WHO OWNS AFRICAN OWNERSHIP?

THE AFRICANISATION OF SECURITY AND ITS LIMITS

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Abstract

Over the last couple of years, "African Ownership" has become a buzzword in many fields. Economic development initiatives like the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) are based on it, partnership agreements like the Joint AU-EU Africa Strategy are built around it and its central concept of Africanisation guides virtually all external relations of the continent. African leaders (rightly) insist on it, international organisations (rightly) preach it and many non-African actors are (unsurprisingly) hiding behind it. The concept of African Ownership is so omnipresent today that it is more than surprising that the simple question of who actually owns it has not yet been asked. It is the declared purpose of this paper to disentangle rhetoric from reality and identify the owner as well as the limits of African ownership in the sphere of peace and security.

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Introduction

While the issue of increasingly elaborate inter-African security cooperation has received widespread attention ever since the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was replaced by the structurally more promising African Union (AU) in 2002, the underlying concepts of *African Ownership* and *Africanisation* always seem to have been taken for granted rather than critically studied. Several authors have drawn attention to the selective nature of contemporary African-led peace operations, others have noted the discrepancy between the ownership rhetoric and the continuing dependence on external (that is, non-African) support, but thus far there have neither been consistent attempts to draw appropriate conclusions from these discussions nor satisfactory conceptual analyses of the origin, evolution and especially the present-day realisation of what Ali Mazrui once referred to as the quest for a "Pax Africana that is protected and maintained by Africa herself".[1]

Despite their virtual omnipresence in the proliferating literature on peace and security in Africa, the concepts of African Ownership and Africanisation have not been properly defined thus far. Both are often used interchangeably and sometimes even synonymously. Far from being perfect substitutes, however, we argue that they refer to very different ideas and that their confusion carries great epistemological and practical dangers. For the purpose of this discussion, Ownership is defined as *de facto* political control over an issue while Africanisation refers to the process of increasing the extent and quality of African participation in a particular activity or field. In this respect, it is important to note that ownership of an issue does not necessarily presuppose a preceding process of Africanisation while the

[1] Mazrui, Ali. (1967) *Towards a Pax Africana: A Study in Ideology and Ambition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Africanisation of something does not naturally lead to African ownership of it even though it may and actually should. Hence, it would be as mistaken to assume that the West's support to African-led peace operations signifies a sincere commitment to the principle of African Ownership as to doubt African ownership of an issue merely on the basis that the majority of the burden is carried by non-Africans.[2]

Despite the undeniable progress of the last decade, many scholars and practitioners are sceptical about the sustainability of the ongoing processes of Africanisation or the effective extent of African ownership. This paper is mainly concerned with the reasons underlying this scepticism, rather than the desirability of Africanisation *per se*.[3] It argues that what is missing – and needed – in discussions about peace and security in Africa is a greater understanding of the structural limitations to the ongoing process of Africanisation and the principle of African Ownership. More specifically, we contend that Africa is forced into a crisis in ownership which reflects two interrelated historical processes, namely, the continuing meddling of outside actors in the affairs of the continent and the unfinished nature of Africa's self-emancipation. As a result of this crisis, Africans can hardly claim ownership of the ongoing security efforts and instead have to rely on an externally-dominated discourse to delineate the extent of their freedom of action.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first tracks the evolution of the concepts of African Ownership and Africanisation through the past five decades. On the basis of this retrospective journey, it argues that the concepts of African Ownership and Africanisation should be seen in the tradition of the long quest for African self-emancipation rather than as a groundbreaking new idea. The second part introduces the reader to the past and present pro-Africanisation rhetoric of international actors, detailing the shifting rationales for their financial and political support to the concept. Drawing together African and

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[2] In this respect it may be worth to distinguish between positive and negative African ownership. The former could refer to "ownership by free will" while negative ownership could describe a situation where Africans are forced into an ownership situation.

[3] There is certainly room for the utilitarian argument that the Africanisation of security should not be pursued at the expense of the suffering peoples in Africa. We are planning to deal with this controversial question in a forthcoming paper.

non-African realities, the third part presents a taxonomy of the structural conditions that currently restrict the process of Africanisation and thereby prevent it from translating into true African ownership. The conclusion elaborates on the probability of changes to this taxonomy and highlights a number of difficult questions that deserve further attention.

Africanisation and Ownership: A History

The concepts of Africanisation and African Ownership are closely linked in their origin and development to the ideology of Pan-Africanism. Both essentially evolved out of the latter's opposition to external domination and its advocacy of self-centred development. Beginning as natural by-products of the struggle for African independence, their conceptual development was subsequently shaped by the dynamics of the Cold War and the turmoil of the immediate post-Cold War era. While these conceptual phases differ substantially from the present-day realisation of Africanisation and African ownership as described in the last section of this paper, their detailed treatment nonetheless allows important inferences on the importance of path-dependence as well as the changing role of external influences. For this reason the following section will briefly track the conceptual evolution of Africanisation through the past five decades.

Africanisation as by-product of the struggle against colonialism
Any study on the Africanisation of African security necessarily has to begin with the advent of Pan-Africanism and its role in the decolonisation process. Originally rooted in the opposition to the Atlantic slave trade and its consequences, Pan-Africanism is both a system of ideological beliefs and an organisational framework.[4] As a socio-political worldview, Pan-Africanism sought (and still seeks) to

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[4] In his 1962 article on Pan-Africanism, George Shepperson has argued for a greater conceptual separation between Pan-African ideology and the various movements. While there is some validity to his argument, for the purpose of this paper both concepts will remain subsumed under the term "Pan-Africanism". See Shepperson, George. (1962) Pan-Africanism And "Pan-Africanism": Some Historical Notes. *Phylon* 23:346-58. See also Nantambu, Kwame. (1998) Pan-Africanism Versus Pan-African Nationalism. *Journal of Black Studies* 28.

unify and uplift both native Africans and those of the African Diaspora as part of a global African community. As an organisational framework and movement, Pan-Africanism has evolved substantially over the decades from its early abolitionist roots and subsequently its acquiescence to being a symbolic spearhead of nationalist agitations which placed primary value on immediate national independence for African territories and deferred dreams of African unity into the indefinite future.[5]

Originating outside the African continent, the Pan-African movement initially merely sought to mitigate and reverse the impact of European colonialism on peoples of African descent, without questioning the colonial system in itself. Heavily influenced and promoted by Martin Delany (who championed voluntary re-emigration to Africa with the aim of building up a modern nation on African soil),[6] Henry Sylvester Williams (who founded the Pan-African Association and organised the first Pan-African Conference in 1900),[7] Edward Wilmot Blyden (who sought to prove that Africa and Africans have a worthy history and culture),[8] Marcus Garvey (who founded the powerful United Negro Improvement Association to produce a sense of collective identity among Africans),[9] George Padmore (who built up the Pan-African Federation and later wrote the book *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*),[10] and William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B) Du Bois (who organised and

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[5] See, for example, Geiss, Imanuel. (1968) *The Pan-African Movement*, translated by Ann Keep. London: Methuen & Co, Legum, Colin. (1965) *Pan-Africanism; a Short Political Guide*. Rev. ed. New York: F.A. Praeger, Ajala, Adekunle. (1973) *Pan-Africanism: Evolution, Progress and Prospects*. London: André Deutsch, Thompson, Vincent. (1969) *Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism*. London: Longmans. For an excellent overview see Esedebe, P. Olisanwuche. (1994) *Pan-Africanism : The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: Howard University.
[6] Griffith, Cyril. (1975) *The African Dream: Martin R. Delany and the Emergence of Pan-African Thought*. London: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
[7] Mathurin, Owen. (1976) *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan-African Movement, 1869-1911*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
[8] Lynch, Hollis. (1970) *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[9] Martin, Tony. (1987) International Aspects of the Garvey Movement. *Jamaica Journal* 20, Lewis, Rupert, and Patrick Bryan. (1991) Garvey: His Work and Impact Trenton: Africa World Press, Persaud, Randolph. (2001) Re-Envisioning Sovereignty: Marcus Garvey and the Making of a Transnational Identity. In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, edited by Kevin Dunn and Timothy Shaw, pp. 112-28. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
[10] Hooker, J. (1967) *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*. London: Pall Mall Press.

presided over five Pan-African congresses),[11] the movement gained momentum between 1900 and 1945. The sixth Pan-African Conference held in Manchester in October 1945 finally adopted Pan-Africanism as a rallying cry for Africa's independence from colonial rule and fostered African leadership of the movement, most notably in the persons of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (who was to become the first president of Ghana) and Jomo Kenyatta (who was to become Kenya's first president).

The conference marked a watershed in many ways. Not only was the connection between Pan-Africanism and African nationalism discussed fully for the first time, but the participants also stressed the need for well-organised, firmly-knit movements as a primary condition for the success of the national liberation struggle in Africa.[12] By the end of the congress, it had become clear that, as Adekunle Ajala phrased it, "Pan-Africanism was growing from a protest movement by people of African descent in the West Indies and the United States into an instrument of African nationalist movements fighting colonial rule".[13]

As such, the concept of Pan-Africanism essentially evolved around five distinctive sets of ideas. According to Charles Andrain, the first set comprised those beliefs emanating from the French revolution and its credo *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* with an emphasis on the rights of man, especially the right of Africans to have the same opportunities for social and political development as the white race.[14] This belief was reinforced by the experiences of the Second World War where Africans fought alongside their colonizers for the principles of democracy and national sovereignty.[15] A second set was formed by the ideas of Marcus Garvey who sought to "advance the redemption of Africa as the home for the

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[11] Broderick, Francis. (1959) *W.E.B. Dubois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Also see Rudwick, Elliot. (1960) *W.E.B. Dubois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[12] Adi, Hakim, and Marika Sherwood. (1995) *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited*. London: New Beacon Books.
[13] Ajala. *Pan-Africanism: Evolution, Progress and Prospects*.
[14] See Andrain, Charles F. (1962) The Pan-African Movement: The Search for Organization and Community. *Phylon* 23:5-17.
[15] The politicising effect World War II had on participating Africans and their subsequent commitment to the Pan-African cause must not be underestimated. Returning veterans played a significant part in various nationalist movements on the continent. For example, it was the February 1948 demonstration of war veterans in Accra that sparked off the political and constitutional process that led to the independence of Ghana nine years later. See Geiss. *The Pan-African Movement*.

Negro race".[16] The influence of Gandhi on the Pan-African movement constituted a third set of beliefs (it became particularly evident in Nkrumah's peaceful resistance to colonial rule).[17] A fourth set identified by Andrain was Wilsonian idealism in international affairs and especially its emphasis of right over might. The fifth set consisted of some of the ideas arising from Marxism and the Russian Revolution, most notably concepts such as the organisation of the masses and the idea of being a vanguard movement.

Following the Manchester Conference, the Pan-African movement seemed to dissolve into its diverse national constituent parts as Kenyatta returned to Kenya (1946) and Nkrumah went back to the Gold Coast (1947), each to work towards the liberation of his country. The Pan-African idea, however, endured without further congresses and conferences. Even though not all independence movements of the continent necessarily subscribed to the underlying idea of African oneness, the ideologically charged rhetoric of Pan-Africanism served them well by carrying the anti-colonial message and finally creating a feeling of self-assertion. In addition, the concept held the promise of mutual support and assistance in the face of obvious vulnerability and an omnipresent fear of neo-colonial suppression.

As the struggle for liberation from colonial rule intensified, so did the calls for uniting the military resources of Africa in order to achieve and secure the continent's independence. The idea for a Pan-African military force seems to have grown out of communist revolutionary propaganda for as early as 1922 an article in the *Communist Review* demanded that "no opportunity should be lost for propagandizing the native soldiers in the colonial armies and for organizing secretly a great Pan-African army in the same way as the Sinn Fein built up the Irish Army under the very nose of England".[18] The topic was frequently discussed at Pan-African conferences across the world, but did not receive serious political support until Nkrumah, who had become

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[16] See Persaud. Re-Envisioning Sovereignty: Marcus Garvey and the Making of a Transnational Identity.

[17] Sutherland, Bill, and Matt Meyer. (2000) *Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan-African Insights on Non-Violence, Armed Struggle and Liberation in Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

[18] Anonymous, Program of the African Blood Brotherhood, *Communist Review*, 2(6), 1922, 449-454.

Africa's leading exponent of Africanisation, voiced the idea of an African High Command (AHC) and the establishment of an African Legion during the first All-African People's Conference in 1958.[19] According to him, the objectives of such a military construct were threefold, namely, (1) to defend the increasing number of independent African states from imperialist aggression, (2) to offer African states a feasible alternative to disadvantageous military pacts with the Cold War powers and (3) to spearhead the liberation of areas under colonial and white supremacist control.

Despite its popular appeal, Nkrumah's radical proposals encountered passionate opposition from the growing number of nationalists among Africa's leading politicians such as President Tubman of Liberia who saw the centralisation of military power as a first (and irreversible) step towards the political unification of the continent. While this was exactly what fervent Pan-Africanists such as Nkrumah or Guinea's Sékou Touré had hoped, preached and worked for, many other African leaders believed in a more gradual approach to continental unity that would not infringe upon the newly-won sovereignty of their states. This irreconcilable difference in perspectives eventually combined with divergent views on ongoing developments like the international intervention in the Congo and the war in Algeria to polarise Africa's states into the opposing Casablanca and Monrovia groups.

For several reasons, among them most states' increasing preoccupation with domestic issues, neither group's concept of Africanisation was realised before a general *rapprochement* culminated in the establishment of the OAU in May 1963 (and the two groups' subsequent dissolution). Far from marking the end of his quest for an AHC, this re-organisation of Africa's institutional landscape tempted Nkrumah to renew his calls for the establishment of a unified military structure to ensure the stability and security of Africa. In a book distributed at the OAU's founding conference in Addis Ababa, Nkrumah wrote:

> "We should aim at the establishment of a unified military and defence strategy. […] If we do not unite and combine our military resources for common defence, individual states, out of a sense of

[19] The proceedings of the conference have been reproduced in *Current History* 37, no. 215 (1959).

insecurity, may be drawn into making defence pacts with foreign powers which may endanger the security of us all. Also, the maintenance of large military forces imposes a heavy financial burden on even the most wealthy states. For young African states, who are in great need of capital for internal development, it is ridiculous – indeed suicidal – for each state separately to assume the heavy burden of self-defence, when the weight of this burden could be easily lightened by sharing it among themselves. Some attempt has already been made by the Casablanca Powers and the Afro-Malagasy Union in the matter of common defence, but how much better and stronger it would be if, instead of two such ventures, there was one over-all (land, sea and air) Defence Command for Africa."[20]

However, despite this passionate plea, Nkrumah failed to get the idea of an African High Command or indeed a common defence strategy entrenched in the OAU Charter and a far less authoritative Defence Commission was created in its stead as one of the new organisation's five specialised commissions.[21] While the creation of this commission was not to play a significant role in the evolution of the concept of Africanisation, a number of other developments in that period would prove more significant.

First, the proliferation of violent conflicts that accompanied the decolonisation process quickly changed the OAU's primary function from the promotion of the unity and solidarity of Africa's states to the more precarious role of conflict mediator. The secessionist civil wars in the Congo, the assassination of Sylvanus Olympio of Togo, the spate of *coups d'Etat* that followed as well as border disputes like those between Algeria and Morocco or Ghana and Upper Volta (today's Burkina Faso) were just some of the thorny issues that forced the OAU into taking a much more active and pragmatic role in the continent's political affairs than it had initially intended. As the turmoil grew, so did the understanding that the primary purpose of Pan-African security cooperation would not be the defence of the continent against external

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[20] Nkrumah, Kwame. (1963) *Africa Must Unite*. New York: F.A. Praeger.
[21] For more details on the OAU's founding conference see Ajala. *Pan-Africanism: Evolution, Progress and Prospects*.

(that is, non-African) aggression as suggested by Nkrumah, but the prevention, management and resolution of internal conflicts. While most, if not all, of these did have some external component (either neo-colonial or Cold War related) and while the complete liberation of the continent from colonial rule always remained a priority, this realisation nonetheless meant an important shift in focus.

A second development that was closely related to this shift in focus was the emergence of the principle "Try Africa First", the conceptual predecessor of what we today understand Africanisation to mean. Often falsely associated with the OAU Charter of May 1963, this principle originated in the discussions of the First Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Cairo in July 1964 and called on African states to first attempt to solve their conflicts within an African framework before referring to the UN and other international actors for help. Even though the UN supported this principle in general and even granted the OAU "exclusive first jurisdiction" in specific intra-state conflicts, a complete Africanisation of conflict management was unrealistic from the start given the newly independent states' divergent political priorities and serious lack of military capabilities. Nonetheless, the heavy participation of African troops in the first UN operation in the Congo (ONUC) as well as the OAU's increasing activism in monitoring missions and attempts at political mediation certainly demonstrated an early desire by African states to be part of the conflict management processes on their own continent.

The decline of Africanisation during the Cold War

In combination with the structural limitation of the OAU's founding charter (especially its overemphasis, from the point of view of African unity, on national sovereignty) the global power structure of the 1960s and 1970s soon began to reverse some of the promising steps taken during the decolonisation period. First, by dividing the continent into opposing spheres of influence and eventually even turning it into a proxy battleground, the superpowers and their respective allies effectively prevented the Africanisation of security at the continental level for the duration of their confrontation. Second, the continuing

interference of some Western powers in their former colonies further fragmented inter-African solidarity and shifted cooperation to an increasingly bilateral and non-African level. France, for example, used so-called Cooperation and Defence Agreements with selected countries to justify its continuing military presence in Africa and conduct no less than twenty military interventions between 1963 and 1983.[22] As a result, it took the continent's states until 1978 to agree on the first all-African peacekeeping mission, a miniature operation in Congo's Shaba province. Another three years later, the OAU finally deployed its first operation to Chad in order to quell the country's decade-long civil war. For the first time, a substantial African force was mandated by an African organisation to conduct peacekeeping operations within one of its member states and many saw this as a first step towards the eventual institutionalisation of continental security cooperation. However, the OAU force soon encountered immense difficulties and was hastily withdrawn in June 1982.

The many problems that beset the OAU peacekeeping force in Chad – from logistical and financial shortages to an unclear mandate and a lack of interoperability – were a practical demonstration of all that the opponents of the Pan-African high command or any other form of Pan-African security cooperation had been saying all along.[23] Not surprisingly, the unmitigated failure of the operation undermined the appetite for all-African security initiatives. The institutional frustration and disillusionment amongst the regions that ensued led to the devolution of similar initiatives away from the continental level.

While the failure of the Chad operation sounded the death knell to the OAU's cautious efforts, the devolution of the process of Africanisation from the continental to the regional level had long been in the making. Regional initiatives such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or the Front Line States' Inter-State Defence and

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[22] Martin, Guy. (1985) The Historical, Economic and Political Bases of France's African Policy. *The Journal of modern African studies* 23:189-208.
[23] See Sesay, Ahmadu. (1991) The Limits of Peacekeeping by a Regional Organisation: The OAU Peacekeeping Force in Chad. *Conflict Quarterly* 11. Also see Imobighe, Thomas. (1996) The Analysis of Political Issues Raised by OAU Peacekeeping in Chad. In *Peacekeeping as a Security Strategy in Africa: Chad and Liberia as Case Studies*, edited by Margaret Vogt and S. Aminu, pp. 241-59. Enugu (Nigeria): Fourth Dimension Publishing.

Security Committee (ISDSC) had gradually begun to fill the void created by the OAU's Cold-War induced inability to set up an integrated defence mechanism since the mid-1970s.

By that time, African states had already had more than a decade's experience with regional cooperation which had quickly become a notable feature of inter-African relations following decolonisation.[24] While the first wave of regionalisation and the emergence of cooperative schemes like the *Conseil de l'Entente* (1959), the Union of African States (1960) or the African and Malagasy Union (1961) was mainly a result of Pan-African euphoria and the fear of neo-colonial interference, the second wave beginning in the 1970s was characterised by more practical considerations.

Firstly, Africa's disappointing economic performance during the 1960s – the continent had emerged from the UN's first Development Decade (1960-70) as the region registering the lowest rate of growth among developing countries – provided an obvious motivation for increasing regional cooperation as states began to feel the negative consequences of the extreme segmentation and the intrinsically problematic viability of the political divisions and economic circuits inherited from the colonial period. In addition to overcoming the effects of the continent's division, Africa's leaders also hoped that regional cooperation would lessen their states' disadvantageous dependence on the economies of the industrialised Western countries and thus fortify their independence.[25]

Another reason for the growth of regionalism in the 1970s was the failure of the OAU to provide an effective continental framework for cooperative ventures. Although Article XX of the OAU Charter had established several specialised commissions (Economic and Social, Educational and Cultural, Health, Sanitation and Nutrition, Defence as

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[24] For excellent histories of regional cooperation in Africa see Bach, Daniel. (1999) *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration & Disintegration*. Oxford: Bloomington, Boas, Morten. (2001) *Regions and Regionalisation: A Heretic's View*. Regionalism and Regional Integration in Africa - a Debate of Current Aspects and Issues. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

[25] While some may not accept dependency theory as an accurate description of Africa's economic situation in the 1970s, it is beyond doubt that African states perceived systemic inequality as reason for cooperation. See McGowan, Patrick, and Dale Smith. (1978) Economic Dependency in Black Africa: An Analysis of Competing Theories. *International Organization* 32:179-235.

well as Scientific, Technical and Research) these never really materialised and plans for continental action were rarely translated into concrete activities.[26] Instead, the OAU's failure "to coordinate and intensify member states' cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa" left a sizeable vacuum in the continent's perceived potential which the states themselves ventured to fill.[27] They did so by expanding and intensifying regional cooperation. Mainly concerned with economic cooperation at first, they broadened their activities to include security cooperation when the Cold War finally came to an end.

The revival of Africanisation in the post-Cold War era
The post-Cold War era saw an explosion of attempts to internalise the provision of peace and security in Africa at both the regional and the continental level. With the shackles of the superpower confrontation gone and the need for inter-African cooperation becoming ever more obvious and pressing, the OAU and many of the regional organisations began a renewed search for "African solutions to African problems". While the OAU initially had difficulties to agree on anything more than a blurred Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and a couple of small observer missions (in Rwanda 1991-93, in Burundi 1993-96 and on the Comoros 1997-99), the regional organisations used their substantial experience in economic cooperation to design elaborate security structures and engage in a variety of conflict management activities reaching from full-blown peace-enforcement operations to political mediation and cease-fire monitoring. Six reasons in particular gave rise to this new regional activism, namely (1) the drastic deterioration in Africa's security landscape following the end of the Cold War, (2) quickly waning superpower interest and the international community's apparent unwillingness to get involved in the continent's proliferating conflicts, (3) the OAU's equally obvious inability to provide continental solutions to the latter, (4) the increasing willingness of regional powers like Nigeria and South Africa to assume responsibility for peace and

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[26] OAU, *Charter of the OAU*, Article XX, 1-5 (Addis Ababa, 1963).
[27] Ibid., Article II, 1b.

stability in their zones of influence, (5) the successful precedent set by the 1991 intervention of the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia's escalating civil war,[28] and (6) the growing acceptance of regional approaches to security by the UN and other international actors.[29]

As these six points have been explored in detail elsewhere,[30] it should suffice here to draw attention to their cumulative effect which eventually was to lead to the creation of the AU and the establishment of an all-African peace and security architecture. After more than three decades of futile attempts at establishing some sort of cooperative security arrangement on the continent, the upheavals of the immediate post-Cold War era and the simultaneous disengagement of the West made the states of Africa painfully aware of the need for cooperation and led to a notable change in Africa's self-conception. In what Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni later called a "decade of awakening",[31] Africa's leaders realised that if they wanted to contain the spread of conflict and break the cycle of violence, poverty and underdevelopment that had kept them at the bottom of every international league table they finally had to take charge of their own problems.

The effect of this realisation was amplified by the emergence of an idealistic undercurrent in inter-African relations. Encouraged by the end of Apartheid and the elimination of corrupt dictatorships and autocratic one-party systems, inefficient structures and unresponsive social institutions in Eastern Europe, pro-democracy movements began

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[28] See Ero, Comfort. (2000) *Ecomog: A Model for Africa?* Monograph Series No. 46. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

[29] While Chapter VIII of the UN Charter acknowledges a major role for regional organisations, it was only under Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali that regional organisations were encouraged to play such role in order to ease the growing burden on the UN system. See UN Document A/47/277-S/24111, "Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peace Making and Peacekeeping," *Report of the Secretary-General*, 17 June 1992, paragraph 64; UN Document A/50/711 and S/1995/911, "Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa," *Report of the Secretary-General*, 1 November 1995, paragraph 4. Also see Abass, Ademola. (2004) *Regional Organisations and the Development of Collective Security - Beyond Chapter Viii of the Un Charter*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

[30] See Franke, Benedikt. (2006) A Pan-African Army: The Evolution of an Idea and Its Eventual Realisation in the African Standby Force. *African Security Review* 15:2-16.

[31] Yoweri Museveni, *Address to the South African Parliament*, Cape Town, 27 May 1997.

to flourish in Africa and with them what looked like a new generation of politically-responsible leaders.[32] Spurred by the hope for what Thabo Mbeki later referred to as an "African Renaissance", these leaders quickly rediscovered the usefulness of the unifying ideology of Pan-Africanism as a vehicle for their cooperative efforts. While the vision of a strong, united and independent Africa remained utopian, the promotion of a collective African identity and the resultant desire to minimise non-African interference in the affairs of the continent (by providing "African solutions to African problems") nonetheless advanced the formation of what Benedict Anderson called an "imagined community".[33] Anderson argued that collective self-imagination and identity formation can help community-building between states, or in other words, that communities can be constructed even in the absence of cultural similarities or economic transactions between groups through the creation and manipulation of norms, institutions, symbols and practices.[34] Naturally, not all states on the continent were equally part of this process of collective identity formation, but it seems fair to say that most states in Africa came to rediscover their commonalities in the early 1990s.

This rediscovery of a shared identity (and purpose) was closely connected to the disengagement of the international community that followed the Cold War. Faced with sudden economic and political marginalisation, Africa's states became painfully aware of their instrumentalisation during the superpower conflict and their "fall from grace" at the end of it.[35] The resultant sense of disappointment in their supposed friends and allies soon began to extend to international organisations which were seen as equally reluctant to continue to fulfil

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[32] Obasanjo, Olusegun. (1996) A Balance Sheet of the African Region and the Cold War. In *Africa in the New International Order: Rethinking State Sovereignty and Regional Security*, edited by Edmond Keller and Donald Rothchild, pp. 15-28. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
[33] Anderson, Benedict. (1992) *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
[34] See Cohen, A. (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. New York: Tavistock Publishers, Wendt, Alexander. (1994) Collective Identity Formation and the International State. *American Political Science Review* 88.
[35] Thomas, Scott. (1998) Africa and the End of the Cold War: An Overview of Impacts. In *Africa in the Post-Cold War International System*, edited by Sola Akinrinade and Amadu Sesay, pp. 3-27. London: Pinter.

their pledges to the continent. [36] The UN's hasty withdrawal from Somalia and the costly prevarication of the Security Council in the face of the genocide in Rwanda, for example, reinforced the underlying perception that the UN was less vigorously committed to African conflicts than to those in the Middle East or the Balkans where the West saw vital strategic interests at stake. At a summit meeting of the OAU in Tunis in June 1994, President Nelson Mandela drove home his sense of bewilderment and disappointment in the international community and called on Africa to look inwards for solutions to its collective security problems:

> "Rwanda stands out as a stern and severe rebuke to all of us for having failed to address Africa's security problems. As a result of that, a terrible slaughter of the innocent has taken place and is taking place in front of our very eyes. We know it is a matter of fact that we must have it in ourselves as Africans to change all this. We must, in action assert our will to do so."[37]

Despite many similar pleas and the continuing institutionalisation of regional conflict management mechanisms, the rest of the decade was characterised by further appalling humanitarian catastrophes with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) being the most glaring but far from the only casualty. At the time regarded as the ultimate proof for and expression of the unwillingness of African states to cooperate with each other, these tragedies helped to galvanise the continent into action. More than anything, they clarified the need to follow up on the promises of inter-African cooperation and reinvigorated the debate on which form this cooperation should take.

It was in this atmosphere of re-engagement that Libya's Muammar Gaddafi put forth his radical reform proposals for the defunct OAU that triggered the revival of continental security cooperation. Even though the OAU had somewhat improved its poor record in security cooperation through the establishment of its Conflict Management Mechanism in the 1990s, voices like that of Gaddafi that called for more

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[36] Abass. *Regional Organisations and the Development of Collective Security - Beyond Chapter Viii of the Un Charter*.
[37] Nelson Mandela as quoted in African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, Revised Edition, August 1995, 1138.

far-reaching reforms of the continental body had steadily been getting louder towards the end of the decade. These calls were motivated by the same feeling of disappointment and distrust in the international community and its motives, capabilities and willingness to engage in African affairs that had already motivated the continent's regional organisations to add conflict management functions to their repertoire. While the feeling of disappointment was a direct result of the international community's disastrous track record in Africa, the feeling of distrust sprang from the recognition that Africa's infant renaissance had been accompanied by an altered outside perception of its growing significance to international politics. In fact, it had become obvious that given the two global phenomena of terrorism and resource scarcity far more attention, though much of it instrumentalist, was being paid to Africa at the turn of the millennium than at any time since independence.[38] Given that this attention was not concerned with the well-being of the continent and its inhabitants *per se*, but with issues such as energy supply, competition for raw material, migration and matters of national security, it is not surprising that many Africans began to fear the advent of yet another scramble for Africa.[39]

This feeling of distrust combined with the long-standing desire for continental self-emancipation to advance the Africanisation of security within the framework of the new African Union. Determined to cultivate the emancipative notions of *African Renaissance* (that is, the concept that African people and nations will overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, political and economic renewal) and *African Century* (that is, the belief that the 21st century will bring peace, prosperity and cultural revival to Africa) and to overcome the image of the "hopeless continent",[40] states like South Africa and Nigeria pushed for the AU to assume a much more proactive role with regard to peace and security than the OAU had

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[38] Klingebiel, Stephan. (2005) *How Much Weight for Military Capabilities? Africa's New Peace and Security Architecture and the Role of External Actors*. Bonn: Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik.

[39] There have already been at least three scrambles for Africa, the first having occurred during colonisation, the second arising from the independence movements throughout the 1950s and early 60s and the third being associated with the various attempts of the Cold War superpowers to carve out spheres of influence for themselves.

[40] Cover title of *The Economist*, May 2000.

done.[41] The elaborate form of security cooperation agreed upon in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council and the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Military Staff Committee, as well as the national commitments to its implementation speak to the enthusiasm with which Africa's states heeded President Mbeki's call "to do everything they can to rely on their own capacities to secure their continent's renaissance".[42] While there was a general awareness that African efforts would continue to depend on external support for at least the foreseeable future, the creation of the AU was seen as an important step in transferring the responsibility for peace and security back from the international community to the African continent.

Africanisation and Ownership: The Rhetoric

Calling for an Africanisation of African security has a long tradition, both within Africa and outside it. While it was a natural reaction for the continent's newly independent states to insist on a greater role for themselves, the idea of "African solutions to African problems" also provided their former colonial masters as well as the two superpowers and their respective allies with a neat rhetoric to camouflage their own involvement and criticise that of their rivals.[43] Following some initial scepticism, both the Soviet Union and the United States regularly drew on the idea whenever they thought it useful to discrediting the efforts of the other side or highlighting their own support to the African cause.[44] Not surprisingly, the French were also quick to justify their continuing military presence and political involvement on the continent by dressing it up as assistance to indigenous African security efforts. In 1978 for example, French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing used two

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[41] For a discussion of the role of South Africa and Nigeria in the creation of the AU see Tieku, Thomas. (2004) Explaining the Clash of Interests of Major Actors in the Creation of the African Union. *African Affairs* 103:249-67.

[42] Thabo Mbeki as quoted in Neethling, Theo. (2005) Realising the African Standby Force as a Pan-African Deal: Progress, Prospects and Challenges. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 8:1-25.

[43] See Aluko, Olajide. (1981) African Responses to External Intervention in Africa since Angola. *African Affairs* 80.

[44] See, for example, Laidi, Zaki. (1990) *The Superpowers and Africa: The Constraints of a Rivalry, 1960-1990*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

different occasions – a visit to Mali and the opening of the French-African Summit in Paris – to drive home his country's newfound commitment to the process of Africanisation.

In Mali, he said that:

> "La politique de la France sur votre continent a aussi pour but essentiel le renforcement de la capacité des Africains à résister aux ingérences extérieures; car l'Afrique n'appartient et ne doit appartenir qu'à elle-même. Dans sa politique, la France continuera de s'inspirer de ce principe que j'ai affirmé il y a deux ans sur votre continent et qui a trouvé un large écho: l'Afrique aux Africains."[45]

On the occasion of the French African Summit, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing said that:

> "La responsabilité principale de leur sécurité appartient naturellement aux Etats concernés. Nous estimons que c'est aux Africains eux-mêmes, ainsi qu'aux organisations interafricaines, qu'il appartient de régler les conflits du continent."[46]

Following the end of the Cold War, the rhetoric of the Western powers did not change, but the underlying rationale did. Rather than continuing to (ab)use the notion of "African solutions to African problems" to masquerade their own strategic involvement in the continent's affairs, states like the US, the UK and France now gladly heeded Africa's call for greater autonomy in order to secure an easy peace dividend for their own, war-weary populations. With the ideological battle for Africa won and no other significant economic or political issues at stake, limited support to African ambitions seemed to provide a convenient and internationally acceptable way to avoid costly entanglements in Africa's deteriorating security situation and at the same time regain the African trust and confidence lost during the Cold War. As a result, the Western powers soon began to support the continent's various regional security and conflict management arrangements through capacity-building initiatives like the US African

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[45] Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Speech at the occasion of his official visit to Mali, Palais de Koulouba, Bamako, 14 February 1977.
[46] Opening statement of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Afrique-France Summit, May 1978, Paris

Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) and the French programme *Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix* (RECAMP).[47]

Today, the notion of "helping Africans to help themselves" remains the backbone of the West's pro-Africanisation rhetoric. However, the rationale for it has changed once again. Instead of the mere burden-shifting of the immediate post-Cold War period, contemporary support activities are again motivated by strategic considerations. Following a decade of economic and political marginalisation, Africa has returned to the geo-strategic limelight and a growing number of states are competing for political influence and access to its ressources. The US, for example, has significantly increased its material, logistical and rhetorical support to the process of Africanisation over the last years because it sees the strengthening of African capacities in the area of peace and security as the most sensible and cost-effective way to safeguard its manifold national interests on the continent ranging from safe access to the oil wealth of Western Africa to the roll back of terrorist safe havens in Eastern Africa. At the same time, US politicians hope that their increased attention to African ambitions can help to counteract China's growing political influence in the region. For this reason, the US has been particularly careful to dress its new Africa Command (AFRICOM) in the clothes of yet another support initiative to the continent's burgeoning security efforts.[48] Fearful of the obvious charge of neo-imperialism, US policymakers like Ryan Henry are eager to stress the unobtrusive nature of their country's increased attention to Africa's security:

> "We cleared up any misunderstandings that we were coming forth with American or US solutions to African problems. […] AFRICOM is to work with the nations and the multinational organizations there to support African solutions for the continent, both in the area of security and stability."[49]

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[47] For more details on the evolution of US capacity-building see Franke, Benedikt. (2007) Enabling a Continent to Help Itself: US Military Capacity Building and Africa's Emerging Security Architecture. *Strategic Insights* VI.

[48] For more information on the new Africa Command see Sieber, Otto. (2007) Africa Command: Forecast for the Future. *Strategic Insights* VI.

[49] News Briefing with Principal Deputy-Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Ryan Henry, Washington DC, 23 April 2007.

Not surprisingly, the US is far from alone in recognising (and exploiting) the great political benefits of supporting the ongoing Africanisation of security. Equally wary of Chinese advances in Africa as America and keen to carve out a greater foreign policy role for itself, the European Union has become another vocal advocate for and generous supporter of the African cause. Since 2003, it has not only disbursed more than €300 million to African-led peace and security efforts through its specifically designed financing instrument, the so-called African Peace Facility, but it has also taken the lead in helping to realise central AU projects like the ASF and the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). Its most recent Africa Strategy (December 2007) has also elevated African Ownership to one of its guiding principles *en par* with the respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Individually, European states like France and the UK have also discovered the political usefulness of being associated with Africa's emerging security architecture. In February 2008, for example, French President Nicolas Sarkozy delivered a widely-noted speech in Cape Town that strikingly resembled those of his predecessor Giscard d'Estaing in tone and purpose.

> "Je propose que la présence militaire française en Afrique serve en priorité à aider l'Afrique à bâtir, comme elle en a l'ambition, son propre dispositif de sécurité collective. […] La France n'a pas vocation à maintenir indéfiniment des forces armées en Afrique, *l'Afrique doit prendre en charge ses problèmes de sécurité*. Que l'on me comprenne bien: il ne s'agit nullement d'un désengagement de la France en Afrique. C'est tout le contraire. Je souhaite que la France s'engage davantage au côté de l'Union Africaine pour construire le système de sécurité collective dont l'Afrique a besoin car la sécurité de l'Afrique c'est d'abord naturellement l'affaire des Africains."[50]

Be it Germany (which has recently donated €20 million for a new AU building housing the organisation's Peace Support Operations Department), the G8 (whose Africa Action Plan aims to mobilise technical and financial assistance for the African efforts), the UN

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[50] Nicolas Sarkozy before the South African Parliament, 28 February 2008, Cape Town.

(which has agreed to share the responsibility for peace and security in Africa with the AU) or China (which just gave $100 million for a new AU Headquarters), not a single political entity wants to be left behind in affirming its commitment to the principles of Africanisation and African Ownership. Combined with the ubiquitous calls for ever greater autonomy by African leaders and the surprisingly uncritical attitude of the academic world, which seems to have settled on the undeniable attractiveness of the two principles, this has turned what used to be wishful thinking a mere decade ago into seemingly universally accepted quasi-norms. While this is, at least on the face of it, an encouraging development, this paper argues that it is important to look beyond the mostly empty rhetoric of both Africans and non-Africans and provide a clear analysis of the current state of the Africanisation of security and the quality and extent of its ownership.

Africanisation and Ownership: The Evidence

It is beyond doubt that the last couple of years have seen enormous progress in the Africanisation of security on the continent. Not only have the AU and the various regional organisations begun to institutionalise elaborate conflict management systems, but they have also formalised their cooperation in a Memorandum of Understanding which should help to channel the often diverging continental and regional Africanisation processes towards a common objective.[51] At the regional level, the South African Development Community (SADC) and ECOWAS have been particularly active in establishing structures and procedures for African-led peace support operations ranging from a dedicated force and equipment pool to standardised training programmes and interoperable communication systems. At the continental level, the AU's envisioned peace and security architecture is gradually taking shape – the Peace and Security Council is already meeting regularly to discuss crises and propose solutions, the first Panel of the Wise has recently been elected and other central projects like the ASF or the CEWS are also nearing completion. Besides these

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[51] For more information on institutional rivalries and competing regionalisms in Africa see Franke, Benedikt. (2007) Competing Regionalisms in Africa and the Continent's Emerging Security Architecture. *African Studies Quarterly* 10.

structural improvements, the AU has also already surpassed the OAU's, admittedly relatively meagre, record in launching peace operations and conducting mediation activities. In Burundi, for example, the AU mission (AMIB) stabilised the fragile situation and prepared the ground for the subsequent UN operation. In Darfur, the AU mission (AMIS) has, despite severe financial and logistical difficulties, done remarkably well in alleviating some of the suffering before it had to be replaced by the new AU-UN hybrid mission (UNAMID). In Togo, the AU forced the son of President Gnassingbe Eyadema to hold elections following the death of his father (which admittedly he manipulated) and on the Comoros the AU mission (AMISEC) successfully safeguarded a complicated election and reconciliation process. Most recently, the AU supported the successful military operations of the elected government of the Comoros to reintegrate the renegade island of Anjouan.

However, even a cursory look past these success stories quickly reveals a number of limitations to the Africanisation of security beyond the obvious ones like the scarcity of financial and military resources on the continent. These range from the selective support and hidden agendas of the international community to the reluctance and ulterior motives of the African states themselves and severely restrict the extent and quality of both the process of Africanisation as well as the effective ownership thereof. The following taxonomy of externally and internally imposed limitations, though far from complete, serves well to demonstrate just how many obstacles have yet to be overcome on the road to Ali Mazrui's "Pax Africana".

External limitations

The external limitations to the Africanisation of security – that is, those that lie beyond the control of African actors – generally relate to the sincerity and quality of international support measures. Both have changed substantially since geo-strategic considerations have replaced the post-Cold War desire for burden-sharing as the main motivation of international supporters. While in theory it should not matter for what reason a political entity supports the Africanisation process as long as it does so, the selective and commanding nature of the international

engagement has undermined the entire concept in several important ways.

First, it has led to a creeping Westernisation of African security efforts. Through their increasing involvement in the continent's security affairs and the selective application of their financial muscle, external actors like the US and France but also the United Nations and the European Union have essentially shaped the discussion about the meaning of "African security" in their own image. As a result, a notable dichotomy has developed between how Africans think about the concept of "African security" and how non-Africans think about it.[52] While for many African leaders regime survival undoubtedly continues to play the central role, non-African decision-makers generally focus on the increasingly popular and easier-to-sell notions of "new threats" and "human security" which they have superimposed on the African debate.[53] By focusing their badly-needed support on initiatives which they themselves see in accordance with this distorted debate like the creation of an AU Counter-Terrorism Center, Western actors – China and other non-Western actors have been very careful not to attach conditions to their financial and material support – have essentially abused Africa's dependence on foreign aid in order to shape the emerging security structures to their liking. While this may not come as a total surprise and may actually have very positive side-effects with respect to the bureaucratic efficiency, political sustainability and international compatibility of the resultant African structures, it naturally leads to the question as to how Western the Africanisation of Africa's security can and should be.

Second, the commitment of many states, particularly of France and the US, to the notion of "African solutions to African problems" is far from steadfast. In fact, the experience of the last five years clearly shows that Western actors generally only resort to the "African solution" if the

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[52] David Chuter, *Into Africa, Always Something New: Telling Africans what their Security Problems Are*, Conference Presentation, Royal United Services Institute Conference on AFRICOM, 18 February 2008.

[53] This is the result of a study presented by Major Shannon Beebe at the Royal United Services Conference on AFRICOM, 18 February 2008, London. For a detailed discussion see Thomas, Caroline, and Peter Wilkin. (1999) Globalization, Human Security and the African Experience. pp. vii, 211 p. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

problem at hand fulfills one or more of the following criteria: (1) they do not have any immediate interest in it; (2) they do have an immediate interest but do not want to engage directly or alone; (3) it requires a long-term and sustained approach they are unwilling to commit to.[54] France's Janus-faced security policy in Western Africa (once called its *chasse gardée*), America's decision to support Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia and its establishment of a separate combatant command for Africa (AFRICOM) are all unmistakable signs that the West continues to see the Africanisation of African security merely as one policy option of many. Without in any way wishing to diminish the enormous contribution international actors have made to the African missions in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Darfur, Somalia and the Comoros, the disadvantages of the resultant selectiveness and ad hoc nature of most international support measures are hard to miss. For one, it is once again Western and not African actors that decide on when, where and how the "African solution" is applied because without significant financial and military means of their own African states (and organisations) have no choice but to bow to the strategic, operational and tactical demands of their "benefactors". Cedric de Coning foresaw this negative dependence and its likely consequences for the continent's freedom of action even before the AU was inaugurated.

> "Its reliance on foreign funding means that donors could influence which missions the AU can undertake based on their national interests. Donors can determine the duration of a mission, and can influence a mission's mandate by placing terms and conditions on continued funding, or by withdrawing funding if they no longer agree with the scope of the mission."[55]

What he did not foresee, however, was to what extent the West would really make use of its financial muscle to define, shape and control the process of Africanisation. Happy to hide behind their support for the principle of "African solutions for African problems" whenever they

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[54] For an informative discussion of the argument that "the growing reliance on regional organisations is a result of an unwillingness to commit rather than because the idea has intrinsic merit" see Boulden, Jane. (2003) *Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[55] Coning, Cedric de. (2002) Peacekeeping in Africa: The Next Decade. *Conflict Trends*.

need to justify their inaction in geo-strategically unimportant places like Darfur or Somalia, states like France and the US are quick to ignore this principle when they see major interests at stake.[56] Over the years this has led to a macabre division of labour between Africans and non-Africans in which the latter have practically outsourced the handling of conflicts they are not themselves willing to engage in to the former under the flimsy banner of Africanisation. Or as Adekeye Adebajo has put it:

> "The battle cry of "African solutions to African problems", coined during the Cold War to rid the continent of foreign meddlers, has cynically been appropriated in the current era. It has been hijacked to promote an apartheid system of peacekeeping in which Africans are expected to spill most of the blood, while the West pays some of the bills in a macabre aristocracy of death."[57]

As a result of this division of labour and Africa's dependence on external support we are indeed witnessing a growing Africanisation of peace operations on the continent (that is, a gradual increase in African participation) but no discernable increase in African ownership thereof (that is, de facto political control). This leads one to wonder how sincere the international commitment to African ownership really is and whether the ongoing Africanisation is not so much a sign of growing African commitment but rather of the West's preference for peacekeeping by proxy, sub-contracting and outsourcing.

A third notable limitation to the process of Africanisation is the quality and suitability of the international capacity building programmes themselves. The most serious structural deficiencies cited in the burgeoning literature on the West's support initiatives are (1) their undue emphasis on peacekeeping training at the expense of the provision of badly-needed military equipment, (2) their greater responsiveness to immediate crises than to long-term measures and (3)

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[56] There are a couple of good examples. For instance, many African leaders were taken by surprise by the UK's intervention in Sierra Leone in 2002 and the second EU operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Operation Artemis, April-November 2006) was launched despite the protests of many African countries.
[57] Adebajo, Adekeye. 29 April, 2007 Tread Warily through the Politics of Peacekeeping. Sunday Times.

the lack of harmonisation and coordination between the multitude of donor initiatives.

Given that their capacity-building commitments also have to appeal to their domestic electorates and international partners, it is not surprising that many donor states (and their institutions) prefer the easy-to-sell provision of peacekeeping training to the supply of deadly military hardware like guns, armoured personnel carriers and combat helicopters. Even though the success of robust peace operations like UNAMID and AMISOM depends on the latter, little has changed in the ten years since Eric Berman and Katie Sams argued the following:

> "Supplying the type and amount of military equipment that might enable African peacekeepers to respond effectively to crises on their continent is neither financially nor politically feasible; providing low-level peacekeeping training and instruction is. Western initiatives respond principally to domestic political concerns — not African limitations."[58]

Another crucial shortcoming of today's capacity building programmes is that despite their often impressive-looking budgets – the EU's African Peace Facility, for example, has just been replenished with €300 million and the US has committed over US$ 660 million to its Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) – actual funding is rather sporadic and seemingly more responsive to immediate crises than longer-term projects like the ASF or the CEWS. While the readiness of donors to sacrifice the latter for urgently-needed crisis relief is politically understandable (and morally certainly not objectionable), it has nonetheless severely hampered the sustainable development of Africa's security capabilities.

Lastly, the insufficient coordination of donor activities means that the overall impact of international capacity-building support remains far below potential. Even though the G8 Africa Action Plan has identified the unnecessary duplication of efforts and the divisive impact of uncoordinated measures as significant obstacles to capacity-building in Africa and has subsequently called for a better harmonisation of

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[58] Berman, Eric, and Katie Sams. (1998) *Constructive Disengagement: Western Efforts to Develop African Peacekeeping*. Monograph Series No. 33. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

bilateral support initiatives, the coordination between the various programmes is still weak. Widely differing agendas and political rivalries among the donors have inhibited efforts to overcome this problem which thus continues to undermine the development of strategic approaches and multiplies transaction costs for the AU and other recipients in Africa. Interestingly, insufficient coordination of support activities is not a problem confined to the international level. Even within donor states the various development and security agencies often fail to coordinate their efforts for reasons ranging from inter-agency rivalries and personal turf battles to asymmetric information and constitutional restraints. US assistance, for example, still comes from a variety of independent and often mal-coordinated offices including at least three in the Department of State, several in the Department of Defense, and more from EUCOM and other overseas commands.[59]

The creeping Westernisation of African security, the merely superficial commitment of many non-African states as well as the structural deficiencies of the international support initiatives all mean that the ongoing process of Africanisation and the extent of African ownership are subject to considerable externally-imposed limitations.

Internal limitations

Far more surprising than the externally-imposed limitations – after a certain degree of outside interference in a continent with Africa's history is not altogether unexpected – are those that can be traced back to the African states themselves. The most crucial among them are (1) a remarkable lack of political and financial commitment to the principles of Africanisation and African Ownership that contrasts starkly with the prevalent rhetoric, (2) the ulterior motives behind the push for Africanisation and African Ownership and (3) the unfinished nature of Africa's self-emancipation. While all of these have to be seen against the backdrop of extremely limited funds and substantial outside interference, they nonetheless add to the external limitations described

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[59] See Franke. Enabling a Continent to Help Itself: US Military Capacity Building and Africa's Emerging Security Architecture.

above to restrict the Africanisation of African security to the highly superficial level we are witnessing today.

Quite naturally, African leaders have been among the most fervent advocates of total and immediate Africanisation of Africa's security affairs. Alpha Oumar Konaré, the first chairperson of the AU Commission, for example, used a special meeting of the UN Security Council in September 2007 to remind the world that:

> "… the primary responsibility for ensuring peace in Africa belongs to Africans themselves. They must shoulder that responsibility. Our partners must let Africans run their own business. [...] Africa is no longer a private hunting ground; it is no longer anyone's backyard; it is no longer a part of the Great Game; and it is no longer anyone's sphere of influence. Those are the few simple rules that will allow the continent to shoulder its responsibility and to demonstrate inter-African solidarity."[60]

Ambassador Said Djinnit, the AU's first Commissioner for Peace and Security was even more outspoken on the topic of African responsibility than his superior:

> "No more, never again. Africans cannot watch the tragedies developing in the continent and say it is the UN's responsibility or somebody else's responsibility. We have moved from the concept of non-interference to non-indifference. We cannot as Africans remain indifferent to the tragedy of our people."[61]

This noble rhetoric, however, contrasts starkly with the grim reality on the continent. Instead of the "traditional African values of burden-sharing and mutual assistance" evoked in their Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (2004), most of Africa's 53 states have displayed a remarkable lack of political and financial commitment to and interest in the continent's security affairs. As a result, the enormous burden of attempting to Africanise these affairs rests on merely a few shoulders – most notably those of Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa where troop contributions

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[60] Special Meeting of the UN Security Council on Africa, September 2007.
[61] Ambassador Said Djinnit, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, 28 June 2004, Addis Ababa, as quoted in Powell, Kristiana. (2005) *The African Union's Emerging Peace and Security Regime - Opportunities and Challenges for Delivering on the Responsibility to Protect*. Monograph Series No. 119. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

to African-led missions are concerned and Ethiopia, Libya and Kenya where financial support to the emerging security structures is concerned.[62] Consequently, the AU finds it ever more difficult to man, equip and sustain its growing array of security initiatives. Its faltering mission in Somalia (AMISOM), for example, remains woefully understaffed – almost two years after its launch it still consists of nothing but the Ethiopian invasion forces and a handful of Ugandan and Burundian troops. The AU is also still more than two thirds short of its promised troop contribution to the UN's hybrid force in Darfur (UNAMID). While the reluctance of many states to contribute more than words to the process of Africanisation has to be seen in the context of their often disastrous economic situation (after all, 38 out of the world's 50 least developed countries are in Africa), the lack of broad support beyond the occasional common declaration undermines the very idea of Africanisation.

Most crucially, it erodes the illusion of Africanisation as a Pan-African project. Instead it feeds suspicions that those states that do promote the process and actively contribute to it do so for purely self-serving rather than universally beneficial reasons. Especially Nigeria, Kenya, Libya and Ethiopia have regularly been accused of abusing the AU's emerging security architecture as vehicle for their hegemonic ambitions. This in turn deters many smaller states from increasing their commitments to the AU-led process and instead leads them to concentrate their support on their respective sub-regional and/or regional organisations where they expect greater and more direct returns on their investments (that is, more control over the use of their contributions). Despite the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the seven regional organisations it officially recognises as pillars of its security architecture, this continues to prevent a unitary African approach. Instead, it advances the fragmentation of the process of Africanisation into several broadly-related but not fully compatible sub-processes that had begun with the devolution of security initiatives in the early 1990s. While nothing in

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[62] For more information on African troop contributions to ongoing peace operations see *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2007*. New York: Center on International Cooperation

the underlying idea of "African solutions to African problems" actually requires the Africanisation of security to be a centralised process, its fragmentation is undoubtedly fraught with certain disadvantages (even though it may help to keep the smaller states committed). First, it leads to an unnecessary duplication of efforts and structures. Second, it dilutes the potential impact of international support measures.[63] Lastly, it also raises the question of how the continent's current plethora of intergovernmental organisations and institutions are going to evade the self-destructive rivalries which have characterised Africa's institutional landscape for so long and which have prevented effective sub-regional and regional cooperation ever since the beginning of decolonisation.

A second internal limitation to the Africanisation of security is the sincerity of the African support for the concepts of Africanisation and African Ownership. Just as in the case of the non-African actors, the specific reasons for which African states support both concepts should not be too important as long as they do not have any adverse effects on the realisation of the concepts themselves. Some of these reasons and the states' resultant behaviour, however, severely restrict the quality and sustainability of the ongoing process of Africanisation as well as the potential for true African ownership thereof. For example, the tendency of some states to openly declare themselves part of the Africanisation process seems to be motivated more by a desire for Western arms and training which they can use for internal security measures than by the willingness to be part of a continental conflict management effort, or as Paul Omach once argued with specific reference to ACRI: "States participating [in international capacity building programmes] do so with the primary motive of strengthening their military forces to deal with internal conflicts rather than the need to participate in regional peacekeeping."[64] The last few years have seen states like Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda using military hardware and

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[63] Cedric de Coning has rightly argued that the AU's emerging peace and security architecture "epitomises a much needed common objective which helps to channel the multiplicity of resources, initiatives and ambitions devoted to African peace and security efforts into one direction". See Coning, Cedric de. (2004) *Towards a Common Southern African Peacekeeping System*. Electronic Briefing Paper No. 16. Pretoria: Center for International Political Studies.

[64] Omach, Paul. (2000) The African Crisis Response Initiative: Domestic Politics and Convergence of National Interests. *African Affairs* 99.

training obtained under the pretext of Africanisation to crush their domestic opposition and rebel movements.[65] Another motivation that has already begun to undermine the two concepts of Africanisation and African Ownership is their use as excuse for and justification of African inaction. Examples that immediately come to mind include the continent's unfortunate insistence on an "African solution" for the crisis in Zimbabwe and the AU's complete mishandling of Kenya's recent electoral impasse.

Lastly, the unfinished nature of Africa's self-emancipation is another factor that limits the sustainability of the ongoing processes of Africanisation and the effective extent of African ownership. Especially the deep-running divisions and rivalries that continue to exist between many Africans (for example, between Anglophones and Francophones) as well as their susceptibility to outside interference and manipulation must foster serious doubts about the continent's ability to promote the Africanisation of security beyond its current level. As long as Africa's states continue to think and act in artificially-created categories and maintain closer links with their colonial or neo-colonial masters than with each other further progress is unlikely. Unfortunately, the geo-strategically motivated reengagement of the international community in the continent's affairs has already begun to reverse the process of African self-emancipation that seemed so promising not even a decade ago. It now appears as if we are back in yet another scramble for Africa in which the international thirst for natural resources and political allegiance have once again tempted Africa's leaders to forsake their peoples' chance for a real renaissance for short-term benefits and personal profits.

Conclusion

In this paper we have argued that a number of internal and external factors limit the sustainability of the ongoing process of Africanising

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[65] Nigeria has used material and training originally provided for its ECOWAS activities to fight the rebels in the Niger Delta. Uganda has used troops trained and equipped through Western capacity-building programmes in its counter-insurgency campaign against the Lord's Resistance Army while Senegal has done likewise in its operations in the Casamance region.

African security as well as the extent of true African ownership thereof. Unfortunately, it seems as if none of these factors are bound to change in the foreseeable future. The international community, and especially the West, will continue to interfere in the continent's affairs under the pretext of supporting the principles of Africanisation and African Ownership and African states will continue to forsake Ali Mazrui's dream of a Pax Africana for short-sighted national and personal power policies. The empty rhetoric of "African solutions to African problems" thereby serves both sides as a convenient cover story for their self-interested activities.

Besides highlighting the growing gap between rhetoric and reality, it was our aim to raise a number of issues and questions that we believe deserve an extended discussion. For example, how Western can and should the Africanisation of security be? Which path to the Africanisation of security should the continent's states take if they are committed to the process? Is Africa as a continent at all ready to take over the responsibility for its own security? Does such an Africanisation actually make practical sense for the continent at its present stage of development?

While we did not intend to provide conclusive answers to these questions, we hope that we have at least been able to shed some light on the one question that has lingered underneath the surface of this paper ever since its title posed it. The continuing interference of non-African actors in the continent's affairs, the fickle nature of Africa's self-emancipation and the adverse global trends sadly allow no other conclusion than that African Ownership (at least in the sphere of peace and security) is hardly more than an empty concept. This paper has shown that Africans have only very limited control over the ongoing processes of Africanising Africa's security and that they depend on an externally-imposed discourse to delineate the extent of their freedom of action. It has also sought to counter the widespread belief that there is something inevitable about the ongoing process of Africanisation. Far from ensured, the achievement of a Pax Africana is as distant as ever.

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