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Capitalist Globalisation and the Role of the International Community in Resource Conflicts in Africa

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Abstract

The principal thesis of this paper is that under contemporary capitalist globalisation, the so-called international community constitutes more of the problem than the solution in the continent's resource and allied conflicts. We argue that the geo-strategic and geo-political interests of major western and other powers and the transnational capitalist class (TCC), which tend to defend and enhance these interests, have over the past several decades either been the root cause of resource conflicts on the African continent or have fuelled, exacerbated and prolonged them. The almost devotional attitude of the continent's ruling elites to the values and institutions of capitalist globalisation – and its resultant unequal distribution of the gains and pains of market reforms – have equally contributed to resource conflicts. While there is a complex interplay between internal and external factors and actors, on-balance external causation has, by far, dwarfed internal explanations of conflicts. African societies and peoples have thus suffered an unmitigated internationalisation, exploitation and pillage of their rich tropical hardwood, gems, mineral and oil resources. The paper proposes a strategic coalition of victims of capitalist globalisation and capitalist militarisation in Africa and elsewhere (nations, societies, communities and peoples) to systematically confront and oppose the most invidious process that has turned Africa's resource blessing into resource burden.

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Résumé

Cette étude défend essentiellement la thèse selon laquelle dans un contexte de mondialisation capitaliste, la soi-disant communauté internationale constitue plutôt un problème que la solution des conflits et autres exactions se déroulant sur le continent pour le contrôle de ses ressources. Il nous semble qu'au cours des nombreuses décennies, les intérêts géostratégiques et géopolitiques des principales puissances occidentales et d'ailleurs et la classe capitaliste transnationale (CCT) qui a tendance à défendre et à revaloriser ces intérêts ont été la cause profonde des conflits pour le contrôle des ressources du continent africain. Elles les ont alimentés, exacerbés ou perpétués. Les élites qui détiennent le pouvoir sur le continent font montre d'une dévotion presque religieuse aux valeurs et aux institutions de la mondialisation capitaliste et la répartition inégale des bienfaits et dégâts résultant de la réforme des marchés ont également aggravé les conflits pour le contrôle des ressources. Même si l'interaction entre facteurs et acteurs internes et externes peut s'avérer complexe, au bout du compte, les causes externes l'emportent de loin sur les justifications internes des conflits. Les sociétés et les peuples africains ont ainsi souffert d'une internationalisation, d'une exploitation et d'un pillage parfaits de leur bois dur tropical, de leurs pierres précieuses et de leurs ressources minérales et pétrolières. Cet article propose donc une coalition stratégique des victimes de la mondialisation capitaliste et de la militarisation capitaliste en Afrique et ailleurs (nations, sociétés, communautés et peuples) pour confronter et s'opposer systématiquement à ce processus on ne peut plus injuste qui a transformé la bénédiction des ressources africaines en fardeau.

Introduction

The promise of contemporary capitalist globalisation to integrate Africa into mainstream global production having been largely thwarted by unequal or lopsided integration, the continent has largely lost out in accessing the benefits and opportunities of globalisation. Clearly, the same processes of globalisation that have produced (and continue to produce) prosperity in much of the Global North (and in some parts of the Global South, accessed by transnational capital and transnational capitalist class and its objective allies) have been responsible for the production of poverty and exploitation in much of the Global South (and maintained the slums of the poorest of the poor in the Global South). The resultant further weakening of the nation-state in the latter and its deepening material impoverishment have tended to attract sundry external economic vampires and buccaneers aided and abetted by hegemonic internal social forces to exploit and pillage its rich tropical hardwood, gems, fish, minerals, water, land and oil.

African states need to be historicised and periodised within the context of national dynamics and the global system in order to understand their ambivalence – that is to say, why they seem to obey more external impulses than internal clamours and struggles for social justice and political inclusiveness. The international community is no less ambivalent than the increasingly privatised and corporatist neo-colonial state. To be sure, in a post-Cold War world, international actors are anything but homogenous, and they impact differentially in individual African contexts. What this suggests is the need for a nuanced methodological *démarche* and more conceptual rigour that combine to impose a contextual and specific use of the term 'international community'. There is no homogenous or monolithic 'international community'– even though more often than not the great powers tend to project their own interests and defend their privileged turf in the name of that community. By the same token, while the contemporary stage of capitalist globalisation is dominated by transnational capital, state and class, particularistic capital, state and class, though undergoing trans-nationalisation, continue to defend the interests of state-based and class driven domestic capital.

In addition to the two dominant thinking on the causes of contemporary conflicts – grievance and greed theories – structural inequalities occasioned by contemporary capitalist globalisation provide a potent explanatory framework for political violence and economic conflict in developing countries. While certain causative factors may be specific to individual countries, grievance theories, which are essentially political, appear more salient on account of the failure of development in many equally neo-adjustment African states. Political grievances often eventually snowball – or get dissolved – into greed theories at the interstices of political and economic interests where national and international hegemonic forces get involved in titanic battles over strategic natural and mineral resources. At this juncture, profit will join the quest for political power as one of the motivations for conflicts and civil wars. The latter will amount to 'the continuation of economics by other means' (Hubert 2000). Similarly, wrenching and retaining power may also be, in the imaginings of the protagonists, about the most rational way to achieve true emancipation from external domination and internal repression.

This paper adopts a combination of radical political economy and critical historiography approaches, which suggests a sharp critique of capitalist globalisation. It interrogates the extremely complex nature, context, terrain, and texture of resource conflicts in post-Cold War Africa. This is a context of warlords, drug barons, mercenaries, militias, private security organisations, transnational corporations, transnational capital and transnational capitalist class (TCC); transnational labour and transnational social forces; great and

rich powers, and African ruling elites. The principal thesis is that the role of the international community (principally trans-national corporations (TNCs), western and other powers) has been at once predominant and ambivalent. While the arms industry of major western powers and China in particular – through the intermediary of their trans-national corporations, private security firms, mercenaries, arms and ammunitions industries, and individual arms merchants – supply 'resources for fighting with a view to fighting for resources', the same powers and the International Financial Institutions (IFIS) they control are the ones that fund post-conflict reconstruction, peace keeping and peace building initiatives. In the process, these gladiators thrive in two seemingly diametrical and parallel worlds of 'resource war and resource peace' (Hubert 2000).

Relations between western corporate conglomerates and warlords (in particular the use of the latter's international trading networks for money and resource laundering) and the collusion between mining and oil companies and African ruling elites permit the former to exploit resources and destroy the environment with impunity. In light of this, we argue, 'the international community constitutes more of the problem than the solution'.

Capitalist Globalisation, Structural Crisis of Capitalism and the African Neo-Colonial State

Second only to the scourge of war, the contemporary capitalist phase of globalisation is arguably the greatest challenge to the Global South in the unfolding 21st Century, not least because of the political economy of accentuated uneven development its operational logic imposes on much of that segment of the globe (Khan 2006: 128; Swyngedouw 2004; Naim 2009; Robinson 2005, 2007, 2008; Urry 2005; Amin 2006; Mittelman 2000, 2004; Jessop 2003; Keller 1996). There are two generic views on contemporary globalisation. The first, which offers an optimistic and humanistic perspective, proffers that globalisation is a benign and beneficent social phenomenon. This is an implicit reference to human solidarity, sisterhood and brotherhood. This reference is sometimes prescriptive rather than descriptive such as Samir Amin's (2006:5) moralist notion of a globalisation of 'real and complete multi-polarity' as against the notion of profit as the essence of trans-national capital. Amin envisions his moralism as one that can give 'a place to all nations on earth', meaning '100 per cent of humanity'. This perspective which hails the potential of globalisation to make the world a better place materially and otherwise for the large majority of the world population is the product of a seeming non-ideological and apolitical conception of the phenomenon. The International Environment Forum (IEF), in its 'Statement for the World Summit on Sustainable Development' (August 2002) describes

globalisation as 'only a continuation of the natural processes of human evolution towards higher levels of social integration'. While Brzezinski (2004:139) claims, on the one hand, that globalisation emerged as 'a neutral description of a process that is inherent in the worldwide effects of the technological revolution', he also asserts, on the other, that globalisation is 'the fashionable ideology of post-ideological age' (p. 143). Thus, notions such as 'global interdependence' and 'shared values' are deployed to describe globalisation apparently as an incentive for a global buy-in by all and sundry. The 'shared values' include the following: neo-liberal democracy, market economy, rule of law, free trade, human rights, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Within this ambit, the IEF enunciates the credit or positive side of globalisation as follows: a global intellectual system, product of terrific advances in, among others, science, engineering, medicine and technology; increasing opportunities for wealth creation; new economies of scale and new opportunities for humanity to share the planet's variety; and 'the emergence of a new awareness of our common humanity with a set of universal values, extending beyond traditional boundaries of nations, races, classes or religions. McRae (2000:4-5) tars the picture with the same brush: lucrative international trade; gigantic flows of capital across national borders; and relentlessly decreasing communication costs. Others include the quantity, quality, and variety of goods and services; enormous investment and employment opportunities; the incredible wealth the global economy produces annually; individual liberties and the freedom of people to make their own choices; and (perhaps rather coyly) 'a surge in international migration as people seek economic opportunities'.

The second perspective conceptualises globalisation as 'unification for the dominant', that is, a human design and creation with the primary aim of giving primacy to the market and the expansion of trans-national capital. In theory and in practice, corporate values are simultaneously ascendant and transcendental. Insofar as globalisation is central to the relations among core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral states, trans-national capital operates as a double-edged sword. While it delivers prosperity, services and security to the transnational capital class and ruling elites across nations; poverty, repression and destruction are reserved for their excluded counterparts (Khan 2006:139, 132). A well-articulated socio-economic agenda of globalisation is clearly at work in the Global South, which consists of 'limiting the aspirations of the working class and property-less, increasing profits and preventing the state from any intervention that might promote welfare through redistribution'. Private profits are also promoted at the expense of poor nations and poor peoples (Khan 2006:132). Globalisation is, to that extent, not an opportunity,

but a threat, to the majority of the peoples of the world (Kim, Parker and Choi 2006:432). To all appearances, those who benefit most from globalisation are the most enthusiastic about its spread, its putative benefits as well as about how the most vulnerable states, governments and people kowtow before it. Stiglitz (2006) argues that not only has globalisation failed in practice to live up to its potential, it has actually contributed to social distress. This is because, for him, the key institutions responsible for establishing the rules of global financial, economic and trade governance – the IMF, World Bank and WTO – appear more driven by narrow ideology and the demands of special interests. Shared values are hardly equally shared. The tendency is for the weakest and the poorest of states to cling to ambivalent notions of international law and international morality whenever the great powers throw their weight around, using an admixture of hard and soft power to fulfill their national, strategic, and geopolitical interests on a global scale. Further, the putative virtue of global interdependence is besmirched by the vice of unequal dependency.

But globalisation has done little to lessen national identities even though the nation-state or territorial state is becoming an ever more complex political structure and social institution (Naim 2009). Its nature and meaning are also evolving 'as social relations and structures become transformed, particularly as they trans-nationalise' (Robinson 2007:14). It is precisely at the level of trans-nationalisation of the state, capital and capitalist class that Robinson's works are very illuminating, not least in exposing the unstable juxtaposition between the nation-state/inter-state system and transnational social groups and classes operating through states and related institutions. Several insights from him are particularly germane to the elaboration of a more nuanced understanding of the second dominant perspective of globalisation. One, Robinson (2007:23) argues that 'capitalist imperialism' is considerably more complex under globalisation than the more facile North-South/Core-Periphery framework through which it has for long been apprehended. Two, globalisation is 'a new stage in the history of world capitalism involving the integration of national and regional economies into a new global production and financial system and such related processes as transnational class formation' (Robinson 2005:5).

Further, the use of the global capitalist theory (which analyses hegemony in the global system from the standpoint of 'an emergent global capitalist historical bloc, led by a transnational capitalist class') brings into sharp focus the superiority of transnational social forces and institutions over the system of nation-states and national economies. This superiority emanates from the interface between national and transnational elites which results in 'the

horizontal integration of classes and social forces' that 'operate through webs of national and international institutions'. The emphasis is on new forms of transnational class relations and class cleavages not only globally but also within countries, regions, cities and local communities. By the same token, new forms of transnational capital, transnational state and a new transnational capitalist class are implicated in 'globalised production, marketing and finance'. They also manage 'globalised circuits of accumulation 'which furnish 'an objective class existence and identity spatially and politically in the global system above any local territories and polities' (Robinson 2005:5-6). Four, while capital is not wholly de-territorialised and world politics still has a geopolitical referent, de-centring (not re-centring) of the 'global economy, its fragmentation and the rise of several zones of intense global accumulation' is the archetypal norm. This is because 'national networks of capital have become overlapping and interpenetrating' (Robinson 2005:9). Five, contrary to the methodological approach of the *New Imperialism School* which separates the political from the economic, Robinson (2007:24) argues that 'imperialism is not about nations but about groups exercising social power through institutions to control value production, to appropriate surpluses, and to reproduce these arrangements'.

Found in virtually all spaces and climes around the globe, the interface and enmeshment between national and transnational elites is fascinating: 'the localisation of the global and the globalisation of the local become crafted in a place-specific manner, yet exhale perplexing, and often disturbing, common threads' (Swyngedouw, Moulaert and Rodriguez 2003:6). This is akin to Swyngedouw's study (2003:5, 10) of the world in a 'dynamic process-based manner', implying the study of globalisation as one of 'shifting relations and geometries of power'. He also avers that 'capitalist geodynamics are inherently tied up with processes of territorialisation, de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation'. Two other notable scholars complete this complex and nuanced dynamic interface between the core, semi-periphery and the periphery in terms of space and time. For Jessop (2003:1-2), globalisation is nothing but a multi-centric, multi-scalar, multi-temporal, multiform, multi-causal and spatio-temporal process. This is because insofar as globalisation emerges from activities in many places as well as actions on many scales, there is 'no simple opposition between the global and the national or the global and the local. The former may in fact be little more than 'a hugely extended network of localities'. Finally, according to Mittelman (2004:5), the three major processes that come to the fore in capitalist globalisation (which has tended to be 'normalised as a dominant ideology') are the global division of labour and power; a new regionalism; and resistance politics.

The foregoing suggests that whereas globalisation is gradually turning the world into a 'global hamlet' for expropriation and appropriation by the TCC, political realism in international relations and global politics has not totally expired. Humanity also remains deeply divided not only by culture, tradition, and history but also by what Kaplan (2009) refers to as 'the bleaker tides of passion that lie just beneath the veneer of civilisation'. Territorialised and localised ethnic, cultural, religious and political actions continue to valorise sundry identities of people across the globe and within and across countries and regions – a phenomenon Kaplan (2009) characterises as 'the revenge of geography'. Even under contemporary multifaceted globalisation, natural frontiers are limiting human freedom and choice. According to Mittelman (2000), the cultural dimensions of globalisation are arguably the most significant from the point of view of global under-classes and weak states. He underlines the importance of listening to the voices of those most affected by globalisation's cultural dimensions, those who, because globalisation represents more of a loss than a gain for them, are hurt by it and try to resist it. The loss is expressed in the form of inequality, exclusion, and an increasingly irrelevant and irreverent state, by virtue of the erosion of its power by the market. The erosion is typified not only by the IMF/World Bank's fundamental market reforms but also by global currency speculation. Mittelman (2004:xi) refers to the resistance to globalisation as 'alter-globalisation' (not anti-globalisation because he believes that resistance is not so much against globalisation *qua* globalisation as against neo-liberalism and its devastation across the globe, Mittelman 2004:8), that is, 'an ensemble of countervailing power, competing knowledge sets and ideological contestation'. High priests of an ideologically and politically neutral capitalist globalisation are often at a loss about its severe contestation in different loci of the globe. They overlook the fact that this perspective on globalisation has been 'silent about social hierarchies and power relations' (Mittelman 2004:4).

For the vast majority of African states, governments and people, globalisation represents no more than another phase – a superior phase to colonial capitalism – in the unequal exchanges between Africa and West and other powers (Rodney 1982:160-161). There is little doubt that the neo-liberal onslaught against African political economies in the past three decades has, almost everywhere, irreparably weakened the neo-colonial state, jeopardised its performance legitimacy and all but sounded the death knell of its development ideology. Whereas Amin (2006:27) opines that 'to benefit from openness, one must know how to manage it', Keller (1996:1) argues that the emergence of popular movements for political and economic reform in the 1990s was not only a function of 'poor governance' and 'bad policy

choice', but, perhaps more significantly, 'intrusive external interference in African affairs'. To a large extent, the latter factor has often spawned the former pair of factors.

Almost by inadvertence, Stiglitz (2002:20) has bridged the gap between the two dominant perspectives on globalisation, even while giving vent to how to manage openness when he writes memorably as follows: 'globalisation itself is neither good nor bad. It has the power to do enormous good, and for the countries of East Asia who (sic) have embraced globalisation 'under their own terms', at their own pace, it has been an enormous benefit, in spite of the setback of the 1997 crisis. But in much of the world, it has not brought comparable benefits. For many, it seems closer to an unmitigated disaster'. (emphasis in the original). We return to the (East) Asian case below. Clearly, one region of the world where the praxis of globalisation has, willy-nilly, been 'an unmitigated disaster' is Africa. According to Ukeje (2007:355), contrary to globalisation's dominant neo-liberal epistemology's promise of renewal and sustainability everywhere; in Africa, globalisation is 'exacerbating the fault-lines among different social groups and fuelling political instability, civil strife and, ultimately, state decay and collapse'. Africa has been the victim of the type of globalisation to which it has been unduly exposed as well as the relations of power underpinning it.

Expressed differently, in much of the real world in general and in much of Africa in particular, the second perspective appears dominant. Capitalist globalisation is anchored on a global hierarchy of power and wealth in geographical, class and racial terms. It is also based on an inequality of emancipation. In addition, it thrives on an historic and unending assault on the people of the Global South by neo-liberal policy, global exploitation, and imperialist military and cultural apparatus. All these elements aggregate to reinforce lack of social justice and socialist imagination that are 'central to global inequality and underdevelopment' (Saul 2006:2, 16, 36, 50; Amin 2006:2). Thus, contrary to what happened during the Cold War period when the West's policies allowed some friendly Asian economic Tigers and Dragons (such as South Korea and Taiwan) to emerge as part of its own containment policy of Communism, capitalist globalisation has given little elbow room for autonomous development and, to that extent, has appeared ill-suited to produce another round of capitalist development in the Global South. According to Andre Gunder Frank (in Saul 2006:10-11), the only time in history when genuine economic development had occurred in the Periphery was during the two world wars and the Depression of the 1930s. And that happened because trade and investment links between the Core and the Periphery were either completely broken or became extremely weakened. Amin (2006:10 and 39) also contends that US' generic geo-political strategy

of dissuading the formation of regional blocs capable of re-negotiating the current terms of globalisation and the contemporary polarisation spurred by the global expansion of capital have tended to limit the possibility of reproducing the development model of the Global North in the Global South. It should be noted, however, that while the 'tigers' or 'dragons' in East, North-East and South-East Asia (notably members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, ASEAN) may have modeled their developmental states on Japan's success, these states do not, by any means, constitute a monolithic group (Shutt 1998:209; Bergsten 2000:21).

Defined as 'organisational complexes in which expert and coherent bureaucratic agencies collaborate with organised private sectors to spur national economic transformation' (Doner, Ritchie and Slater 2005:328), the strong or hard state at the vanguard of the developmental projects in East and South-East Asia did not arise as a result of the benevolence of the US and the EU. The latter have thinly disguised their lack of interest in further liberalisation of the global economic, financial and trade systems so that they could further their hegemonic drive (Bergsten 2000:20). Asian developmental states have resulted from several factors including the following: the state's relative autonomy, political power and more control over the economy through regulation, including the pursuit of nationalistic industrial policies; exploitation of cheap labour and imported Japanese and western capital and technology; and strong government. Others are: the politics of enlightened self-interest and 'the constraints that make it difficult for politicians to preserve power through clientelist connections to the private sector'; nationalistic and patriotic leaders with long-term visions willing and capable to confront the short-term visions of the IFIs and MNOCs; regulation of the latter to ensure they follow national standards for pay and labour conditions, payment of adequate taxes and the investment and re-investment of part of their profits domestically; and refusal to adopt and execute neo-liberal or market reforms wholesale (Amin 2006:32; Short 1998:162, 209; Doner, Ritchie and Slater 2005:329; Amuwo 2008:13-16). Perhaps the most significant factor in the dramatic economic success story of many an Asian state is what Shutt (1998:209) refers to as the region's 'robust culture of single-minded dedication to national collective goals'. Often routinely conflated with Confucianism, this culture, for Shutt (ibid.) is, almost in all material particular, the anti-thesis of 'the rather self-indulgent individualism of the west'.

On account of their successful economic development and industrialisation, Asian tigers have, in the past decade or so, been able to challenge the dominance of the world's financial and trading systems nested in the G7/G8 (Bergsten 2000:19). On the contrary, African countries have

generally adopted a western-driven dependency path to development which, *grosso modo*, is the anti-thesis of the Asian path in terms of an industrialisation policy that neither protects its internal market from the ravages of competition nor forbids foreign capital from owning imported industrial plant (Amin 2006:88). This largely explains why Asia's developmental states have, by far, bested African countries, in the appropriation and expropriation of the benefits of capitalist globalisation. In other words, the distribution of threat and opportunity of globalisation is uneven across and among nation-states. This distribution is a function of the extent to which each state can deploy its arsenal of structural and empirical capacities to favourably and profitably utilise globalisation for the long-term interest of its citizenry. Two viewpoints are pertinent here. One, because the general experience of the Global South under capitalist globalisation is one of 'the unmediated rule of global capital and the solitary imperative of capital accumulation' (Saul 2006:44), globalisation is little more than 'the preferences of hegemonic states'. This type of globalisation props up the forces that marginalise African values, standards and traditions. These include traditional and Afro-centric mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. Two, in spite of the foregoing, hope and 'optimism maketh not to be ashamed'! Thus, Makinda and Okumu (2008:8, 17, 37) contend that 'globalisation can be managed and controlled for the benefit of human kind'. But can it, for the African segment of humanity?

Mainly because of the phenomenon of the hallowing out of the neo-colonial African state through the agency of orthodox market reforms from the 1980s, structural analysts have tended to cast doubts on the viability of the state and on its power of agency to domesticate global structures (Khan 2006:129). For African states – admittedly at different levels and degrees – globalisation comprises several elements. One, it is part of the larger movement of history which sanctions the logic of post-Cold War domination of western powers on the Global South. The usual refrain is that 'the strong can now extract what it will, and the weak must surrender what it cannot protect'. The latter includes extremely strategic oil, water and minerals under the soil, thus undermining both the territorial integrity/sovereignty and the security of peripheral nation-states and societies. It would appear, on the ground, that post-Cold War globalisation is no more than a deliberate attempt by the masters, overseers and super-managers of the global village (that is, the International Financial Institutions IFIs, TNCs, and the G7 + Russia) to roll back the economic gains recorded by African countries during the Cold War period (Tandon 1998/1999:22; Gelinas 2003:83ff). The so-called Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) has tended to ensure the hegemony of foreign capital over national capital in developing countries. As far as African

states are concerned, MAI translates to a lack of control by their governments over the entry and the *modus operandi* of foreign capital. This is so because MAI frowns at indigenisation policies. On the issue of profit repatriation, it also stipulates a better treatment of foreign capital vis-à-vis national capital. In addition, the former is often protected against indiscriminate appropriation or nationalisation by the state (Tandon 1999:117, 129-130).

Two, as earlier alluded to, contemporary capitalist globalisation reinforces the impact of hard economics and *real politik* by major international public and corporate actors. This is akin to the mercantilist era of capitalism, which was marked by decreasing national control and corresponding increasing external control over the economy by outside players. Contrary to received wisdom, however, the state *qua* state continues to be relevant in the matrix of people-centred growth and development. According to Tandon (1998/ 1999: 17), 'at a time when states are weakening in the face of the power of the large MNCs (or TNCs) the state … remains an important weapon (besides capital) of struggle for markets and control over raw materials'.

Three, given the primacy of financial liberalisation, liberalised capital and commodities in the globalisation matrix, the significance of private and corporate accumulation of capital over the welfare and happiness of people comes into bold relief. With economic liberalisation, the structural basis of conflict in the Global South emanates from the empirical manifestation of globalisation (Khan 2006:134-135). While cheap (but not liberalised) labour is the corollary of liberalised capital, labour is an anathema whenever it appears cheap products from the Global South may jeopardise markets and jobs in the Global North (Tandon 1998/1999:17). Pushed to its logical conclusion, the essence of liberalised capital is the control of the natural resources and endowments of developing countries by western powers and the TNCs that serve as the undertakers of their interests. On the specific African social type, Tandon (1998/1999:19 and 1999:119-120) speaks to two related and interlocking phenomena. The first is the globalisation of Africa from slavery till the contemporary capital-led integration. This has aptly been described as 'a disaster for Africa, both in human terms and in terms of damage to Africa's natural environment'. The second is that it is precisely where Africa has a comparative advantage – that is, the continent's natural endowment of 'agricultural and bio-genetical resources' – that western powers have laboured the most assiduously and treacherously to subdue the continent with a view to appropriating these resources.

A major contradiction in the relations between rich and poor nations is the gap between the theory and practice of free trade. According to the theory, specifically in relation to Africa, increased trade is vital to increased growth. While international trade is expected to strengthen human

development, it has, on the contrary, weakened it through unjust, unequal, and iniquitous trade. This negates the optimism by the UNDP that international trade has been one of the most powerful motors driving globalisation in favour of Africa. Nowhere are the benefits of global integration denied the continent as in the international agricultural sector through the activities of western powers in the WTO (Jawara and Kwa 2004). Two examples will suffice. One, rather than cutting subsidies to agriculture and their farmers in line with repeated promises and pledges, rich nations have constantly increased them. They spend a little less than $1 billion daily to subsidise their own farmers in comparison to a little over the same amount annually given as agriculture aid to poor nations. The trivialisation of agricultural subsidy to American and EU farmers has penalised African farmers. Two, the US' African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA or the Trade and Development Act of 2000) that was, in theory, meant to give African states easier access to the US market has not only involved very few African states, oil has also been the most important commodity involved. The reasons for this are directly related to Washington's over-arching geo-strategic interests on the continent (Brzenzinki 2004:131-135). This phenomenon has prompted Hesse (2005:334) to critique the Clinton government that its declared interest to increase trade with Africa was not matched by a commitment to devote significant resources to development. Melber (2007:8) also argues that both AGOA and the EU's Economic Partnership for Africa (EPA) with the continent 'seem to reflect less the genuine desire for fairer trade than securing access to relevant markets not least in the own interest of the USA and the EU'.

Yet, the same western powers routinely seek to stand on a high moral ground in their analysis of China's Africa foreign policy in general and oil policy in particular. Oil prospecting by Chinese national oil corporations (NOCs) is often pilloried as 'mercantilist' in western rhetoric. Regarding the latter as a 'zero-sum competition for oil among the world's major powers, Downs (2007:52-53) contends that the rhetoric 'mischaracterises the Chinese NOCs' global search for oil and their impact on the world oil market, exaggerates the difference between Chinese and American oil policies and runs the risk of heightening Sino-American tensions over oil'. Again, while conceding that Chinese oil foreign policy (which, as we show below, separates business from politics) is 'amoral' and 'shortsighted', Downs (ibid.) argues that western countries do not behave any better: 'China is not alone in subjugating its foreign policy to its oil interests. The US has fought for oil (Iraq), rolled out the red carpet for visiting heads of state from oil-producing countries with poor human rights records (Equatorial-Guinea) and widespread corruption (Kazakhstan) and overthrown governments to further US oil interests'.

Another structural crisis is the continued premium placed on cash crops, since the colonial era, to the detriment of food crops. The result is food insecurity in several African countries and the politics of food importation and, on occasion, food 'humanitarianism'. The same phenomenon also comes to bold relief whenever political struggles over nationalist, identity and citizenship issues boil over and engender political violence or instability, civil strife, and civil war (Ukeje 2007). If not rapidly nipped in the bud, the ensuing militarisation of society may invariably end up in increased militarism, such that rather than invest in food security, political authorities would be forced to invest in arms and bullets paradoxically with a view to ensuring regime survival and political stability.

How does the nation-state fit into this complexity? First, how conceptualise the nation-state? There are two opposing views on the nature of the contemporary nation-state. The first view posits that, virtually everywhere (but particularly in the Global South), the state is in decline. It is claimed that this is so not only because of a demonstrable loss of control by the nation-state over its own macro-economic policies, but also because social policy is driven more by external than domestic interests. The second view contends that the thesis of the gradual withering away of the nation-state and its corollary – the gradual movement towards the constitution of a 'global state' – is nothing but a myth. As Saul (2006:26) has argued, 'real states are still there to do a lot of the heavy lifting on behalf of capital'. But then there are important differences across nations and continents according to levels of state capacity to confront and tame transnational capital for nationalistic and development purposes. Thus, whereas the state in highly industrialised countries plays the role of enhancing their global competitiveness through the agency of, *inter alia*, TNCs, the state in much of the rest of the world lacks the ability to serve as 'an active agent of national economic advance' (Saul 2006:27-28). Kahn (2006:140) has shown that for the South Asian states of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, intense and intensive market intrusion into their economies has aggregated to diminish 'the potential of these states to function as an even distributor of power and wealth, to deliver social security to marginalised people … to be efficient in the management of capital and to be an effective entrepreneur'.

To understand the character of globalisation in Africa, we need to interrogate the nature and role of the neo-colonial/neo-adjustment state in the development matrix. The state is the most viable mechanism capable of working in tandem with key social forces and organisations for people-centred development. Due to its serious weakening by transnational capital and the

character of domestic power, however, the state's central catalytic role in development has seriously diminished. Clearly, one of the disputed virtues preached by the World Bank and the IMF – good governance is less government – has had the effect of turning the state in much of Africa to no more than 'an investment promotion agency' for western powers and the TNCs. The state is equally no more than 'a mediator between local interests and external capital' and 'the disciplining spokesman of transnational capital'. It has hardly served as the protector of 'the domestic economy from harmful exogenous influences' (Soderbaum and Taylor 2001:676, 687).

Africa is the most victimised region by capitalist globalisation. Due to the lack of an effective control over the exploitation and utilisation of the continent's immense natural and mineral resources, African economies have tended to benefit western powers and TNCs more than Africans themselves (Baregu 2002:19-20). The more the African state is integrated into market economy, the weaker and less autonomous it has become in relation to its historic role as the primary driver and catalyst of people-centred development. Several years of market reforms in Africa have effectively disconnected the state from the people resulting in the latter being treated, except for very isolated pockets, more as an undifferentiated set of consumers rather than as full-fledged citizens with concrete democratic and human rights (Amin 2006:21). The neo-liberal democracy in vogue on the continent, shed of all embellishments, is no more than free market in political garb. The best it offers is some civic, civil, libertarian, and political rights. These rights ought not to be belittled, however, in view of the continent's fairly recent history of state-society relations under one-party and military dictatorships- even though their reach, depth and import are extremely limited. Freedom of speech is rarely accompanied by freedom from poverty, which, *mutatis mutandis*, is the very essence and kernel of popular democracy.

The simultaneous deficit in democracy and development has, in several African states, occasioned a lot of political violence, conflicts and, in some cases, civil wars. Women and children remain the major victims. Foremost gender analyst, Amina Mama (2007:23) is clear on this issue:

> African women have been at the receiving end of globalisation through their direct experience of the development failure that manifests in lives cut short, lives lived out in poverty, lives lived in fear and vulnerability to violence and disease. It is in Africa and upon the bodies and lives of African women in particular that the effects of Western policy dictates have done their worst damage.

The International Community and Resource Conflicts in Africa

Defined by the World Bank as development in reverse, not least because resources directed to conflict are diverted from development, conflicts, particularly intra-state, have been a major defining feature of the post-Cold War international system. Many of these conflicts are a function of identity-based ethnic nationalisms and they have tended to be extensive and highly destructive (Ukeje 2004:39; Makinda and Okumu 2008:83). According to an April 2008 estimate, there are about 26 million internally displaced persons in 52 countries, with the Sudan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq and Afghanistan being the worst affected. While by 2006 there was a 40 per cent reduction in the number of armed conflicts globally since the 1990s, in 2003 alone, Africa was home to 46 of the 89 (armed) conflicts recorded globally. Similarly, between 1998 and 2006, incidences of conflict in Africa grew from 3 to 33, though there was a period of relative lull in between (Ukeje 2007:356). Armed insurgencies or civil wars in several states have relapsed due, among other reasons, to a one-size-fit- all approach in peacemaking and peacekeeping, and hurriedly organised electoral politics.

African conflicts (or, perhaps more correctly, conflicts in Africa) are often under-girded by the phenomenon of privatisation of violence. This has manifested itself through a myriad of militias and private armies. Realist narrative in international relations has seized upon this phenomenon to proclaim that warfare is a structural problem on the continent. Yet, neither ethnicity nor natural resources trigger wars or violent conflicts on their own; hence the merit in the suggestion by Campbell (2001:3) that conflicts on the African continent make no sense except they are linked, among others, to Cold War investments in armaments.

The Major Powers in General

The ensuing armaments culture – in terms of the ideas and structures of militarism – has created a formidable platform for the post-Cold War second scramble for the continent's natural and mineral resources. The incentive for increased US military presence in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea and the accelerated militarisation of the US foreign policy engagement with Africa since 2005 (as seen through the African High Command (AFRICOM); military aid programmes and enhanced arms sales to African countries; Ethiopian military invasion of Somalia as a proxy of Washington; financial aid to warlords, arguably the most spectacular being the late Angolan warlord, Jonas Savimbi, etc.) is African oil/energy resources. In much the same way that Iraq's massive oil reserves (the 3rd largest in the world) have, since 2007, become the object of large-scale exploitation by Western oil companies, in which the big three (BP, Shell and Exxon) are competing

allies, US oil giants (Conoco, Chevron, Amoco, Phillips, etc.) have concessions in almost two-thirds of Somali oil. Most of these concessions were procured during the dying years of President Siad Barre, the late Somali dictator. By the same token, an aggregate of domestic factors (the twin pulls of clan and religion) and external (Somalia's delicate but strategic geopolitical importance to the US, prompting Washington to embrace warlords because she loathes Islamists and Jihadists) has combined to render Somalia as arguably 'the most dangerous place in the world' (Gettleman 2009).

The armament culture has thrown up a lot of interests, actors and values. These include a culture of violence that is a direct consequence of the drive by the major powers for global hegemony; armaments manufacture and manufacturers; and ideology of national security and glorification of warfare. Others are the international arms trade (arguably the West's most lucrative industry since the late 1980s); military aid; genocide; politics of militarism; accentuated and facile manipulation of ethnicity in Africa by the great powers and their global media outlets. We have also witnessed political assassinations of Africa's most patriotic and nationalistic leaders; and the training of future African dictators in Western military academies (Campbell 2000:13). A one-to-one correlation has been made between countries such as Ethiopia, Liberia, Somalia, the Sudan and the DRC 'with the highest number of military officers trained and countries with the worst record of the politics of retrogression' (ibid). This point is important because, as we show below, political rebellion occasioned by genuine citizenship and identity aspirations is a major cause of conflicts on the African continent. The comparative experience of Afghanistan is very instructive in this respect (Millen 2005).

The context of capitalist globalisation is one that some analysts have referred to as a new scramble for Africa's resources and a probable drive towards the continent's re-colonisation (Isike, Okeke-Uzodike and Gilbert 2008:34). The aggressive pursuit of national geo-strategic, economic and political interests by western powers at all costs and by all means is such that important moral and political values they claim drive their foreign policies (for instance democracy and human rights) are ignored whenever it appears they may be counter-productive. The flip side of the valorisation of western interests in Africa is humanitarian crisis and the ensuing humanitarian intervention by the West. Campbell (2000:18) has argued that, even at this level, such interventions are often no more that 'pretexts for countries to act in their own self-interest and for their own geo-political reasons'.

The triumph of foreign capital has been the main story of the relations between resource-rich African states and the resource-hungry triad (US, EU and Japan) as well as China. Several other emerging powers – such as Russia, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Venezuela, to name only a few – are

also rearing to join the fray. The hegemony of foreign capital on the national economies and strategic mineral and natural resources of African states has led to a stranglehold on all key sectors. These range from forests, fisheries and oil through the productive sectors, including manufacturing, mining to related sectors such as banking, insurance, shipping, export-import and foreign exchange transactions. Similarly, the Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) the continent still manages to attract are essentially used for the cheap extraction of Africa's immense raw materials and commodities. By ensuring that the bulk of received FDIs are used for this purpose, oil-mongering US and, to a lesser extent, European powers, are able to save billions of dollars annually (Tandon 1999:127, 131-132). Manji and Mark (2007:17) have summarised the contemporary African predicament as follows: 'rather than develop, Africa is hemorrhaging while the rest of the world accumulates wealth at its expense through the unbalanced exploitation of its natural resources and the enforcement of a distorted international economic system'.

The United States in Africa

The inexorable drive by western powers to valorise their national interests has taken many forms. The example of the US is very instructive and emblematic. While its foreign policy towards Africa has, historically, had very little to do with the continent's autochthonous development and human security (Schraeder 1994), the events surrounding the terrorist attacks of 9/11 2001 have further diminished the prospects of genuine partnership between Washington and Africa. AFRICOM, the latest in the avalanche of so-called security partnerships by the US with Africa (preceded by, *inter alia*, the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) and the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance, ACOTA), already on stream but expected to have been fully operational by the end of 2008, was conceived, like its forerunners, behind the back of African governments and peoples. Yet – like the World Bank and the IMF are wont to do – Washington expects Africans to claim its ownership simply because it is good for the US (Whelan 2007). Africans (but perhaps not their governments) seemed to have learned from very bitter experience that whatever is good for the US and the former European colonial powers is, almost by definition, bad for Africa.

AFRICOM has officially been presented as a tool to foster Africa's development and security, 'strengthen US security cooperation with Africa' and 'create new opportunities to bolster the capacity of African states to deal with threats to their stability and security'. However, the lack of emphasis on the use of 'soft power' for the creation of a people-friendly development, security and governance environment and the creation of a 'more balanced and equal partnership with Africa' raises fundamental questions about the

true intentions of the military command structure. By the same token, since the security interests of the US and Africa are informed by different value and reference frames, only genuine partnerships intended to valorise social democracy and build capacity for good governance can begin to effect a rapprochement between these frames.

In the absence of the foregoing, AFRICOM cannot but be a tool for the protection and enhancement of the security interests of the US and the realisation of her geo-strategic goals on the continent. AFRICOM was partly occasioned by the neo-conservative wing of the Grand Old Party (GOP, the Republican Party), which is in favour of US' unilateralism in global politics. Kaplan (in Heine 2007:532), an 'eminence grease' of this wing, has written infamously that '9/11 was not the result of an excessive, but of an insufficient, involvement of the US in world affairs and the way forward was to strengthen even further the US military apparatus'. Washington's major geo-strategic interests on the continent are woven around the hardly disguised need to either substantially control or (in the worst-case scenario) have an unimpeded access to the continent's resources. Coveted is crude oil (with indubitable interest in the continent's so-called oil triangle in the Gulf of Guinea, from where, in conjunction with North Africa, the US imports 18 per cent of its energy requirements compared to 17 per cent from the Persian Gulf). It has been argued, for example, that the choice of Ghana for the maiden visit of sub-Saharan Africa by President Barrack Obama in July 2009 was dictated not by any genuine commitment to 'good governance' and democracy (two major themes Obama adumbrated during his famous Accra speech) but by the need to rapidly lay claim to Ghana's emerging oil fields (Ross 2009:9). Similarly, vital mineral resources that are much sought after include Niger's rich uranium, the world's 3rd largest (where it has been involved in a running battle notably with France and China), cobalt, diamonds, coltan, gold, manganese, etc. (Isike, Okeke-Uzodike and Gilbert 2008:21-24; Underwood 2008).

Washington's high-intensity militarist intrusion on the continent is complemented by the relatively low-intensity intervention of other powers, including China. This has led to well known negative consequences. Post-9/11 2001 global politics has largely been one of deepening securitisation via US unilateralism and sheer force and the grave undermining of human rights and social democracy on a global scale. Washington has, wittingly or otherwise, created a global discourse of war that reinforces the armament industry and culture evoked above. The government of George Bush Jr. chose a 'relentlessly militaristic path', the result being that the US currently spends almost as much money on warfare as the rest of the world combined (Sachs 2008). It remains to be seen how the popular (not to say populist) President Barrack Obama and his government will deal with this festering issue.

Beijing Beckons

Given the dual nature of the Chinese enigma on the continent (China is simultaneously first and third world; she is at once a great power and a developing country; she needs Africa perhaps as much as Africa needs her, thus the seeming diplomacy of reciprocity in the UN system, etc.), there is something *sui generis* about Beijing's increasingly close relations with Africa at the turn of the new century. Much of the literature on the current phase of Sino-African relations – described by Wenping (2006) as one of 'economic-driven pragmatism' in contradistinction to the 'politically-driven idealism' of the past – is caught between three dominant perspectives: China is either an economic competitor, a development partner or a new hegemon (Alden 2007; Naidu 2007; Marysse and Geenen 2009; Vine 2007; Rotberg 2008; Southall and Melber 2009). Africanists who see China as the West's major economic competitor in Africa read medium and long-term plans into China's Africa foreign policy. The former is the desire to access the continent's fossil energy resources and other minerals and metals (notably uranium, bauxite, aluminium, manganese, and iron ore); while the latter aims at turning Beijing into a major player in the global oil market (Melber 2007:8; Taylor 2007:10). Wenping (2007:26) has argued that 'China's Africa policies are driven by its long-term strategic interests and the rise of China's international status'. It is instructive that within the space of a decade – 1995 and 2005 – Chinese oil consumption doubled to 6.8 million barrels per day, reinforcing its position as the second biggest oil consumer after the US, and ahead of Japan (Taylor 2007:14). In 2008, Angolan oil represented about 18 per cent of Beijing's total oil imports (Vines 2008). More importantly, the expansion of leading Chinese national oil companies (such as the China National Petroleum Corporation, CNPC, and the China Petro-Chemical Corporation, SINOPEC) into Africa and other parts of the globe has been greatly enhanced by the liberalisation and decentralisation of the country's energy sector in the past two decades. The net effect of this phenomenon has been 'a shift of power and resources away from the central government toward the state-owned energy companies and a substantial reduction in the ability of the government to monitor these firms' (Downs 2007:53).

The second perspective – China as Africa's development partner – speaks in essence to the meaning that each of the interlocutors attaches to their interactions. Having been thoroughly subjugated and humiliated by western capital through the World Bank and the IMF, among others, many Africa governments have tended to see Chinese capital as more benign and less intrusive of the sovereignty of African countries. This stance seems to suit China very well, which explains why its investment and trade signatures

litter the continent's financial landscape (Vines 2007:213-219). Small wonder, China is not only the continent's leading lender and infrastructure investor (with its investment in the oil industry and other sectors in, for instance, the Sudan, estimated at $4 billion in 2007); it is also its second trading partner (Raine 2009; Taylor 2007:18). But the jury is out on whether China would behave differently from western powers in securing and entrenching her interests in Africa at the expense of African governments and people. It also remains to be seen whether or not the symbiosis between a China hungry and on rampage for Africa's energy, raw materials and primary commodities, and an Africa in need of agricultural and light manufactures would yield people-friendly developmental dividends. Nor is it likely that Chinese aid, trade and investment drive, as they logically are by the developmental needs of the Chinese economy, would be more an opportunity than a threat to many African states (Rotberg 2008). If anything, Chinese capital – no less than its Western counterpart – possesses the capacity to marginalise nascent African capital.

Similarly, the centrality of the struggle for oil and minerals by China (and other powers) has accentuated the militarisation of African politics and society and exacerbated the banalisation of light weapons and small arms in several African countries. Niquet (2007:3) has made the point that 'for essentially commercial reasons, China is the principal supplier of light weapons to the armed groups that are currently tearing the African continent apart, as well as to African governments'. Reputed to be extremely lethal – on average, no fewer than half a million people are felled by them annually – small arms continue to proliferate and circulate. It has been estimated that, in 2005, there were about 640 million small arms and light weapons in circulation, notwithstanding some important international initiatives to halt the trend. Two of these are the 1998 Moratorium on the Import, Export and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, driven by the ECOWAS, and the 2002 Wassenaar Arrangement Best Practice Guidelines for Exports of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was endorsed by a majority of global arms manufacturers and exporters (UNDP 2005:173).

It is on the third and final perspective on China as the new hegemon in Africa that western powers' irritation about China's presence on the continent seemingly reaches its apogee. Western uneasiness of China's Africa foreign and oil policy is not so much about the 'whys' and 'wherefores' of China in Africa as about 'how' China conducts business on the continent. Undoubtedly, China's inroad into African resources has been eased by what has been called the 'Beijing Consensus' or the 'Chinese model' of political governance. By this is meant China's policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of its

trading partners. It has been claimed that this policy is anchored on the following: a 'business is business, politics is politics approach'; respect for the sovereignty of other states; rapid development of China resulting in its economic prowess without western-style liberal democracy; and Beijing as a new source of capital and investment for the continent (Alden 2008:122; Aning and Lecoutre 2008:47; Li 2008; Manji and Marks 2007; James 2009).

Yet, China's 'soft power' diplomacy and offensive on the continent; its rhetoric of 'historical friendship, equality and common development' with Africa; as well as its so-called 'special relationship', 'shared history', 'no political strings attached and non-interference' aid policy, 'respect for dignity and sovereignty', 'the poor help the poor', and 'win-win' cooperation policy (Naidu 2007:41; Taylor 2007:14; Wenping, n.d, 2006, 2007; Marysse and Geenen, 2009) mask a foreign policy drive that is no less hard-nosed than the foreign policy orientations of China's major global competitors.

Further, China seeks natural resources not only from Africa but also from Central Asia, South America and other parts of the world. By the same token, Beijing's engagement with Africa is driven not only by the quest for natural resources; but also by the Chinese search for influence and African support in global and multilateral institutions. Perhaps on account of the massive diplomatic support, China has historically received from the African bloc in the UN (for example, the restoration of the People's Republic of China to its UN seat in 1971), China tends to believe that the continent is likely to play a more influential role in global politics (Taylor 2007:15). Wenping (2007:31) is probably right to say that 'China will need Africa's political and moral support to become a great power'.

While Chinese labour and capital generally exist side by side with western capital in several African countries (with the possible exception of the Sudan (where Middle East and Asian capital are equally prominent), there are instances where Chinese capital and labour are found in those places in Africa where its competitors are absent. Downs (2007:54) elaborates: 'China's NOCs are actually expanding, rather than contracting, the amount of oil available to other consumers by pumping oil abroad, especially at oil fields in which other companies are unable or unwilling to invest'. Chinese investments in prestige projects such as stadiums and public buildings and the use of Chinese labour in infrastructure projects are becoming simultaneously significant and controversial (Alden 2008:120, 122).

While it certainly is difficult, especially within the context of western global hegemony, to characterise Sino-African relations, China's current status as Africa's second largest trading partner (running a very close second behind the US) has largely been attained through an admixture of pragmatism and

necessity plus ideology spurred by the profit motif. From 2007 to 2008, Sino-African trade increased by 45 per cent to total about $107 billion in 2008 (Hishaw, 2009; Mosinyi, 2009). The interplay of ideology and profit (as well as gradual ascendancy of the latter over the former) in the post-Cold War era comes into bold relief in military agreements, military exchange programmes, arms transfers, the sale of light weapons to governments and rebel movements alike – as in the Sudan and Chad, among others (Alden 2008:120; Aning and Lecoutre 2008:44). Not unlike its western competitors, China has progressively developed an aggressive policy of expanding interests and markets in the key area of energy. With no significant toehold in the Middle East, Beijing's only realistic hope of satisfying the demands and tastes of an emergent Chinese middle class and supplementing her scarce domestic natural resources is importation from Africa. Beijing accounts, respectively, for 60 per cent and 25 per cent of Sudan and Angola's oil exports. Other items of Chinese imports include minerals, precious stones, timber, cotton, and fish products. Beijing's exports to Africa consist of consumer goods/staple commodities machine tools and textiles (Aning and Lecoutre 2008:41, 46).

Cheap and poor quality Chinese textiles that appeal to Africa's poor have contributed to the continent's de-industrialisation through unfair, unequal and lopsided competition. Clearly, the nexus between 'raw materials, trade, infrastructure and non-interference' (Aning and Lecoutre 2008:45) has so far functioned to protect and enhance the geo-strategic and economic interests of Beijing at the expense of its African interlocutors. Unfair trade relations, however they are perpetrated globally (whether in the name of South-South Solidarity or by a western hegemon), have the same effect of compounding human security on the African continent. Nowhere has this phenomenon come into sharper focus in recent times than in the so-called $9 billion 'Marshall Plan' deal between the DRC and China in May 2008, about a third of which is expected to be spent on revitalising the strategic mining sector and Gecamines, the state-owned copper and cobalt mining giant. In a joint venture to be created between Gecamines and a consortium of Chinese companies, including Sinohydro and the China Railway Group, the latter will control a commanding 68 per cent stake compared to a paltry 32 per cent by the Gecamines. In addition, the contract stipulates that China would receive more than 10 million tons of copper and 620,000 tons of cobalt in exchange for the (re) construction of roads, railways, schools and clinics. It is this evident lopsidedness that has prompted the main opposition party in the Congolese Parliament to describe the deal as 'unbalanced and incoherent' because, in its eyes, the DRC has been forced 'to sell off its national heritage to the detriment of several generations' (Walters 2008:6).

France's Neo-Colonialism *per excellence*

Beginning from the inauguration of France's fifth Republic in October 1958 with Presidents that are constitutionally empowered (and further enabled, over the years, by constitutional practice) to be the master of their own foreign policy, Paris has traversed Francophone Africa's political landscape like a colossus. Fifty years on, President Francois Mitterrand's (1981-1995) statement that 'without Africa, France would have no history in the 21st Century' has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. While her influence in global political and economic affairs has waned in the post-Cold War era (partly because it can no longer play her favourite *Tier-Mondiste* (Third Worldist) card of serving as the buffer between the East and the West; partly because of the ascendancy of the EU, with the (united) Federal Republic of Germany as EU's leading hegemon and partly because of Washington's forays into what used to be France's exclusive sphere of influence in Francophone Africa), France's preeminence in Francophone (West) Africa remains mind-boggling.

Through a combination of formal structures and institutions, the stranglehold on the latter region and the crude and cruel exploitation of its substantial strategic resources has continued unabated under the guise of sundry bilateral and multilateral agreements. The structures include the following: the political Franco-African Summit (which, since the 1980s, has become an all-comers' club and is no longer restricted to French-speaking Africa); the cultural *La Francophonie* (where the plausible counterweight of Canada is nothing but irritating to Paris); the financial Franc zone that has been deftly nearly integrated into the Euro zone); and the subsisting mutual defence agreements and military bases (the former having, rather curiously, a clear position on the raw materials of its African signatories!). Equally significant are informal structures engendered by intimate personal relations between sitting French presidents and senior French politicians, on the one hand, and French-speaking Africa's veteran presidents and seasoned dictators (the late Omar Bongo of Gabon, (in power for 40 years between 1969 and 2009) and Paul Biya of Cameroon being archetypal), on the other.

Campbell (2000:24) refers to West (and Central) African markets as 'captive markets' of France. But Paris has thrived and prospered as a result of the continued exploitation and pillage of not only her former colonies, but also of other African countries that have been drawn into France's vortex of *liberté, egalité and fraternité*. Thus, to cite only this case, some former ministers and prominent members of the French society have been on trial since the end of 2008 for their alleged involvement in arms trafficking to Angola in the 1990s. Prominent among them are former Interior Minister, Charles Pasqua and Jean-Christophe Mitterand, son of former President Mitterand. Like the US, France's trade with Africa has resulted in societal poverty and state

anarchy that are directly proportional to the degree of exploitation. In addition, unequal economic relations imposed by market reforms have reinforced the ideas and structures of exploitation that birthed militarism (Campbell 2000:30). Pushed to its logical conclusion, the product of structural violence or militarism and exploitative economic relationships is the privatisation of violence: 'the ideas of the free market provide conditions for the liberalised trade in weapons outside of the control of governments. This liberalisation process has supported military entrepreneurs across Africa' (Campbell 2000:33). While the experience of Africa with other powers has not been any different, the practical import of Franco-African relations has been particularly devastating for many African states, societies and communities because of the umbilical cord that binds commerce and militarism.

Paris has sought to deflect growing criticism away from the acutely aggressive and inhuman pursuit of her national interests in Africa by claiming that the post-Cold War era is more of a *Euro-afrique* than a *Franc-afrique*. That is to say that there is more of EU-Africa multi-lateralism than a perceptible French hegemony in her relations with the continent. France's foreign policy elite claims that *Franc-afrique* represents the gradual abandonment of mercantilist or *gunboat* diplomacy by Paris in favour of a more benign, development-friendly Africa policy. What is important, however, is not so much the discourse of foreign policy as its practice. Clearly, with the US and China breathing down her neck in West Africa, the last thing on the mind of *Palais d'Elysee* is to diminish its presence and visibility in Africa.

Indeed, real *politik* remains the name of the game. Pilloried and heavily criticised by French media and civil society as well as his own Human Rights Minister, Rama Yade, for allowing Libya's Muamar Ghaddafi to use his state visit to France in December 2007 'as a door mat on which he could wipe his shoes of the blood of his crimes', President Nicolas Sarkozy's cynical response was •10 billion! This is the gargantuan sum that is expected to accrue to Paris from the various contracts signed with Tripoli (Berlin 2008). Sarkozy has been true to type. He has simply continued what has become the pattern of France's relations with its ex-colonies (as well as other African countries), namely, the abnegation of the long-term development and security interests of Africa in favour of the economic interests and geo-strategic visions of France's ruling elite.

France's massive presence in Africa is meant to achieve salient foreign policy interests and goals. These include the following: Paris as the leading investor and trading partner of its satellite states; easy access to, and control of, the continent's uranium, through the exploitation of Niger's uranium by Areva, a French company, in order to run its commercial nuclear plants and military nuclear weapons relatively cheaply. Others are a privileged access to

the continent's established and emergent oilfields (which explains why France has always supported whichever government is in power in all of the continent's oil-rich nations without exception) and the acquisition of high-level competitiveness in the very lucrative business of arms sales by serving as the major supplier to her ex-colonies and other African states (Mesfin 2008:16-17). In the light of the foregoing, Mesfin (2008:18) concludes: 'France totally lacks concern for the fate and aspirations of Africans, and it acts only in view of its …lasting and deep-rooted political, strategic and economic interests, the permanence and exigencies of which, more than sheer force of circumstances, account for the continuity in France's policy towards Africa'.

In sum, there is a fundamental sense in which, as Azevedo (1998) has copiously shown in his excellent study of Chad Republic, conflicts and violence have become routinised on African soil through the proliferation of instruments of violence, especially small arms. To be sure, neither small arms nor natural resources export creates violent conflicts on their own. It is the existence of markets for these commodities – as well as their excessive politicisation by a plethora of ingenious and disingenious political, military and para-military actors within and without the continent – that has sustained and exacerbated conflicts. There is empirical evidence across Africa that the exports of gems and timber have resulted in financing conflicts and weakening state capacity. Mazrui's (2004:8) lamentation that 'a continent of little more than 1/10th of the world's population is rapidly becoming a region of half of the displaced people of the world' speaks to the extent of the undue internationalisation of the continent's strategic resources and the degree to which those resources have become more of a burden than a blessing. It has been argued that the source of state decay and societal anarchy in Somali has been the immense difficulty in disarming Somali warring military entrepreneurs, warlords and militias due to the massive privatisation of violence and democratisation of arms and ammunitions in the Somali society (Woodward 1998:148; Kennedy 2009; Amuwo 1992).

How to Explain Conflicts in Africa

The causal process of conflict is, everywhere, extremely complex. The process is often unmastered by governments in countries and societies that are too open to external control and intervention and are, therefore, more susceptible to the dictates of the international community than to the legitimate aspirations of national populations. Thus, while African conflicts have both external and internal causation, the former dimension has always loomed larger, with its array of interests and actors.

Two points merit emphasis here. The first is to dismiss purportedly scientific explanations of war, conflicts and crisis in Africa that demonise and criminalise Africa and Africans more than they explain. A typical 'explanation' by a section of Africanist scholarship, steeped in what Aning, Birikorang and Hutchful (2003:1) refer to as 'pseudo-academic Afro-pessimism' is that civil wars on the continent are not so much part of the withering away of the neo-colonial African state project as a function of so-called 'habit of conflict' inherent in Africa and Africans. Several variants of this type of argument litter the literature of this 'school of thought', not least the perception that African conflicts are 'uncivil wars', that are 'intrinsically unjustified and dysfunctional, a horrid irrationality' (Aning, Birikong and Hutchful 2003:7).

The second is not unrelated, namely, that to the extent that there is too much external interference in African affairs and on account of the endemic weakness of the neo-colonial state, the 'resource-curse' approach to African conflicts is grossly inadequate on at least three counts. For one, it is excessively deterministic. For another, it overlooks the political economy of scarcity. Finally, too much attention is paid to local/national actors to the detriment, for political, ideological and geo-strategic reasons, of transnational actors. In other words, while the state/political elites, militia groups/warlords/criminal gangs/money-lords, domestic civil society organisations (CSOs), and the inefficient state bureaucracy are put on the spot, the activities of critical external actors such as private security organisations, mercenaries, international traders and companies, arms suppliers, transnational corporations, international financial institutions (IFIs), international CSOs, and the great powers are often de-emphasised (Obi 2008:8; Alao 2007; Akinyemi 2009:220-221). Freed from high-wire internal and external politics, neither oil nor solid minerals cause conflicts any more than ethnicity or ethnic favoritism causes wars (Alao and Olonisakin 2000:27-28). We return to this theme below. As Obi (2008:9) has argued, it is the undue politicisation of minerals and oil through their transformation by 'market, social and power relations' that spawns conflicts. Alao (2007:278) echoes this point when he says that 'the prevalence of violent conflicts over natural resources in Africa is due largely to the management of these resources'.

External Causation

The role of the international private sector in intra-state conflicts has grown considerably over the years. Mburu (1999:104) has shown, for instance, that the latent causes of violence and conflict in the Horn of Africa are an interplay among national and international social, economic and political fac-

tors. There are, for instance, links between conflicts, resource companies and private security. Similarly, an umbilical cord of sorts wedges military entrepreneurship with latter-day imperialism of both established and emergent powers. Warlords and imperialism have tended to work amicably together. This is because imperialism thrives better in societies and states cut asunder by high-intensity political instability/disorder, conflict and violence. Hubert (2000) underlines the importance of international trading networks used by shadowy and militia groups to launder fabulous resources and huge amounts of foreign exchange. Baregu (2002:20, 22-28) also speaks to the significance, in the Great Lakes in general and in the resource-rich DRC in particular, of multiple actors driven by a complexity of interests. As already alluded to above, while internal parties and actors abound both in the background and in the foreground; largely invisible but powerful external actors also come into bold relief.

In a fundamental sense, conflicts and civil wars in Africa have generally been a function of the interests of a combination of transnational capital/class, state and global hegemonic states and social forces in search of lucrative but cheap commodity and resources on the African continent. The intense competition among these powers for the control of Africa's natural and mineral resource base has often occasioned structural/latent conflict. When unequal domestic access to power and resources degenerates, this evolves into manifest or actual conflict. In Liberia, during the 20th Century, the Americo-Liberian elite did little to discourage the crude exploitation of the country's natural resources by foreign capital (Outram 1997:358). Similarly, 'blood diamonds', among other strategic minerals, have been implicated as a most coveted commodity in many conflicts across the continent.

The Angolan diamond trade (the country has the 4th largest diamond reserves in the world) has, for instance, increasingly become a free-for-all enterprise, anchored on what has been described as 'militarised commercialism'. This is a symbiosis between security and mining, undergirded by market forces (Dietrich 2000:186, 176-177; UNDP 2005:166-167). The veteran Ugandan scholar, Professor Nabudere (2004), famously described the DRC civil war as 'Africa's First World War'. On the same war, Baregu (2002:33) contends that it was all 'about high international politics as opposed to low domestic politics (democratisation, human rights, ethnicity, etc.)'. He adds: 'it (was), first and foremost, an imperialist war and like all imperialist wars in modern history, it (was) a war about the distribution of wealth and power'. Noting that the US was the biggest winner in the DRC debacle insofar as its armament industry was a foremost supplier to all the countries and warring factions/militias involved, Baregu insists that 'behind the pro-democracy, pro-growth rhetoric, the less publicised role of the US in Africa

has been the steady supply of arms, ammunitions and military training – all stoking the fires of armed conflicts in the continent'. In the process, the security of people, states and societies are constantly undermined and endangered (Ukeje 2007:357).

Internal Causation

Evidently, conflicts are also caused and driven by internally induced factors. On this score, Soederberg (2001:861) has argued that:

> Policy-makers in the 3rd World cannot be dismissed as mere spectators, rather they must be seen as players in the game itself, the play being attempts at making peripheral staging posts more attractive investment sites in the face of decreasing levels of political legitimacy of periphery governments and increasing forms of socio-economic inequalities.

This brings us to the theoretical postulations of greed and grievance in the explanation of African conflicts and civil wars. As earlier remarked, in much of Africanist scholarship ethnicity has virtually become a one-size-fit-all explicatory schema in the study of African politics. It is seized upon to explain a wide range of issues – from religious crisis through democracy deficit to the absence of people-centred development. Ethnicity is regarded as the proverbial bane of the continent's politics, democracy and development. Exorcise ethnicity one way or the other from African societies and politics, and Africa will be a little paradise on earth! Yet, ethnicity, not unlike corruption, is not the specialty of any race or people; it is, rather, a common affliction of all humanity. The problem is that what western scholars journalists and analysts often perceive as ethnic conflicts are, in reality, class wars. Thandika Mkandawire (in Agbu 2006:7) has suggested that we cannot fully understand the emergence of rebel groups except we adequately come to terms with elite politics, intra-elite conflicts and the responses of the society *writ large*. This suggests that what often is at stake is not ethnicity *per se* but politicised, constructed and reconstructed ethnicity. This phenomenon has been cynically and cruelly promoted by western powers in Africa since the colonial days, only to be reinforced by the indigenous inheritance elite. Warlords and military entrepreneurs have also used politicised ethnicity as a strategy of plunder and pillage on the continent (Baregu 2002:28).

Take the political violence consequent upon the presidential elections in Kenya on December 27, 2007 as an example. Clearly unable to fathom what had suddenly gone wrong with one of Africa's most 'stable neo-liberal democracies', leading western electronic media (such as *CNN*, *BBC*, *Sky News* and *Radio France Internationale)* resorted to the well-worn ethnic cleansing thesis. This is the corollary of the so-called theory of *ancient hatred*

among ethnic nationalities across the continent. According to this line of argument, the post-election violence in Kenya – with special emphasis on Nairobi's slums – was a direct ethnic struggle between the majority Kikuyu ethnic nationality to which incumbent President Kibaki belongs and the minority Luo ethnic nationality from where hails Raila Odinga, the main opposition leader. These analysts appeared not to have been bothered by the fact that, between them, the Kikuyu and the Luo do not account for half of the Kenyan population.

A more thoughtful and more scientific explanation has been proffered by Warah (2008:12), who situates the root of the political violence in economic and political inequalities in the Kenyan society. While conceding that there is a linkage among rigged elections, ethnic chauvinism and class antagonism, Warah argues that the latter is the most potent explicatory schema. She advances four reasons why this is the case. One, not unlike Brazil and South Africa, Kenya is one of the most unequal societies in the world. Two, Nairobi's slums are ethnically segmented and diverse. They not only figure among the 'biggest and most deprived slums in the world', they are also juxtaposed with 'some of the wealthiest homes and neighbourhoods in Africa'. Three, there are no provisions whatsoever in the country's Constitution for distributive politics. To that extent, it is a Herculean task to seek to force the hands of the state to embark on the distribution of the country's resources. And, finally, while there is no doubt that Kenya's political struggles have tended to assume ethnic dimensions; they have equally retained more fundamental and more enduring links with equity and material questions than with ethnicity. On a wider canvass, the so-called 'tribal narrative' is of secondary importance and, to that extent, is of limited import (Campbell 2000:3).

The Internal-External Nexus

Greed speaks to resource-based explanations of conflict situations. According to this theory, economic opportunities are a motivation for conflicts or civil wars. Paul Collier has been one of the major proponents of this approach in recent years. His main argument is that 'the true cause of much civil war is not the loud discourse of grievance but the silent force of greed' (Collier 2000:101). He elaborates: 'although societies as a whole suffer economically from civil war, some small identifiable groups do well out of it. They thus have an interest in the initiation, perpetuation and renewal of conflict. Naturally, these interests tend to remain low-profile. Hence, the discourse of grievance is much louder than that of greed, even if it is less significant'. As summarised by Abdullah (2006:12), 'civil war is about resources; rebels are motivated by greed, not grievance'. Agbu (2006:3) argues that 'most of the wars in Africa

have been fought over or are being fought over the control of mineral wealth, like the civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola and the DRC'. On the specific DRC civil war, Lemarchand (2007:19) concurs by underlining the impact of greed on both intra- and inter-ethnic enmities, a phenomenon reinforced by the intervention of Uganda and Rwanda in favour of their Congolese clients, as well as by five other countries and no fewer than five Congolese factions. It would seem that the prize or trophy at stake – diamonds, gold, cobalt, tantalum, etc. – was worth the trouble (Nabudere 2004; Alao and Olonisakin 2000:31). This analysis should be nuanced, however, in order to capture the complexity at work, from the perspectives of both national and transnational actors, in particular the pattern and subtlety of transnational forces in African conflicts. Thus the utility of the distinction between two different, if related, phenomena: natural resources that cause conflicts, and natural resources that fuel conflicts (Alao and Olonisakin 2000:25). Conflicts and civil wars are more likely to be provoked by present, clear and definite grievances but can be spurred along and prolonged by economic considerations. Conflicts are not likely to be the result of greed *per se*. Hyden (in Agbu 2006:3) makes the point that 'African conflicts are typically over resources … they are usually triggered off by competitive politics associated with the election systems …'

It makes eminent sense to say that, at least for the first set of African conflicts, rebels were, in all probability, driven more by grievance than by greed. This is because they could never have imagined the magnitude of mineral and natural resources available for plunder and primitive accumulation. Subsequent generations of political rebels may not have been so motivated and propelled. There is, however, an external dimension to this equation: greed or economic motivation may be a more suitable ideological label for transnational capital and local power wherever the former goes. As if the permanent exploitation of the strategic mineral and natural resources of African societies is not enough, the alliance between global capital and local power often routinely (as in the Niger Delta region of oil-rich Nigeria), 'unleashes terror on the poor …(and) destroys human beings and the environment' (Okonta and Douglas in Osha 2006:15).

The central thesis of grievance or political ideological explanation of conflicts is that conflicts are a political project and a political struggle. These sometimes feed into the larger and broader political struggles of the African people for genuine liberation and emancipation. Social, political and economic deprivation, income and asset inequality, political repression, lack of political tolerance or exclusionary politics and sundry inequities have been the main causes of political violence (Biswas 2005; Ghannoushi 2008:12; Collier 2000:110). Picciotto (2007:2) claims that 'weak governance explains poverty

as well as conflict: weak states cannot compromise, cannot deliver services, and cannot resolve grievances peacefully'. According to Stedman (in Agbu 2006:6), political grievances often revolve around four major issues: identity, participation, distribution and legitimacy. The struggle for identity and citizenship is a natural phenomenon as these categories define the very humanity of individuals, a people and a community. Since the mid-1980s, African peoples and communities have been experiencing acute crisis of identity and citizenship in welfare provisioning. This crisis has fed into nationality and development deficit (Soderbaum and Taylor 2001:690-1) and the resultant clamour and struggle for the valorisation of what Amos Sawyer (in Pham 2006) refers to as 'shared sovereignty' in contradistinction to 'unitary sovereignty'. A major grievance of many ethnic nationalities (both majority and minority, aside those in power) is the almost total absence of human development and human security. Preoccupation with human development has focused attention, following the French polyglot scholar, Michel Foucault on *bio-politics*. The latter is concerned with the biological well being of a population, particularly disease control and prevention, adequate food and water supply sanitation, shelter and education.

On account of market reforms, internal to virtually all African societies has been the widening gap between pockets of affluence and oceans of deprivation. Politics of inequalities has been deepened by geography or regionalisation and by integrationist policies of ruling elites that seek to vitiate group identities. Inequalities have tended to pitch groups with access to state and societal resources against those seeking access; and conflicts and civil wars have ensued not only over oil and solid minerals, but equally over land and water (Alao 2007). Inevitably, there is a strong linkage between poverty, identity and conflict (Ukeje 2007:357, 359-360; Isike, Okeke-Uzodike and Gilbert 2008:26, 29, 32; Mburu 1999:103; Agbu 2006:23, 35-36; Mukanda and Okumu 2008:80; Abdullah 1998).

Within the foregoing context, conflicts appear as a legitimate enterprise that seeks to overthrow structures, values and practices of internal colonialism. Saul (2006:45) has explained grievance-driven conflicts by linking both the domestic and international dimensions of expansion and exploitation by capital. He argues that some conflicts are political struggles with local flavour, but with the trans-national goal of challenging the global system in a most fundamental way. He cites the demands of the Zapatistas in Mexico and the resistance to Shell Oil by the Ogoni and other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria's Niger Delta as notable examples of struggles 'against the grossest of exploitation and raping of the environment' by 'global firms, imperialist states and their local intermediaries'. An additional example is the marginalisation

of the oil-rich Cabinda enclave in Angola, which accounts for more than half of that country's annual oil output. The result of this political exclusion is the formation of a separatist guerilla movement – the Liberation Front for the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC). On account of this, Cabindans have had their human and civil rights curtailed and have been subjected to military detentions and other types of inhumane treatment (Tobi and Rossouw 2009:6). According to the *Human Rights Watch* (2009), these abuses were very severe between September 2007 and March 2009. Saul (2006:47) also underlines the salience of 'voices of diversity and of local definition of needs, possible modes of action and cultural integrity' begging for recognition but which are systematically suppressed by local and international sites of power under the grip of transnational capital.

Since both greed and grievance often get enmeshed in the real world of conflict and violence, it makes eminent sense to suggest a balance between the two analytic frameworks. With key external interests at stake, the dynamics of contemporary international political economy of oil and other strategic minerals is that political grievances easily metamorphose into economic-driven warfare. The main beneficiaries are transnational capital and the arms industries of the great powers, as well as the domestic military-commercial complex.

Conclusion

We have attempted to show, both implicitly and explicitly, that the economic and geo-strategic interests of the great powers have either been the root cause of conflicts in Africa or have fuelled and prolonged them. We have also argued that the almost theological devotion of the continent's ruling elites to the values, mores and institutions of capitalist globalisation that have structured the continent's under-development, further weakened and imperiled the neo-colonial state, de-legitimised and criminalised political and other leaderships, and impoverished its dynamic and resourceful population, has equally contributed to conflict and violence over resource control. On balance, however, external causes of conflicts have, by far, outweighed internal ones. In the process, the armament culture has become routinised.

Yet, there is nothing fundamentally burdensome, let alone accursed, about Africa's rich outlay of natural and mineral resources. They are a gift of nature to humanity. What has turned a potential blessing into an actual burden is the illicit covetousness and exploitation of the continent's resources by western and other powers and the trans-national corporations that defend and enhance their interests in unbridled collusion with Africa's ruling elites. And this is often done without any regard whatsoever for the well-being of

ordinary Africans. In the 2005 edition of its *Human Development Report* (HDR), the UNDP (2005:165-166) makes the important point that 'the links between resources and violent conflict are neither automatic nor inevitable'. It adds that while 'the availability of weapons may not cause conflict…it makes conflict more likely, and it increases the likelihood that conflicts will take more violent forms' (p. 172).

Writing two years later, in a review of Nicholas Shanson's highly controversial and polemical book, *Poisoned Wells: The Dirty Politics of African Oil* (2007), which amplifies a creeping tradition that tends to regard African oil as evil and, in consequence, a danger to 'western society, security and civilisation', Cyril Obi (2007:397-399), foremost oil analyst, argues that oil multinationals, not African governments, should be blamed for the 'paradox of plenty' of oil-rich African states. He elaborates: 'the real threat is not from oil, it is from those hegemonic global forces to whom oil means everything-whose supply at all times, must be guaranteed at any cost, if need be, by force. It is the premium that these forces – all outside Africa – place on oil, everywhere it exists in the world, and the competition between them over the remaining of the world's shrinking oil reserves that are the real threat' (ibid 399).

In the debate about the way out of this impasse, it has been suggested that the US, as the 'main beneficiary of a stable and predictable international order', should also 'take a lead in forging international rules and regimes' with a view to resolving conflicts and ensuring global peace and prosperity (Heine 2007:532). There is little to suggest, both in recent and in contemporary foreign policy orientations of the US, that Washington can effectively play this role. The self-styled *gendarme* of the world would, in all probability, be the first to break the rules. A more practical solution cannot but be a political work of the long haul. This will necessarily bring together a coalition of nations, societies, communities and peoples across the globe that are victims of capitalist globalisation and capitalist militarisation through unmitigated internationalisation of their resources. Their vision will be to expose and systematically confront transnational capital/state/class, global hegemonic forces, and their local surrogates – as well as their objective allies globally – that have turned otherwise blissful natural and mineral resources into a heavy yoke for governments and citizens in developing countries.

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