after an in-depth study by Jeremy Keenan who analyzed the involvement and collaboration of US intelligence with the Tuareg insurgents in the Sahel.[11] In the past decade since the establishment of AFRICOM, the US has covertly deployed small numbers of its elite Special Forces—Delta Force, Green Berets, Navy Seals—in several African countries all under the pretense of helping them with security sector reforms, assisting in training military personnel, and so forth. Even Nigeria's attitude toward AFRICOM has over time and due to circumstances shifted from the initial official hostility to the idea of foreign forces on African soil, to virtual indifference, to warmness and later to reluctant acquiescence and full cooperation. This metamorphosis happened against the backdrop of Nigeria's virtual helplessness in the face of Boko Haram terror, most especially in the aftermath of the abduction of nearly 300 teenage female students from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno State in April 2014. The Nigerian government's inability to resolve this

mass abduction invariably paved the way for US military intrusion into the country's security and defense affairs under the pretext of offering assistance. All of a sudden, US military unmanned aerial vehicles known as drones were freely flying over Nigeria's air space, ostensibly for surveillance to gather intelligence on the abducted girls, but in reality serving the purpose of entrenching AFRICOM.

Arising from the above analysis are a few posers to ponder over: can anyone justifiably and honestly blame these fragile colonial contraptions that were originally cobbled together purely for plunder and pillage for failing to evolve into durable nation-states, and for unraveling so quickly and so spectacularly? How can so-called post-colonial states which were held under the stifling control of external powers and forces be expected to function and endure as if they are real states?

Whilst it is not debatable that it was colonial rule that forcibly cobbled together new and artificial territorial entities comprising disparate and mutually competitive ethnic nations like Nigeria, the resultant post-colonial state has been deliberately run aground and wrecked by a curious alliance or collaboration between Western imperialist nations and those that Adebayo Williams famously termed "enemy nationals" whose allegiance to the new nation-state is for the benefits that would accrue to them only. One pervasive feature of African politics is the sit-tight syndrome, a situation where leaders become rulers and simply decide to hang on to power indefinitely. This category of rulers who also pride themselves as gatekeepers and defenders of their nations deliberately discourage opposition, stifle human rights, national progress and development, and invariably cause more harm than good to their respective nation-states. As Frederick Cooper has pointedly observed, these "gatekeeper states" are endangered because the sit-tight rulers "use patronage, coercion, scapegoating of opponents, and other resources to reinforce their position."[12] Some of the most recent manifestations of this trend are discernible in Egypt, Gambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, and so forth, where opposition is crippled by coercion. In Uganda, for example, the opposition politician who contested presidential election against the sitting Yoweri Museveni was summarily detained on trumped-up charges of treason. Most recently (January 2017) in Gambia, it had to take the deployment of military forces by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to force President Yahya Jammeh out of power after twenty years when he refused to accept the results of a general election he lost to the opposition. Are these "post-colonial" monstrosities amenable to reform, given that the power elites have also become the "enemy nationals" that make change impossible?

The contemporary scramble for Africa's resources has unleashed a new wave of foreign interference and intrusions into Africa's affairs. While the Chinese are in Africa in search of vital resources, avenues for trade and spread

of influence, the West, which had hitherto lost valuable ground and influence in the post–Cold War era, is trying to regain influence by deploying both "hard" and "soft" power resources. Hard power is currently manifested through deployment of French and American military forces in several states of the continent—Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, CAR, Djibouti, and so forth. It would appear that a number of these crisis spots have been contrived or promoted by external influence to keep the continent under perpetual control. As things stand, there is a virtual military lockdown of the continent by US AFRICOM. This contemporary scramble is signposted by even more ruthless exploitation and plunder of Africa's vital resources. This new plunder is creating crisis, instability and disunity, a development which is inevitably helping to foment or exacerbate internal crises that put Africa's security and development in jeopardy.

Can Africans overcome the legacies of colonialism and redefine the essence and character of the state in such a way that they can claim true ownership, or must they continue with the colonial artifact bequeathed to them by the imperialist powers? Is a successful reform of the state feasible without consideration for the built-in structural defects inherited from colonialism? Related posers: is the "African state" actually and sincerely amenable to be reformed? Can the African state be reinvented in such a way that will give its ownership to the Africans themselves? If so, how, by what means, and in what direction? Can the various crises of governance, nation-building and insecurity facing the African state be amenable to durable resolution without recourse to its historical provenance?

Is it realistic to expect Africans to radically redefine the political architecture of Africa away from its current fifty-four states separated by artificial and arbitrary boundaries in the manner that has been suggested by the likes of Wole Soyinka, Wakau wa Mutua, and Jeffrey Herbst? These three have suggested a peaceful recreation of Africa by collapsing the current states into a few new "federations" or "super-states."[13] How feasible is the suggestion that existing territorial states whose artificial boundaries have ossified and are held sacrosanct, and in which people have settled (though not necessarily comfortably as yet because there are still incidences of separatist agitations in many countries), and in which identities have been forged over the past several decades, can be redrawn to create brand new entities and identities as suggested by Soyinka and others? Is peaceful restructuring of Africa into a few new "federations" or "super-states" as suggested by these eminent scholars feasible?

In any case even if this were feasible, the assumption is that Africa's woes are based solely on the artificiality of borders that at once "sliced" (apologies to Soyinka) the same peoples between several territorial entities, and at the same time corralled several disparate ethnic nations into single compacts not of their own will but of that of the colonial overlords. This assumption is not entirely correct. Would new and, possibly more, problematic identities not be created by the new super-states? If the above suggestion is not feasible nor would it

even solve the problem, then do we work with what we have—retain the territorial states as they are, and seek innovative ways of making them work for Africans? If yes, the question of how to achieve that must have to be addressed.

A fundamental question to be posed: how relevant and important to peoples' wellbeing are territorial states in the era of globalization and its attendant effects, and when forces other than states, such as international organizations, MNCs, WTO, transnational civil society, terrorist and insurgency/jihadist groups, are becoming increasingly powerful? This is against the backdrop of Crawford Young's correct observation on the "erosion of stateness" in that states no longer have "the routine capacity to exercise ultimate authority within the territorial domain of sovereignty," invariably yielding the ground to non-state actors, smugglers, warlords, arms and drug traffickers, militia groups, even religious groups.[14]

Overall, the intention in this work is not necessarily to paint a sorry picture of the state of Africa's states but to disabuse the minds of those who might be starry-eyed, who think that Africa's problems and challenges can be overcome by good intentions, to underscore the deep-seated immensity of the crisis of the state in Africa so that we can all begin the process of fashioning credible and durable roadmaps for the future in the twenty-first century. It is to disabuse the minds of those who, erroneously, subscribe to finding the so-called "African solutions" to the myriad crises on the continent when, in actual fact, the origins and causes and factors of the exacerbation of the crises are not wholly indigenous to Africa alone. Since the rest of the world, especially the Western nations as harbingers of the crises, cannot escape culpability, they must not also be allowed to walk away from the mess they created nor be allowed to employ sophistry to cleanse their consciences. Whilst not advocating Africa be made a ward of the international community, it stands to reason that its problems cannot be solved by so-called African solutions. This is more so in the face of the interference of powerful external actors with clearly defined and often selfish interests to protect and advance on the continent. For example, how can Africans be left to find durable solutions when countries like the United States are fomenting troubles across the continent to advance America's national interests at the expense of the security, stability and development of the states of Africa? What this all means is that the rest of the world must accept some responsibility for the state of affairs and resolve to help Africa.

NOTES

1. Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Panaf Books, 1963); *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1965).

2. Many states have been wracked by intra-state violence as a consequence of pre-existing and unresolved ethno-national divisions that colonial rulers carefully embedded into the fabric of each colonial state—this has been the fate of Nigeria, Chad, DR Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, to name a few.

3. Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: The Free Press, 2005), 347–350.

4. See Sam C. Nolutshungu, *Limits of Anarchy: Intervention and State Formation in Chad* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995).

5. For the role of the United States and the CIA in Hissene Habre's ruinous rule in Chad, see Michael Bronner, "Our Man in Africa," *Foreign Policy* (The Magazine), accessed December 28, 2014.

6. See variously James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, 320; Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

7. Peter J. Pham, quoted in Ajamu Baraka, "Iraq, Libya, Syria: Three Reasons African Americans should oppose US Intervention in Africa," (Op. Ed.), www.eurasiareview.com/08072014-iraq-libya-syria-three-reasons-african-americans-oppose-us-intervention-africa-oped/. (Accessed July 8, 2014).

8. Not a few scholars are of the view that it was America's foreign policy that wittingly or otherwise created contemporary transnational terrorism. See, for example, Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).

9. Baraka, "Iraq, Libya, Syria."

10. Baraka, "Iraq, Libya, Syria."

11. See Jeremy Keenan, *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa* (New York: Pluto Press, 2009).

12. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

13. See the positions canvassed by Wole Soyinka, Wakau wa Mutua, and Jeffrey Herbst in A. I. Asiwaju, "Introduction: Borders in African History," in *Borders in Africa: An Anthology of the Policy History*, ed. Anthony I. Asiwaju (Addis Ababa: Institute for Peace and Security Studies, 2015), 21–24.

14. Crawford Young, "The End of the Post-Colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics," *African Affairs* 103, no. 410 (January 2004): 25.

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