

Irom Obar A. “The Contributions of Commonwealth to World Diplomacy: 1960-Present”
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In a globalized world it has often been suggested in recent years that the commonwealth is unnecessary and is in conflict with the United Nations as a World Organization. Commonwealth does not conflict in any way with the United Nations but rather it complements the work of the United Nations, as commonwealth States acting together in many fields have helped make the United Nations more effective. Diplomacy comes from the Greek word “diplomacy” denoting a folded document that was used for identification or to confer favour or privilege. It comprises the procedures and process of negotiating agreements, usually between sovereign States. In its contemporary usage, the word has come to mean different things to different people ranging from foreign policy, international relations, or simple tact. For the purpose of this paper diplomacy here is thought of in terms of negotiation and co-operation, which means something possibly derived from closer contacts and greater understanding. World diplomacy is used here as the condition in which States settle their differences by negotiating rather than force; in which there is active promotion of co-operation between them, and in which there is a scope for the emergence of new international forces without this becoming the occasion of conflict.¹ The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign States, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interest of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and World Peace.²

The transformation of British Empire to a friendly grouping of nations who voluntarily enter into a relationship which in no way hinders their freedom of action or thought may well prove to be the greatest monument of British adaptability and ingenuity. In taking the initiative of transforming her relationship towards those nations historically bound to her from one of dominance to one of fraternity, Britain though unable to rewrite history in order to put a more favourable gloss upon her old colonial policies, has certainly done much to allay the bitterness which otherwise would have been directed against her by the people she has finally released from tutelage.³

On the other hand most nationalities especially from former French territories have claimed that the timely transformation of the British Empire into a Commonwealth was a subtle move to ensure British influence in the domination of territories she could no longer rule by direct means and thus along with subjugating African unity, they felt that grouping independent states in such a way as to keep alive the memory of their colonial orientation and bringing to bear upon them the pressure of British and white dominion Diplomacy to guide their foreign policy into the same orbit as Britain? But in spite of this misgiving on the part of nationalities historically oriented towards metropolitan France there was a great drive on the part of those members of the French community associated with the so called Brazzaville group to transform the French community into something closely approximating to the Commonwealth.⁴

Kwame Nkrumah allaying the fears of the former French territories expressed his loyalty to the Commonwealth in the following words:

States emerging from the tutelage of other colonial powers have not always understood Ghana's attachment to the Commonwealth. That is because the loose, ad hoc nature of

structure is not correctly comprehended by those who are members of more formal associations. It is difficult for those not accustomed to a free connection with Europe to appreciate that the Commonwealth is an association of sovereign states, each of which is free from interference from the others, including the United Kingdom.⁵

The above quote is buttressed by the uniqueness of the Commonwealth which is twofold. Firstly, the absence of compulsion upon any nation either to join it or to remain in it and the absolute equality of its members, means that the state which created one of the greatest empires the world has ever known and the smallest, poorest nations are equal partners. Their votes are of equal value; their voices are listened to with the same attention. Secondly, the patience that characterizes every Commonwealth meeting proves that the links are strong enough to withstand the abhorrence one member feels for the policies of another/ others. Since some of the policies of member states are anathema to the British way of life and some of British traditional alliances are with nations who are mortal enemies of African freedom in particular.⁶

The Commonwealth is in many ways a unique organization which was to play a pioneering role in future world affairs because its foundation was firmly laid on the rock of human nature.⁷ Its institutions rather than being artificial schemes simply based on the rules of politics and the schemes of constitutions makers, they were corresponding to what man and nations really needed- an organization for discussion, negotiation and compromise. No state will entrust its vital interest to anything other than an alliance or economic equivalent which is complete with binding pledges and policy, but the whole of international life cannot be organized in this way and alliances cannot fill the whole of a state spectrum of present and prospective interest. The Commonwealth models the need in certain circumstances concession rather than defiance, mutual aid rather than self-seeking which are part of the laws of life whether between persons or state and there is something to be said for a modest and durable body which manages to express them. Hence Duncan Hall in his description of the Commonwealth summarized it thus:

...they might lead the way in developing the organs of international government, in developing and securing a just distribution of the world's resources; in fighting the common enemies of mankind, poverty, hunger and diseases, in raising to the highest level the standards of life of the masses, and in setting up in place of the present system of individual autocracy, a new system of industrial democracy; and finally, in encouraging education, promoting the interchange of students and teachers and developing facilities such as transport and communication.⁸

Today however the Commonwealth pliability, permissiveness and lack of mutual commitment together with its lack of vital significance in the diplomacy of the members gives it the quality of a model V or international cooperation at the lowest level for a long period as it also benefits from its multi-national membership. It is a substantial microcosm of that macrocosm which is sometimes called "the North-South dialogue." In the exchange of the United Nations Conference on Trade and development (UNCTDA) and the United Nations (UN)

about a new international economic order, the contributions inspired by the Commonwealth through its secretariat were noted for a reasoned attempt to bring both sides together, rather than by the passion and obfuscation which are often brought to bear by the major spokesperson on each side.⁹

The Commonwealth has been complementing the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the promotion of international peace and the services of the wider community. Thus, the declaration of the Commonwealth principles commits members' states to international cooperation to "support the United Nations and seek to strengthen its influences for peace in the world, and its effort to remove the causes of tensions between nations".¹⁰ In recognition of its noble role the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gave the Commonwealth secretariat observer status in 1967 and in October 1976 the Commonwealth was given observer status at the United Nations General Assembly.¹¹ This permanent representative of Commonwealth countries at the United Nations usually meet in New York to present a common position on sanction matters discussed at the United Nations.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is also an observer at meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which assist in debt problems of countries. The Commonwealth has also developed special co-operative relations with other international agencies concerned with development work such as the Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).¹² GATT was established in 1947 with the responsibility for negotiating trade with no administrative responsibility and regulatory functions attached. On 1st January 1995 GATT was rechristened World Trade Organization inheriting the GATT agreements on manufactured goods and the agenda to include trade in services and intellectual property.¹³ The Commonwealth has contributed to influence in the policies of these organizations.

At the time of the Cold War, the Commonwealth helped to diffuse tensions in the United Nations. Although research on the history of the Cold War has been revised with new sources based especially evidences and primary sources from the former Soviet bloc, Eastern Europe, Germany and China, the argument still remains that the newest evidence and history of the Cold War confirms the traditional history. The traditional view has it that the Cold War began because of the ideologically motivated expansionism of the Soviet Union and the relative slowness of the United States to respond to the worldwide threat emanating from the Kremlin.¹⁴ In one of the most influential scholarly journals in the United States Douglas Macdonald argues that much of the new available evidence confirms many traditional analytical assumptions about bloc expansion. He particularly mentions a system wide Soviet bloc threat with a significant amount of unity, and this bloc was both held together and driven to expand its sphere by the shared totalistic ideological tenets of Marxism-Leninism as largely defined by Moscow.¹⁵

Prior to the Cold war, the East-West ideological divide that followed the end of the two world wars personified in the end of the United States and its NATO alliances versus the former Soviet Union and its WARSAW pact¹⁶ could have led to the most devastating war the world would have experienced. As an overt but restricted confrontation for ideological supremacy the Cold War was waged mainly political, economic and propaganda fronts and thus heightened military tensions between NATO and Warsaw Pacts forces particularly in Europe.¹⁷ In relation to its diplomatic role at the United Nations as a harmonizer, Guy Arnold's noted in his book *Towards Peace and a Multiracial Commonwealth* that:

The alternative (to an alliance system that increased tensions rather than explores the chances for peace) is a concentration upon the Commonwealth as a bridge that breeds understanding amidst disagreement and blurs the lines that blunt the edges between blocs. This bridge (that is the Commonwealth) links and then softens the two extremes that now divide the world...¹⁸

The end of Cold War should have naturally led to the disbandment of NATO having successfully defeated the Soviet Union. But this has not been the case for like the Commonwealth which emerged which emerged at the end of the colonial rule to bound British colonial territories in all forms of relations, NATO in its Brussels summit of January 1994 began another phase in international relations with leaders of NATO subscribing to eastward thrust into hitherto Warsaw controlled territories with the admission of Poland Czech Republic and Hungary and beyond. This was against the view that the end of the ideological war should end further military alliance since although communism may have been dismantled, potential military threats in Europe subsists. Javier Solana, former Secretary –General of the organization justifies this continued existence of NATO thus “now that Cold War is over, we are faced not with a single all-embracing threat but with a multitude of new risk and challenges.”¹⁹

During the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 when many states pressed for Commonwealth peace mission different from the United Nations initiatives, the then Commonwealth Secretary General Mr. Arnold Smith of Canada counseled against the move and the Commonwealth supported the United Nations initiative and that helped in the early settlement of the problem.²⁰ It is also worth noting that, at the time of the Middle East crisis in June 1967 four of the Security Council members were representing Commonwealth countries - Britain, Nigeria, Canada and India.²¹ Their input contributed in no small measure in bringing an early end to the crisis.

The importance of international and regional organizations and institutions as one of the veritable mechanisms through which conflict and cooperation among nations are mediated explains why the Commonwealth has been co-coordinating and increasing its links with many regional and international bodies such as the European Economic Commercial (EEC), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Caribbean Community and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The definition of international organizations and institutions as “international social institutions characterized by behavioral patterns based on international norms and rules which prescribe behavioral roles in recurring situations that lead to a convergence of reciprocal expectations”²² further underscores these increasing links. For example, during the Paris North-South dialogue talks inaugurated by President Giscard Estang in 1975, at least two of the Commonwealth countries were members of each of the commission setup.²³

Another area of note is the fact that more than a quarter of the members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are Commonwealth countries; the South Pacific forum is made up almost Commonwealth countries; two of the five ASEAN Countries are Commonwealth member while Commonwealth countries such as Trinidad and Guyana are members of the organization of American States (OAS) a 35 member state regional organization comprising nations in the Western hemisphere founded in 1948 at Bogota, Columbia with the main objectives being to achieve order and peace and justice, to promote the solidarity of member

states, to strengthen collaboration and defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of members.²⁴

Commonwealth Countries are in the majority (numerically) in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The formation of ECOWAS in 1975 should be seen as the culmination of several attempts over a period of one and half decades to form a sub-regional organization embracing the whole of West Africa. Initial attempts had floundered first, as a result of the rivalry between Ghana (under Kwame Nkrumah) and Nigeria (under Tafawa Balewa) both Commonwealth countries in the early 1965 and later, the struggle for supremacy in the sub-region between Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire along Anglophone-Francophone lines. The events that delayed the formation have been well documented by O. Aluko, A. K. D. Frempong, O. A. Obasanjo and O. J. B Ojo.²⁵ ECOWAS was later founded on 28th May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria with the signing of the ECOWAS Treaty. Established as an economic union, ECOWAS was designed to integrate the economies of its 15 member states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo in order to promote economic growth and development within the West African sub region. The idea was influenced by the trends in globalization and international economic relations of the twentieth century. The organization has made notable achievements towards the attainment of its objectives.

Two thirds of Commonwealth countries belong to the Non-Aligned movement; most of them are in the Group 77 and so far a quarter of the memberships of the United Nations are Commonwealth countries.²⁶ This goes to show the level of Commonwealth contribution to the development of regional co-operation and how it has helped strengthened regional groupings in Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. These regional groupings have sub theatres in the pursuance of world peace and development. Worthy of note here is the ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) initiative in Liberia, which was spearheaded by Nigeria and Ghana, who are prominent member of the Commonwealth in the West Africans sub-region.²⁷

A further analysis is necessary for an understanding of the peculiar circumstances that faced the Commonwealth countries that make up the largest population in the West African sub-region. There is no iota of doubt that the challenges of sub-regional peace building necessitated the formation and subsequent deployment of ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to the West African Sub-regional countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone. This peace-building initiative was commendable and a most significant milestone in the history of independent Africa's response to her internal conflicts. Given the novelty of the establishment of ECOMOG as a peace-building apparatus and particularly the difficult circumstances in which it was established, N. Obasi averred that "it was easily predictable from the onset that the ECOMOG initiative would attract a considerable degree of commentary and controversy."²⁸ Available records show that Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was not created or established with a mandate of providing security for and within its members. On this premise, the main aim of ECOWAS as enumerated in the treaty of 1975 was;

...to promote co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the

standard of living of its peoples, of increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African continent.²⁹

This was the original mandate of ECOWAS, But the implications of peace as a prerequisite for regional economic development would soon dawn on ECOWAS leaders and force them to take the first step towards a conflict management system in 1978. More significantly, the demons of intra-community rivalries along the Anglo-Francophone cleavage will rear their ugly heads from time to time to frustrate ECOWAS' efforts at conflict management in the post-Cold War era.³⁰ But the devastating Liberian Civil war led to the creation of ECOMOG as a regional peace-keeping and peace building mechanism for resolving conflicts in the sub-region of West Africa.

It was the Liberian Civil war that led to the creation of ECOMOG as a regional peace keeping apparatus for resolving conflict in the sub-region.³¹ Ten years of President Samuel Doe's tyrannical rule was shattered by the rebel invasion of Charles Taylor, leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) on 24th December 1989. Taylor's rebellion, for a variety of personal interests and political considerations was supported by Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire (both ECOWAS members), and Colonel Muammar Ghadafi of Libya, in terms of arms, finances, logistics and even fighting forces.³² Within six months of the Liberian conflict, the country had effectively degenerated into chaos and anarchy. During this period, the level of human carnage and destruction provoked the world's revulsion. As stated in a US State Department Report on human rights in Liberia for the year 1990, "all combatants routinely engage in indiscriminate killing and abuse of civilians, looting and ethnically-based executions, with one of the worst single episodes occurring in July when Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) soldiers killed approximately 600 persons taking refuge in the courtyard of St. Peter's Church."³³ Against this background, most scholars argued that several calls for the US and UN intervention in Liberia went unheeded.³⁴ It should be noted that, the USA in particular had a special relationship with Liberia, and by the mid-1980s it was the largest per capital recipient of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa, estimated at \$500 million between 1980 and 1988.

It was in the face of the unwillingness of the USA and other international institutions such as the UN and the OAU to intervene that ECOWAS had to assume the role of peace-keeping in Liberia. According to the Nigerian President, General Ibrahim Babangida, who led the formation of ECOMOG, at an impromptu briefing on the Liberian crisis in 1990, "when certain events occur in this sub-region, depending on their intensity and magnitude, Which are bound to affect Nigeria's politico-military and socio- economic environment, we should not stand by as helpless and hapless spectators."³⁵ The ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee was reconvened in an attempt to reach a negotiated settlement. After the meeting of 7th August, 1990, the ECOWAS peace plan for Liberia gave birth to ECOMOG. Though this plan was formulated to help Liberia, it however had far-reaching implications for ECOWAS.

The mandate of ECOMOG was to serve as a cease-fire monitoring group that would create an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of a broad-based interim government and eventual democratic election under international supervision and the disarmament, demobilization and encampment of the warring factions Specifically, the mandate of ECOMOG in Liberia as captured by J. Golwa was as follows; Maintain, enforce and monitor the cease-fire. Protect life and property; Maintain essential services; Provide security to the interim administration in Liberia; Observe elections, and Conduct normal policing duties.³⁶ However, it should be noted

that there was no pre-existing ceasefire for ECOMOG to maintain. In fact, when ECOMOG forces landed in Monrovia on August 24th, 1990, it was met with Taylor's promise of attack on them. The operational realities for ECOMOG forces on ground caused a review of its mandate to include peace enforcement. Part of the mandate for peace enforcement included; Creation of 30km free zone around Monrovia, the capital city; Enforcement of ceasefire amongst the factions and ensure compliance; Reporting of violations to the ECOWAS secretariat; Separation of the warring factions by creating buffer zones between them; and Disarming and encampment of the warring factions to facilitate peaceful resolution of the crisis.³⁷ That was how ECOMOG emerged with a clear mandate to keep the peace in the sub-region of West Africa. Note however that given the circumstances of ECOMOG's intervention and the complexity of the civil conflict, ECOMOG was forced to move from peace-keeping to peace enforcement.

In February 1992, the UN position on Liberian crisis was clarified by the Secretary General Boutros Ghali when he welcomed the joint meeting in New York between the UN, OAU and other regional organizations which sought to bring the belligerent factions in Somalia to agree on an immediate cessation of hostilities and conclude a cease-fire arrangement thus "this joint effort will help establish a joint pattern in future co-operation's and the means by which United Nations could help enhance the role of regional organizations and render assistance to help them contribute the peace-keeping and peace-making efforts."³⁸ On the specific issue of peace-keeping the Secretary General drew attention to the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Chapter 6 Article 33 of the United Nations Charter. This article on Pacific Settlement of Disputes, states among other things that party to a dispute may resort to regional agencies or arrangements for the settlement of their conflict. In the case of Liberia he said the setting up of ECOMOG by the ECOWAs community should be seen in this context."³⁹

ECOMOG restored security that permitted the reinstatement of a functional state structure in Liberia and has since controlled conflicts other conflicts in West Africa notably in Sierra Leone (1997), Guinea-Bissau (1999), Guinea-Liberia Border (2001, and for a second time in Liberia (2001). Some of the important lessons drawn from this early ECOMOG experience was that firstly, more relevant to the later dynamics of the ECOWAS conflict management system was that the decision was signed on behalf of ECOWAS by the Burkinabe president, Blaise Campore, then outgoing ECOWAS chairman, a known supporter of Charles Taylors NPFL (NPLF) and perhaps the staunchest critic of the ECOMOG idea.⁴⁰

Secondly, West African leaders became more conscious of the fact that good governance and sustainable development are essentials are essentials for peace and conflict prevention. Members states therefore "undertake to co-operate with the Community to establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanism for the timely prevention and resolution of intra and inter-state conflicts and the need to establish a regional peace and security system and peace keeping forces where appropriate."⁴¹ This formed the basis for the adoption of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security (ECOWAS Mechanism for Short) in December 1999 which can be regarded as the Communities constitution on collective security in West African sub-region. Its preamble not only affirms the desire of the leaders to consolidate the achievements in the resolution of conflicts through ECOMOG but also to establish structures for its implementation. Thirdly, the seventh mechanism task sharing provides that in the pursuit of its objectives ECOWAS shall co-operate with the OAU, the UN and other relevant international organizations.⁴²

The Commonwealth also showed understanding and concern in the quest for a New International Economic Order by the poorer nations of the world due to the prevalence of persistent hunger, poverty and diseases being experienced in the developing countries, some of which are Commonwealth members. The Commonwealth has made them agitate for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) with an aim of suitable sharing of the world's wealth. Consequently, a Commonwealth group of ten experts was appointed by the 1975 Heads of government summit in Kingston, Jamaica to draw up a proposal for bridging the gap between the rich and poor nations. The committee published two interim reports, one to the annual Commonwealth Finance Ministers Conference in August 1975 and the second to the 7th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The committee recommended trade liberalization Agricultural support and innovation, economic and financial aid by the industrialized nation and relieving the debt problems of developing countries.⁴³

The situation in the countries of Southern Africa and the concrete steps taken by the Commonwealth showered one of the most important contributions to world diplomacy. The Rhodesian independence struggle was a major concern for the Heads of Commonwealth Government. They had consistency affirmed their support for Rhodesian independence on majority rule. At their Lagos Summit, Nigeria 1975, they established the Commonwealth sanctions committee to keep them informed on the effectiveness of sanctions imposed by the United Nations against the Rhodesian regime.⁴⁴ This same summit endorsed the committee recommendations that an initiative be taken by Commonwealth government at the United Nations to establish a programme to assist Mozambique in the application of sanctions.⁴⁵ In the August 1979 Commonwealth heads of State summits at Lusaka, Rhodesian issues were central and discussions were based on steps to bring peace to Rhodesian and to create a programme for drawing up a constitution and holding elections under British supervision and the help of Commonwealth. New elections were held in Rhodesia in 1980 as Robert Mugabe won an overall majority and was installed as Prime-Minister of Independent Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, its African name in April 1980, bring to an end the 14 years Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).⁴⁶

Thus the Commonwealth played an active role in achieving majority rule in Zimbabwe. It also provided humanitarian assistance and support in international foreman to Namibia.⁴⁷ It has supported the efforts of majority rule in the region to reduce their economic dependence on South Africa through the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and has helped to set up a distance education scheme for Southern African refugees in camps.⁴⁸

The Commonwealth intensified pressure in South Africa to eliminate apartheid. At the Singapore 1971 meeting,⁴⁹ the Commonwealth condemned Britain plan to sell arms to South Africa. Although Britain tried to stand its ground on what she thought was right in terms of national interest, she quietly retreated from her position on South Africa arm sales a few months after the conference. Similarly, the Lusaka conference adapted a declaration on Racism and Racial prejudice, the objective to which focused on Commonwealth efforts on its eradication. In addition, the 1985 Nassau summit in the Bahamas adopted punitive measures against South Africa, which included ban on new investment in South Africa, restriction on travel and tourism and withdrawal of landing rights for South African airlines.⁵⁰ This same summit also established the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) co-chaired by General Obasanjo at the instance of Britain whose report recommended economic sanctions on South Africa.

Furthermore, after the controversial South Africa rugby tour of New Zealand between July and September 1987 the first extraordinary meeting of the Commonwealth Games

Federation condemned and supports for the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement a Code of Duties for Commonwealth National Association was re-affirmed.⁵¹ While a code of conduct concerning sport contacts with South Africa was enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth Games Association during the 12th Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, Australia in September – October 1982.⁵² So Commonwealth took a lead in the international effort to isolate South Africa from sports and also helped in imposing economic sanctions against her because of her apartheid policy. However, the Commonwealth was also at the forefront in the lifting of economic sanctions and ban on sporting contact when South Africa began to give way to democratic rule. To this effect, the 1991 Harare summit in Zimbabwe mandated the Commonwealth Secretary General to find ways in which the Commonwealth can provide assistance to quell the violence.⁵³

Concerned about the indiscriminate disregard for the sovereignty of her members by Britain the suppose big brother in collaboration with other Western powers, the 1983 Head of State Summit in New Delhi India condemned the United State invasion and called for the withdrawal of American tropes from Grenada a Commonwealth State and the Commonwealth also condemned the six Commonwealth countries that invited the United States to intervene. The Commonwealth then gave favorable consideration to the six Caribbean members stated request to form a regional security force to help patrol the area when the United State leave Canada, New Zealand and Trinidad volunteered to help to train their forces.⁵⁴

However, on the other hand, the genuine desire of the Commonwealth to contribute to international peace is bedeviled by some challenges of which the following should be noted. The interests of member countries are so divergent and at times as such cross-purpose that its continual existence is argued to serve no useful purpose. Moreover, the Commonwealth has never formulated a common foreign or economic policy accepted to like other sub-regional associations like the NATO, European Economic Community, African Union and Economic Community of West African States, amongst others has further compounded the problems of the Commonwealth especially in terms of interest, policies and direction in global diplomacy.⁵⁵ A few instances are worthy of mention here to mirror these challenges

Hence, Turkey's master minding of the break-up of Cyprus a fellow Commonwealth nation, and the silence from Commonwealth to this serious violation during the Nassau 1985 summit demonstrated the lamentable weakness of the association in global diplomacy.

Southern Africa in the late 1980s was in turmoil. South Africa still ruled Namibia, the last colony occupied since the end of the First World War and in defiance of United Nations resolution since 1946. The apartheid government was lashing out at its neighbours trying to punish and destabilize them to stop the 'total onslaught'. In Angola the South Africans and Americans backed the rebel movement UNITA; while in Mozambique the South Africans took over the murderous Renamo from the Rhodesians and reinforced it. Zimbabwe was at the heart of this regional turmoil. It had the largest economy apart from South Africa and it was led by Robert Mugabe the most militant and articulate adversary of South Africans. But Zimbabwe was landlocked, dependent on routes through its neighbours or through South Africa. South Africa's paranoid government choosing war when its western friends argued diplomacy was heading for catastrophe. In the mid 1980s "the Americans - of all people - had to spell out to the Botha government that there was no longer a Communist threat to Africa let alone a 'total onslaught'."⁵⁶ British body language under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was against sanctions on South Africa. For this singular stand South African government made attempts to kidnap and murder African National Congress (ANC) activist on British soil. In petty revenge for the trickle of arms and pinprick attacks by ANC guerrilla in South Africa, Pretoria repeatedly

raided and sabotaged Angola, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia. It mined the harbours of Mozambique and launched bombing raids on Gaborone, Lusaka and Harare and finally sent its army to Angola, calling up its 140,000 strong citizen's force to take up on the Cubans there. At the 1985 Bahamas summit Britain notoriously maintained close relationship with the super powers that tied Namibia independence to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.⁵⁷

In 1986 a mini summit of seven nations of Commonwealth was held. The other six leaders Rajiv Gandhi (India), Bob Hauke (Australia), Brian Mulroney (Canada), Sir Lynden Pindling (the Bahamas), Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia) Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe) were overwhelmingly convinced that economic sanctions were necessary and perhaps sufficient to force Pretoria abandon its inhuman policies. But Britain, the seventh member in collaboration with the leading capitalist west, opposed what was the popular Commonwealth stand. According to Britain Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, sanctions which will enjoy her blessings must also be agreed to by the United States, Japan and West Germany,⁵⁸ this singular act on the part of Britain demonstrated to the other Commonwealth member countries that Britain could not compromise her national interest for that of the Commonwealth. Britain therefore refused to implore the mandatory sanctions arguing that it is not the whites who will suffer, but the majority of the blacks. However on the same issues of sanctions in the Libyan case, it was Britain that came in the forefront advocating for sanctions against Libya and never argued that Libyans were going to suffer. Similarly, during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, Britain played a double standard, while pretending to support the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) they also supported Zimbabwe Africa People Union (ZAPU).⁵⁹ They failed to prevent Jan Smith with his Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and refused to impose sanction against Smith-Banana government.⁶⁰

In another vein, Britain also disregarded the Commonwealth resolution on disinvestment in South Africa. Hence British Petroleum, Mobil oil, Glover, Beckley's Bank, First National Bank and other companies remained intact South Africa and military attachment to South Africa was not hampered, at least to protect her investment. While Canada, Australia and New Zealand, had tremendous investments in South Africa and traded openly with South Africa with no regards to Commonwealth resolution.⁶¹ Also worthy of note is the fact that prior to the 1988 commonwealth games in London, Zola Bud, a South African athlete participated in the games in Johannesburg being in South Africa while she had already nationalized in Britain as a British citizen. The Commonwealth imposed a ban on Zola, but Britain refused to recognize the ban and went ahead to accept Zola as a British and legible to participate in the Commonwealth games. Not until the dying minute when Zimbabwe threatened to pull out of the games followed by Uganda, Kenya and other Africa member states did Britain succumb.⁶²

Although Kenya became a one-party state after 1982 coup attempt, there were elections within the party, and to win an election in Kenya money was needed since in the growing culture of *chai* even voters expected something for their votes as well as petty officials, party officials and those in positions of authority who have always expected something for their services. Thus, at the top in both business and politics the bribes are always huge. Commerce in Kenya was traditionally controlled by Asian Kenyans but in the 1970s and 1980s Kikuyu businessmen and professionals linked to them began to dominate the scene. The situation that emerged was that behind every wealthy Kenyan business an Asian or African was a political protector. The outcome was that money and politics merged in a messy way in Kenya.

The *Saba Saba* riots and subsequent pressure on president Daniel arap Moi government for multi-party democracy, which even Britain eventually supported, led the government to abandon one-party rule and hold an election. The process needed money and to drive it successfully, the senior politicians of the ruling party Kenyan African National Union (KANU) created an export subsidy scam and passed it into law. Anyone who could show they had exported manufactured goods and diamonds would receive a 35 per cent export subsidy of the estimated value. It sounded fine but there was a problem; apart from some freelance gold panning and diamonds smuggled from Congo, Kenya had no gold or diamonds. At the heart of what became known as the Goldenberg scam were Moi, his sons and business partners Gideon and Philip, Kamlesh Pattni, the mastermind behind the schemes and the man who sent up the Goldenberg Bank, and his bagman Ketan Somaia, whose Delphis Bank handled much of the money. Until 2000 Somaia's Dolphin Holdings Company was chaired by Lord Parkinson, a former chairman of the British Conservative Party.⁶³ Also involved were the Kenyan finance minister at the time, George Saitoti, who was later education minister, Joshua Kulei, Moi's chief assistant, Nicholas Biwott, Moi's former personal assistant and later Minister of Industry, and James Kanyotu, Kenya's head of intelligence.

The sheer scale of the looting is still shocking as four billion dollars left the country fraudulently. But the total loss from 1992 to 2002 may have been three times that the equivalent of a year's national economic output. It is even more shocking that it was done under the eyes of Western donors, the IMF and the World Bank.⁶⁴ While Central Bank officials queried the scheme Saitoti pushed it through vigorously, breaching bank regulations. Until then gold exports through Kenya were estimated \$1.2 million a year. When the scam was at its height in 1992 Pattni was claiming 'export compensation' of \$2.5 million a day. He also claimed compensation for other fantasy goods. Pattni once claimed he was exporting machetes to Britain. The money went into five banks owned by Moi himself or his accomplices. Then they found another way of multiplying the money they had stolen. Kenya lacked hard currency so exports were encouraged by a pre-export finance scheme funded by the World Bank. Potential exporters were lent 85 per cent of the value of the goods to be exported. Export credit notes were taken to each of the goods to be exported. The pre-shipment finance fraud cost Kenyans an estimated \$75 million. A further crude alteration of entries on the foreign exchange paperwork added another \$23 million.⁶⁵

From the five banks Nairobi the money shifted all the over the world – to London, Dubai, Panama, Geneva, New York and Germany. Pattni and Moi's cronies were not exporting Kenyan's precious foreign exchange reserves and laundering them through the banks of the world. In London the money came to several banks including ANZ Grindlays, Barclay and Standard Chartered Bank. Huge sums went to Union Bancaire Privee in Geneva and Citibank in London and New York. Many of these same banks were used to launder money for the Nigerian military dictator, Sani Abacha since in those days there were no obligations on banks to report suspiciously large movement of money.⁶⁶ Next, the money was sent back to Goldenberg International accounts at the Exchange Bank in Nairobi. The perpetrators then sent upm the scam number three when the government agreed that Pattni and his cronies should receive a special foreign exchange rate. With their new wealth, they bought dollars from the Kenya Central Bank at thirty-three Kenya shillings to dollar. The dollars were sent out of Kenyan to banks around the world and shipped from bank to bank to make them virtually untraceable. In late 1992 just in time for the election, the money started to flow back to Kenya and was changed to Kenyan shillings at the rate of fifty-seven to the dollar, a profit of nearly 70 per cent.

The shillings were stuffed into boxes and suitcases to pay thugs, bribe officials and buy votes at the December elections. Just to make sure of victory, Moi appointed Zaccheus Chesoni, a former Chief Justice whom has twice been sacked from the bench of bankruptcy, to run the elections. During the elections Richard Dowden discovered that Moi had twice been paid off those debts, a fact known to the Commonwealth Observer Mission and the British government at that time, but which both decided to keep quiet about.⁶⁷ Unsurprisingly Moi won and between March and September 1993 Goldernberg made \$407 million from the export subsidy. The scam suddenly came to a halt on the 3rd March 1994 with a final request for export compensation for non-existent gold and diamond jewelry worth \$48,287,577. The looting of Kenya by its rulers dragged its economic growth rate down from 4.5 per cent in the late 1980's to 1 per cent in 1991 and less than 1 per cent in subsequent years. The whole country paid the price of their ruler's greed. From 1992 poverty and infant motility rates increased rapidly and life expectancy and school enrolment fell.⁶⁸

On the question of liberation movement, right from the early seventies, the African National Congress (ANC), SWAPO, MPLA, FRELIMO, ZANU, ZAPU, PAC, except the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were given seats in the United Nations General Assembly but not the Commonwealth.⁶⁹ It is not out of place to mention that during the 30 months' Nigerian civil war 1967-1970, some commonwealth member's states even on the African continents supported the Biafra Republic to gain in event of success.⁷⁰ On the whole, it looked like the Commonwealth was remote controlled by Britain who was still pursuing, its policy of aggression it used during the British Empire which was informal by purely economic; interest but this time-pursuing it within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. With the above-mentioned challenges, it is amazing that Mozambique and Cameroun a France nation applied for membership during the 1995 Cyprus summit while members who opted out of the fold have come back.⁷¹

In conclusion, like other organizations Commonwealth is not without its problems, more so in an age of globalization which has brought on its heels the blurring of borders and growing regionalism. As a result of the global changes that have taken place over the last decade various tensions in the current membership criteria have become evident. If the commonwealth must stand these challenges it must address the issues in relation to the wordings and interpretation of the membership criteria. Commonwealth discussions and consensus is used to advance global progress in key issues like the New International Economic Order and the Commonwealth role in serving global objectives is helped by its being an association of nations from all continents and a substantial sample of the world as a whole. But its inability to involve the public in the membership debate has made the media uninterested in its affairs hence its subsequent neglect in the studies of multilateralism and global governance.⁷² But as an inter- and non-state network engaging with over a quarter of the world states and people, Commonwealth still has much to contribute to both analysis and practices hence it must create modalities to review membership criteria in order to clarify grey areas, establish a mechanism for testing public endorsement of commonwealth accession and capitalize more from globalization and the rise of English as a lingua franca.

¹Normal Hillmer and Philip Wigley (eds.), *The First British Commonwealth: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Mansergh*. London: Frank Cases and Company Limited 1980, 159.

² Nicholas Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience*, London: Whitefield and Nicholas, 1969, 16.

³ J.K Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism*. East Africa: Oxford University Press, 1969, 367-8.

⁴ K.Kaunda, *A Humanist in Africa*, London: 1966, 127.

⁵ Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa must Unite*. New York: F. A. Praeger, 1963, 35-9.

⁶ K. Kaunda "Towards Unity in Africa" in Gideon -Cyprus M. Mutiso and S. W. Rohio (eds) *Readings in African Political Thought*. London: Heinemann, 1975, 350.

⁷ Nicholas Mansergh. *The Commonwealth Experience*, 411.

⁸ H. Duncan Hall, *The British Commonwealth of Nations* Quoted in Norman Hilmar and Philip Wigley, *The First British Commonwealth...* 164.

⁹ The Common Fund: Report of the Commonwealth Technical Group. London, September 1977, 7-9.

¹⁰T. B. Miller, *The Commonwealth and the United Nations*, 1967, .58-62 see also "African and the Commonwealth" *Africa Today*, London: Africa Books Limited, 1991, 130-32.

¹¹T. B. Miller. *The Commonwealth and the United Nations*, 58-62

¹²Normal Hiller and Philip Wigley, *The First British Commonwealth*, 173.

¹³ BBC News, Monday 17 November 2003. News.bbc.co.uk.

¹⁴Noam Chomsky, *World Order: Old and New*. London: Pluto Press, 1994, 142-145.

¹⁵Douglas J. Macdonald, *Communist Bloc Expansion in the Early Cold War: Challenging Realism, Refuting Revisionism.* *International Security*, 20, Winter, 1995/96, 152-88.

¹⁶ NATO is a child of necessity having been founded during the period of the ideological war that bipolarized the world into two blocs.-East and West. Its equivalent was the Warsaw pact founded in 1955 as the Eastern Bloc response to the military security mechanism of the Western Bloc. See Samuel J. Barkin, *International Organizations: Theories and Institutions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 70-75.

¹⁷ Sam Momah, *Global Strategy: From its genesis to the Post-Cold War Era*. Lagos: Vista Books Limited, 2009, 74.

¹⁸Guy Arnold. *Towards Peace and a Multiracial Commonwealth*. London, 1964, 170.

¹⁹ NATO in Focus: An Introduction to the Transatlantic Alliance. www.nato.int/

²⁰Nicholas Mansergh. *The Commonwealth Experience*, 247-260.

²¹Nicholas Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience*, 425

²² V. Rittberg and B. Zangi. *International Organizations: Polity, Politics and Policies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006, 6.

²³Norma Hiller and Philip Wigley. *The First British Commonwealth*, 167.

²⁴ Emeka A. Obi, Cyril O. Ozor and Agary N. Nwokoye. *International Organizations and Institutions*. Onitsha: Book Point Educational Limited, 2008, 172.

²⁵O. Aluko, *Ghana and Nigeria: A Study in Inter African Discord*, 1976; A. K. D. Frempong, "A Sub-Regional Approach to Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Case of ECOWAS and the Liberian Peace Process", 1990-1997. MPhil Thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, 1999, 124; O.A. Obasanjo. *My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-70*, London: Heinemann Books, 1980 and O.J.B. Ojo. "Nigeria and the Formation of ECOWAS." *International Organization*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1980, 571-604.

²⁶"African and the Commonwealth" *Africa Today*, London: Africa Books Limited, 1991, 130-32.

²⁷Stephen Wright and Janine N. Brownwood (eds) *Africa in World Politics: Changing Perspectives*, London: Macmillan 1987, 20-27.

²⁸N. Obasi "Perception of the ECOWAS Peace Initiative" in M. A. Vogt (ed) *The Liberian Crises and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peace Keeping*. Lagos: Gabumo Publishing Company Limited, 1992, 23-4.

²⁹P. Afolabi, "ECOWAS: Building of an Economic Community" in AB Akinyemi (ed) *Readings and Documents on ECOWAS*. Lagos: NIIA, 1983, 57-9.

³⁰Blaise Campore, quoted in *Newwatch Magazine*, August 27, 1992, 16; A. K. D. Frempong "A Sub-Regional Approach, 120.

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- ³¹D. Francis, "ECOMOG: A Security Agenda in World Politics" in T. B. Bakut and S. Duff (eds) *Africa at the Millennium: An Agenda for Mature Development*. New York: Palgrave Publishers Limited, 2000, 83
- ³²I. James "ECOWAS under Attack" in M.A Vogt (ed) *The Liberian Crises*, 15
- ³³US State Department Report on Human Rights in Liberia for the year 1990.
- ³⁴J. Golwa "ECOWAS and Conflict Management in West Africa" in U. J. Ugwu and W. O. Alli (eds) *ECOWAS: Milestone in Regional Integration*. Lagos: Printserve Limited, 2009, 57.
- ³⁵Chike Akabogu "ECOWAS takes the Initiative" in M. A. Vogt (ed) *The Liberian Crises*, 67. See also "The Return of Peace in Liberia" *The Nigerian Army Information Briefs*, March 1993, 25.
- ³⁶J. Golwa "ECOWAS and Conflict Management," 56-7
- ³⁷J. Golwa, 57-8.
- ³⁸UN Secretary General's Position on the Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG. Summary notes provided by Mrs. Ceciwa Khonje, Director of United Nations Information Center, Lagos, 1992, 3.
- ³⁹UN Secretary General Position on Liberian Crisis, 4
- ⁴⁰The Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) crafted the ECOWAS Peace Plan (EPP) which became the bases for its intervention. It called for the formation of ECOMOG which was criticized by especially by the francophone bock, Cote D'ivoire and Bukina Fasso who were the staunch supporters of NPFL, M. Vogt "The Liberian Crisis and ECOMOG: A Bold Attempt at Regional Peacekeeping" in M Vogt (ed) *The Liberian Crisis*,
- ⁴¹ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security, Article 13, Abuja 1999, 7-17.
- ⁴²ECOWAS Protocol, 23,
- ⁴³"Africa and the Commonwealth" *Africa Today*, 130.
- ⁴⁴C. E. Carrington. *The Commonwealth in Africa: Report of an Unofficial Study Conference held at Lagos Nigeria 1975*, 23-25.
- ⁴⁵C. E. Carrington, 24
- ⁴⁶Kenneth Young, *Rhodesia and Independence*, 1967, 8.
- ⁴⁷Normal Miller and Philip Wigley, *The First British Commonwealth*, 168.
- ⁴⁸"Namibia", *Africa Today*, 38.
- ⁴⁹"Africa and the Commonwealth," *Africa Today*, 37.
- ⁵⁰Shridath Ramphal. *Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth –Report*. Hamriondsmith: Penguin Books, 1986, 12.
- ⁵¹Shridath Ramphal, 12.
- ⁵²Shridath Ramphal, 12.
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- ⁵⁵Shridath, Ramphal, *Mission to South Africa*, 10-13.
- ⁵⁶Richard Dowden. *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*. London: Portobello Books, 2009, 140-1.
- ⁵⁷Shridath, Ramphal, 13.
- ⁵⁸Shridath, Ramphal, 15.
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- ⁶⁰"Zimbabwe" *Africa Today*, 36-40

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- ⁶²Shridath, Ramphal, Mission to South Africa, 14.
- ⁶³Richard Dowden, *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*. London: Portobello Books, 2019, 428.
- ⁶⁴Richard Dowden, 429.
- ⁶⁵David Throup and Charles Hornsky, Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kentatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Elections. Oxford: Curry, 1998, 78-9.
- ⁶⁶Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2011, 400-4. Richard Dowden, *Africa*, 430
- ⁶⁷Richard Dowden, *Africa*, 431.
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- ⁷⁰Julius Nyerere, "Why we Recognize Biafra" *Observer Newspaper*, 28th April 1967, quoted in J.B. Miller, *Survey of Commonwealth Affairs*, 256.
- ⁷¹Victoria Velde-Ashault, "The Future of the Modern Commonwealth: Widening Vs Deepening." Seminar at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 10th October, 2005, 4-5.
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