NEW WINE IN OLD WINE SKIN: AN ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN UNION'S PEACE AND SECURITY INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

T.C. Anyanwu

J.K. Ani

D.E. Uwizeyimana

ABSTRACT

The need for continental freedom, peace, security, and unity were among the major reasons for the formation of Organization of African Unity (OAU). This organization fought acidulously to guarantee independence for the African countries and end apartheid regime in South Africa. With time, both intended and unintended internal activities of independent African countries led to series of conflicts that jeopardized the peace, security and unity of the continent. The need for a more dogged organization that would fit into the trending globalization and create peace and security in the continent therefore led to the formation of the African Union (AU). This research therefore employed qualitative historical method of data collection and analysis as a way juxtaposing the extents the two organizations went in maintaining peace, security and unity of the continent. It tried to examine the extent AU was different from the OAU. The study weighed the strengths and weaknesses of the two organizations. Some of the weaknesses were evident: the OAU was more like a toothless bulldog as it failed in many occasions to back plans with actions; the AU also beclouds the Article 4(h) with conceptual ambiguities that retard its functionalities. The strength of the OAU is evident in the attainment of independence while the AU can boast of success in peacebuilding in the post-Cold War Africa. The study recommended increased peacebuilding efforts and transformative national leadership as the sustainable road to African peace, security and development

Keywords: Africa, AU, OAU, Peace and Security.

INTRODUCTION

From the earliest time, one of the things African societies have put enormous efforts to achieve has been to create nexus between her and her neighbors for the sake of peaceful coexistence, security and so on. This was a fact identified by Talbot (1937) earlier enough when he wrote that a Negro (sic) is the most gregarious of all men; his greatest joy is found in amusing himself with

his companions in dances, plays, etc., and perhaps, his greatest grief is solitude. This love for company is no doubt one of the chief causes of the existence of the innumerable societies and clubs, secret or otherwise which permeates the whole coast into when most people are subdivided. From the foregoing, it is evident that the Africans took it upon themselves to create connections and embrace relationships within and without their immediate societies as they believed that the attainment of relationships guarantees peace and security (Anyanwu, 2015).

This status of the Africans dates back to history as observed by Edward (1967) in his account of an African society in the 18th Century. Even in diaspora, the blacks were able to form several organizations among which was the Pan African Movement. All these represent attempts to maintain unionism that would among other things, guarantee peace and security. In the peak of colonial imperialism, the quest for independence and the formation of Organisation of African Unity at a time a number of African states became independent gave fillip to the quest for the attainment of the manifest independence destiny and the unity inherent in the association. Sequel to the end of colonialism and the collapse of apartheid in South Africa, the relevance of the Organization of African Unity became questionable in the politics of regionalism within the African continent. Additionally, the internationalism that was birthed by the end of the Cold War was punctuated with regional, ethnic and religious crises and so on. Environmental questions were also banes to the peaceful coexistence of the world at large and the independent states of Africa in particular. It was therefore evident that the OAU and its structures was no match to the problems that needed to be solved. Consequently, there was the agitation for the rise of new organization that will radically place Africa on the path of peace, security and development; sequel to the multiple conflicts that have taken the center-stage in nation building reality amongst many African countries. This study evaluates the place of the African Union vis-à-vis the OAU in the quest to enthrone peace, security and development in Africa.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed the qualitative research method. It engaged in the use of context analysis, and historiographical method of analysis in developing the research design.

The need for content and secondary analysis were necessary because the researchers had to gather texts by other scholars, analyzed and sorted them in a way that it drove home the

objectives of this particular study. Consequently, journals articles, unpublished research works, textbooks and so on were carefully analyzed for the purpose of current study.

Furthermore, there was need for historiography because the work had to delve into historical inquiry to obtain the historic need for intergroup organizations, the dynamics and the formation of the OAU, the point at which the ideas of the OAU became obsolete that led to the formation of the AU to tackle the loopholes of the OAU.

FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY TO AFRICAN UNION

By the time colonialism came to an end in some African nations, the need to form a larger and perhaps a continental organization received more attention. For instance, on the 7th January 1961, representatives of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Libya, Egypt and the Algerian Provisional Government, meeting in Casablanca, adopted a Charter which later became known as the Casablanca Charter that provided for a joint military command and an African common market, (Africa Year Book, 1977a). Among the major leaders in this group was Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who advocated for a unified Africa using the socialist template.

There were still other independent African countries who were not in the foregoing group. But that does not mean that they were anti-unified Africa under an umbrella of a continental organization. Rather, this group of countries had a different idea and approach towards this dream. Here, we had such countries as Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Madagascar, Mauritania, Senegal, Tunisia, Upper Volta, Dahomey, and Ivory Coast and so on. These countries, having met in Monrovia at the invitation of President William Tubman of Liberia from May 8th –May 12th, 1961 were addressed as the Monrovia Group. By January, 1962, they met again in Lagos, Nigeria and adopted a draft charter for the Organization of Inter-African and Malagasy States (Africa Year Book, 1977b).

Whether Casablanca or Monrovia, there was a common denominator that defined the two groups: a formation of an organization that would bring together all African states. This dream came to manifestation in May 1963, when Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia invited the Heads of States of African countries to a meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to chart out a way forward for a unified African organization. The outcome of which was a compromise by the two factions

that led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity. To Burgess (2008a), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was an organization of African nations created to promote continental peace, unity, and cooperation. The organization worked to resolve conflicts between nations and to coordinate political, economic, cultural, scientific, medical, and defense policies (Burgess, 2008b).

Among the major responsibilities of the organization was to see to the political independence of the African states that were still under colonial rule and the apartheid government in South Africa. The organization was also to see to the stabilization of power by the newly independent African states and to 'guide' one another towards the policy of non-alignment with any of the two power blocs during the politics of Cold War era. The organization was also to maintain peace, security and unity in the continent.

In as much as there were levels of success by the OAU, it has been argued by such analysts as Eghweree (2014a), Hodge (2002) and so on that it suffered setbacks, especially, in the areas of maintenance of peace and security in the continent. To the advocates of this opinion, it was barely few years after the formation of the Organization that military coups, civil wars and so on sprouted out from the various corners of the continent. Even the mantra of Non-Alignment ravaging the country then was a mere sham. This was so because the various power blocs used various African leaders as pawns to advance their courses. Eghweree (2014b) and Hodge (2002b) further noted that the OAU did not stand for peace, unity and people-centered development as wars and poverty became dominant across continent and as such, the O.A.U was seen as an old boys' club where the so-called leaders met annually to showcase their ill-gotten wealth and rival each other for the control of African continental political body. Their main focus seemed to be protecting each other, no matter the circumstances in line with the so-called 'principle of state sovereignty'. Throughout much of its history, the OAU was troubled by disputes among its member nations as discussed below.

The loopholes of the OAU was made evident with the Angolan civil war. Gaining her independence from the Portuguese after about 15 years of war, Angola was plunged into one of the darkest periods of her history as an independent state. This was as a result of a civil war that broke out among the various factions that made up the country. It can also be said that the war was a continuation of the Cold War that was ravaging the world then. For instance, the Popular

Movement for the Liberation of Angola, Movemento Popular de Libertação de Angola-Partido de Trabalho, or MPLA), was supported by the Soviet Union and her ally, Cuba, while the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, UNITA) had the backings of the United States and her Western allies. In a bid to intervene and restore peace in the nascent country, the OAU met in December of the same year to decide on how to restore peace in the country. But arriving at a decision was difficult because half of the member states chose one side, while the other chose the other. From the foregoing, one observes that the African nations under the OAU could not maintain the mantra of Non-Alignment. More to that was that their alignments with different power blocs could not be controlled as the Organization fumbled in the December meeting thereby inhibiting the ability of the OAU to maintain peace and security in the continent. Burgess (2008b) argued on the shortcomings of the OAU in the maintenance of peace and security in the continent when he wrote that:

> The split in the organization continued during a series of wars, including the 1977 and 1978 invasions of the Katanga Province in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) by Angolan-backed forces, Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia in 1978, and the conflict between Uganda and Tanzania in 1978 and 1979. In 1981 the same nations that had supported the MPLA government in Angola also recognized the Western Sahara as an independent state and admitted it into the OAU. Morocco and other states that had supported the UNITA/FNLA side of the Angolan conflict did not approve of this move and Morocco temporarily withdrew from the OAU. The OAU's strength was sapped further by an accelerating economic decline in Africa during the 1970s and 1980s.

On the other hand, there are still those who claimed that the OAU achieved its paramount objectives of securing political independence for the various countries of Africa and the liberation of South Africa from the apartheid government. Among such people was Eregha (2007) who argued that OAU was instrumental to the attainment of independence all over the

continent and the liberation struggle against apartheid in South Africa. He noted that it was the foregoing that made the African leaders of the time to form the continental organization.

Apart from the foregoing which was argued to be based on the OAU principles, Burgess (2008c) pointed that the OAU also contributed meritoriously in peace and security of the continent. For instance, he argued that the Organization's success in mediating the dispute between Algeria and Morocco in 1964 and 1965 can never be overemphasized. It also mediated the border conflicts of Somalia with Ethiopia and Kenya from 1968 to 1970 Burgess, (2008d).

The two different views cited above agreed on one thing: the era of OAU was gone and that there was need for a reformation of the organization or a formation of a new and vibrant continental organization that would launch the continent into the dynamics of the 21st century global system. To Mbeki, a former president of South Africa, the OAU needed to be strengthened so that in its works, it focuses on strategic objectives of the realization of African renaissance (Meredith, 2015a). This idea of African renaissance was never new to the continent during this time as having be birthed by the quest for independence from colonial governments, it was strengthened in the 1960s and 70s when sovereign states started emerging greatly in the continent. For instance, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana had severally called for a more united and formidable union of the African states. The impacts and several attempts by the Libyan, Colonel Gadhafi also worth mentioning. In the immediate years after the Cold War, as other parts of the world were adjusting to fit into the new world order, Africa was not left behind. Series of attempts were made to economically revamp the continent. One of the most pronounced of them was seen in the outcome of the Abuja Treaty of 1991, in Abuja, Nigeria. The gathering of about fifty one African leaders in Abuja resulted to a treaty signed on the 23rd June 1991 that was the bedrock of African Economic Community (AEC). The objectives of the AEC were contained in the Chapter Two, Article Four of the treaty. For instance, Article 4(a) of the said chapter was based on the promotion of the economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic reliance. Article Six of the same chapter provided the modalities for the establishment of the community which was to pass through six different stages of variable duration over a cumulative period of thirty four years. It was within the first stage as planned that the treaty came into force after due ratification in May, 1994.

The formation of the AEC was not everything the African leaders needed at the time. It was programed to address economic aspect of the continent. The OAU which could be seen as

taking care of other facets of the continent also needed to be revamped. Several attempts were therefore made by varying African leaders to be at the forefront of this mission. Colonel Gadhafi of Libya, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and later Thabo Mbeki of South Africa were key leaders that featured prominently. For instance, by 1999, Gadhafi conveyed African leaders to Sirte, Libya for a special submit that would birth a new and stronger union that would replace the OAU. According to his visions, such nascent body will among other things have a common military force, common currency, continental president etc. These ideas were to offshoot the loosed nature of what was the OAU. Although the Union which Gadhafi desired to form in the very Fourth Extra Ordinary Session of the assembly did not come to fruition, there was a decision made on the 9th September, 1999 to establish an African Union, in conformity with the ultimate objectives of the Charter of the Continental Organization and the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. The ideas of Gadhafi towards achieving the goal might be a good one, but the approach was not entirely free from suspicious eyes of both the Western world and her African allies who believed that Gadhafi was trying to plant himself as the sole leader of the continent. This provided a set back to the transition adventure but did not inhibit it as by 11th July, 2000, the Constitutive Act of the African Union adopted by the thirty-sixth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in 11 July, 2000 - Lome, Togo came to be.

Noteworthy is that when Thabo Mbeki succeeded Nelson Mandela as the second black president of South Africa in 1999, his foreign policy approach skyrocketed the tempo and also altered the power structure in Africa and the politics of forming a continental union. Having joined lately as stated above, and considering the fact that South Africa had a large economy and the youngest democratic rule in Africa, Mbeki had to take up the idea of restructuring the continental organization as a personal crusade, observed Meredith, (2015b). He believed that the continental body in existence was nothing more than a 'Club for dictators' that must be overhauled, Meredith (2015c). With the foregoing mindset, one of the initial steps by Mbeki alongside Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was the formation of New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) in 2001. These African leaders alongside others agreed that a peer review mechanism that would regulate, monitor their performances and discipline defaulters would be established.

Meredith (2015d) maintained that the series of meetings and other efforts led to the meeting of the fifty-three African leaders in Durban, South Africa in July, 2002 for an inaugural conference of the African Union. According to him, the AU became an organization adorned with a plethora of new institutions, including a Pan-African Parliament, a Pan-African Court of Justice, an African Central Bank and a Peace and Security Council, (Meredith 2015e). Unlike the OAU, the AU was granted greater power to interfere in the internal affairs of the member states when the need arises to restore peace and stability, prevent war, crime, genocide and crimes against humanity (Meredith 2015f).

With all these done, the question becomes: Has the AU made proper utility of the power bestowed on it to foster peace and security of the continent? The following paragraphs provide answer to the above question.

STRUCTURAL MOVES BY THE AFRICAN UNION TOWARDS PEACE

Learning from the experience of the OAU, the African leaders during the formation of the AU put in place some structural arrangements that were lacking in the OAU in maintenance of peace in Africa. Such structural arrangements include

Pan African Parliament

At the OAU summit in Lome in 2000, the protocol establishing the Pan African Parliament was adopted. With the signing and ratification by member states, the parliament becomes a legislative organ of the Union on 18 March 2004. Considering the role and the need for this branch of the union, some analysts have commended the founders of the union as they hold that the inclusion of the parliament was a step in the right direction, (Awolawo, 2008). Regarding the task of this body, Eghweree (2014c) wrote that it has the responsibility of passing legislation for the entire continent. Promoting and protecting human rights across the continent, were top on the agenda of the parliament. This is therefore a plus in the AU bid to mend the weaknesses of the OAU.

The Court of Justice

This organ is the judicial arm of the Union bestowed with the responsibility of adjudicating justice to the continent as may be brought forward by member states. According to

Article 18 of the Union that set up the court, it was to be made up of eleven judges with six years' term in office and must be elected ones. Inasmuch as this court stands to suffer suffocation as it would be difficult for member states to give in to her rules, it stands to argue here that there are loopholes that it will fill in the peace and unity of the continent. It can arguably be averred here that if the Court was in existence, Cameroon would not have gone to the International Court of Justice over the Bakassi Peninsula conflict with Nigeria on 29th March, 1994.

Peace and Security Council

One of the paramount principles of the AU is the establishment of a common defense policy for the African continent. This council was equipped with more interventionist power than had the OAU that condoned all manners of breach of peace and abuse of human rights by both private citizens and government officials who hid under the mantra of state sovereignty to perpetrate evil. Since its formation, the Peace and Security Council has served as the engine room of major decision-making on peace and security on the continent. It also provides leadership on peace and security challenges on the continent and holds meetings and briefing sessions on a timely basis to address conflict and crisis (African Peace and Security Architecture, 2015)

PRACTICAL MOVES BY THE AFRICAN UNION TOWARDS PEACE

The AU has used the Peace and Security Congress to effect peace and democratic rule in some African countries since its formation. For instance, Comoros has since the OAU days been ridden with crises. Military coups also punctuated the history of the Island country since her independence in 1975 as it has witnessed more than 15 coups and attempted coups. By March 2008, The AU, through the Peace and Security Council quelled political crises when it launched Operation Democracy in the Comoros. This led to the end of the rule of Mohammed Bacar who had conducted illegal election to retain himself in power. The operation was carried out major with troops from Tanzania and Sudan (Wilén & Williams, 2019a)

Another commendable effort of this Union can be seen in December, 2016 during a political crisis in Gambia. Yahya Jammeh ruled Gambia between 6th November 1996 and 19th January, 2017. During his presidency, Jammeh was a despot who among other things muzzled the press. For instance, in 1998, many staff of the Independent Citizen FM radio station were arrested; the station was forced to close while her equipment were confiscated. There were also cases of human rights abuses and sporadic killings of students. As the 2016 election was coming

closer, Jammeh suppressed opposition while killing many others. These and many other ills of his administration made the people to vote against him in the election of that year that saw Adama Barrow emerging winner. But Jammeh refused the outcome of the election. This and series of other activities made "AU endorse an ECOWAS military operation, ECOMIG, to ensure the election results were upheld and implemented, and that Jammeh's incumbent regime was replaced by the democratically elected president Adama Barrow" (Wilén & Williams, 2019b) This was a plus to the AU's quest to maintain peace and security in the continent.

Another landslide impact of the AU in peace, security and protection of human rights and democratic process in Africa was seen in the conviction of the former Chad president, Hissène Habré. Hissène, during his era in Chad was reported to have killed more than 40,000 people, rape, and sexual slavery, among other crimes were traceable to him. By 30th May, 2016, the Extraordinary African Chamber sentenced him to life in prison. This is arguably the first of its kind in the continent and thus a credit to the AU.

In Burundi, preventive diplomacy of the AU was also evident. Burundi stands as one of the African countries that have wars punctuating her history. By the time the AU was formed, it put forward preventive diplomacy to make sure that another war that was looming in the country did not erupt. For instance, since late 2014, the AU engaged in preventive diplomacy to tackle what it saw as a foreseeable crisis in Burundi (Wilén & Williams, 2019c) that included "several visits from the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui to discuss the country's upcoming elections", (Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 2015). Other moves by the Union to arrest the looming crises included the visit of the Chairperson of AU Commission, Dlamini-Zuma to Burundi and the subsequent deployment of a high-level delegation that was headed by Edem Kodjo, a former OAU Secretary-General and Former Togolese Prime Minister. Among the delegates was Ibrahima Fall, a former Senegalese Foreign Minister. The troop was deployed in May, 2015, (Nina & Paul 2018a).

But among the aforementioned feats, the AU made some flops that questioned the 'over bloated' strength of the Union. For instance, in Burundi, apart from the preventive diplomacy discussed above, there was another dimension of the AU moves towards peace and security of lives that rather portrayed the Union as a toothless bulldog or as powerless as the OAU. This was made glaring when on the 17th December, 2015 the AU issued a 96-hour ultimatum to the

Burundian government and threatened to employ military force in restoring peace in Burundi. This application of force was to authorize deployment of a 5,000 strong force, known by its French acronym, MAPROBU, the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (Dersso, 2017). This decision of AU was in line with the Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act of the Union which gave it the power to intervene without invitation in such cases of graver circumstances as genocide, war crime, and crime against humanity in any member country.

The Union, before posing the threat never looked into some critical conditionalities and requirements for such threat to materialize. These critical things include: does the AU have the economic, political and military wherewithal to implement this aspect of the Constitutive Act? Another cog in the wheel of the AU Article 4(h) was the provision of the United Nations' charter on the regional government on intervention. (Nina & Paul 2018b).observed that "if the AU Assembly had authorized such an intervention, in order to conform with existing international law on the use of force it would have required a UN Security Council resolution passed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This is made clear in Article 53(1) of the UN Charter, which sets out the role of regional arrangements in the UN system, and Article 103 which establishes the UN Charter's standing over other international agreements, such as the AU Constitutive Act. This added yet another layer of uncertainty into the decision-making process: would the AU Assembly carry out what would probably be seen as an illegal use of force if it did not obtain UN Security Council authorization?", (Nina & Paul 2018c).

Furthermore, the intervention would have been relatively a possible adventure if the Burundian government supported the move. But contrarily, the Burundi's parliament unanimously rejected the proposed AU force on 21st December 2015, (Havyarimana, 2015). This was followed two days later by a letter from Burundi's foreign minister to the AU chairperson in which he likened MAPROBU to an invasion force that threatened Burundi's sovereignty, (Burundi. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation). President Nkurunziza followed suit, stating that any military intervention by AU troops would constitute 'an attack on the country and every Burundian will stand up and fight against them, (Nina & Paul 2018d).

The case of availability of military personnel raised above was of paramount inhibition to the AU to carry out her threat. Like the OAU, the AU had no standing army and therefore had to rely on member states for forces. In the light of this, the question becomes: How willing were the

Heads of African states to contribute military personnel to carry out this assignment. (Nina & Paul 2018e). stressed that the heads of states were divided on this issue as divergent opinions trended. A preponderant number of them deemed it inappropriate to send troops to Burundi without the government's consent and agreed it was prudent not to force the issue."

More so, Burundi has been active in the contribution of troops to make peace in other crises ridden African states. Sequel to that, President Nkurunziza argued that with her wealth of experience, Burundi can create internal peace without the intervention of any external assistance. Nina and Paul (2018f) pointed that President Nkurunziza resorted to the use of his military force in other parts of Africa as blackmail to pull the AU interventionist policies down. They argued that in May 2015, just days after the failed coup attempt, President Nkurunziza used the country's provision of peacekeepers to the African Union to divert attention from the political turmoil. Specifically, he claimed that owing to its peacekeepers in Somalia, Burundi faced a specific threat from the Somali Islamist movement al-Shabaab, (Nina & Paul 2018g).

It further threatened that any further threat or attempt by the AU to intervene in what he described as internal issue in his country, his government would have no option than to withdraw her support and troops in any part of the continent they are engaged in peacemaking adventure. It alleged that Burundi had a   large military input in the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

The foregoing 'concert' was the first and perhaps, the only test to the authority of the AU Peace and Security Congress and the Article 4(h) of the Union. And it can be argued here that it exposed the weaknesses of the AU.

CONCLUSION

The Organization of African Unity united the African states in the early years of independence. Among it set goals, there were levels of successes and failure. The dawn of the 21st century birthed new dimensions to internationalism, security, peace and so on in the global bases. This necessitated the need for and formation of a new organization that replaced the Organization.

The African Union was cladded with plethora of expectations in the creation and maintenance of peace and security in the conflict ridden Africa of the 21st century. In a bid to

meet up with these expectations, the structural arrangement of the Union was configured in a way that the aspects of peace and security are considered.

From the above discussions, it becomes apparent that so far, the AU has improved in the peace and security of the continent. But even at that, there are some technical and practical amendments that need to be made. The Article 4(h) and the conditionalities must be reconsidered in order to clarify and deal with some bottlenecks in its implementation. Generally, the AU to a reasonable extent has succeeded in taking care of the weaknesses of the OAU in the quest to guarantee sustainable peace and security in the continent. Although there are still some other inputs to be made. Thus, there is need for increased institutional building within the continent to ensure that leaders that emerge as major players in the African Union must be ambassadors of peace, who are willing and ready to drive the continent towards it manifest destiny of developmental transformation as well as sustainable peace and security.

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