Africa's Own Trusteeship System: *Pax Africana* Has Begun*

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Self-colonization and *Pax Africana* have begun in Africa. If my critics have not recognized the trend in the role of Uganda and Rwanda in the overthrow of the Mobutu Regime in Zaire (now Congo), my critics have been less than fully alert.

When I started the debate about inter-African colonization earlier, in this decade, few people took me seriously. By the time Archie Mafeje discovered my thesis about self-colonization, Archie went vitriolic and abusive! Other critics in your columns have argued that my thesis was either evil or unreal. Yet by mid-1997 it was evident that history was indeed turning in my direction.

Africans were beginning to assert control over their unruly neighbours.

The most dramatic of these events was Uganda' s role in helping the Tutsi to reassert control over Rwanda in 1994. This was a kind of ' Bay of Pigs' operation, African style. The original ' Bay of Pigs' project launched by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 consisted of Cuban exiles trained by the United States to invade Cuba in the hope of overthrowing Fidel Castro. They were intended to land in the Bay of Pigs in Cuba and start an anti-Castro revolution. The whole operation was a total fiasco.

More than thirty years later exiled Rwandans trained in Uganda invaded Rwanda in order to overthrow the Hutu regime there and end the genocide against the Hutu. The aim of the Rwanda Patriotic Front from Ugandan was not counter-genocide but conquest and control. This particular ' Bay of Pigs' operation – African style – was completely successful in 1994.

In the face of the anti-Tutsi genocide in Rwanda, Westerners have sometimes asked: ' Why don' t Africans themselves stop this kind of thing?' The answer in 1994 was: ' The Africans did stop it. The genocide was ended not by French troops, but by the Rwanda Patriotic Front, aided by Uganda' . It was an impressive case of *Pax Africana*.

Then came the problems of 1996 and early 1997 in what was then Zaire. The Mobutu regime over-reached itself when it tried to empower remnants of the Hutu [Interahamwe] in refugee camps in Zaire, and strip indigenous Zairian Tutsi of their Zairian citizenship.

The Zairian Tutsi – helped by Rwanda – decided to resist the intimidation of the Zairian armed forces. To the astonishment of everybody, the Zairian armed forces were a paper monkey, even less than a paper tiger. They were easily defeated by the Tutsi resisters.

Before long the Tutsi rebellion became multi-ethnic. Enter Laurent Kabila with his *rendez-vous* with history. The rebellion also became multinational, aided by Rwanda, Uganda and also Angola. The anti-Mobutu movement was both Pan-African and trans-ethnic. It finally culminated in the overthrow of a dictatorship which had lasted from 1965 to 1996. At least in ousting Mobutu Sese Seko, this was a triumph for *Pax Africana*, though we still do not know how much of an improvement over Mobutu, Laurent Kabila will become.

The optimists see him as another Yoweri Museveni. Museveni too had created a private army to challenge the official army of the state, Museveni' s army like that of Kabila had defeated the army of the state. And then Museveni in power embarked on three strategies of change: first, stabilization of the country; second, restoring the economic health of the country; and third, initiating cautious democratization.

Museveni has had remarkable success in the first two goals, the quest for stability and the restoration of the economic health of Uganda. His progress in both has been faster than most observers (and most Ugandans) ever expected. His third goal of cautious democratization is still in its early stages but so far, so good.

Will Laurent Kabila be another Yoweri Museveni? The answer is only if Kabila is lucky. What is clear is that Kabila' s initial triumph would probably not have occurred without the help of Museveni, both directly, and through Rwanda. For the time being this is a success story for *Pax Africana*, though its long-term future is unclear.

A different kind of successful Pax Africana is the story of Liberia and the role of ECOMOG in ending its civil war leading Liberia towards a relatively and peaceful general election in July 1997. Once again this was a case of neighbouring African countries accepting responsibility for a malfunctioning brotherly state, and going into the weaker state to try and do something about it.

ECOMOG' s lack of experience, along with disarray in Lagos, initially resulted in a lot of disastrous false starts in peace-keeping in Liberia. But in the end the mission was relatively successful, and Liberians had their say at the ballot box. While the overwhelming choice of Liberians for Charles Taylor (the architect of the civil war) puzzled most observers, it was at least a free democratic choice. Behind that choice was the fumbling but historic role of ECOMOG in pioneering *Pax Africana*.

How do we discourage African armies from staging military coups against democratically elected governments? The di-

lemma arose with the first Black African military coup against Sylvanus Olympio in Togo, which was also post-colonial Africa' s first presidential assassination. This was in 1963.

The initial Pan-African response was in boycotting the successor regime in Togo. At the inaugural meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, there was one vacant seat. It was Togo' s originally intended for the assassinated Sylvanus Olympio. Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania wept publicly for Olympio. And the Charter of the newly formed OAU explicitly included a clause ' condemning political assassination in all its forms' .

But was anybody prepared to use force to oust the regime which had assassinated Sylvanus Olympio? At that time no one was. *Pax Africana* was alive but underdeveloped.

Almost exactly ten years later (to the month) a coup took place in Uganda. Idi Amin Dada overthrew the government of Milton Obote. Again one of those most deeply shattered by the event was President Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania. He roundly condemned the coup, and personally refused to have any dealings with Idi Amin Dada. But was anybody prepared to use force to try and reverse the coup? At that time not even Nyerere was! *Pax Africana* was indeed sensitive, but not yet forceful.

Eight years later Julius Nyerere was indeed prepared to use force against Idi Amin' s persistent national and regional destabilization. In 1979 Nyerere was at least ready to order Tanzania' s army to march all the way to Kampala to overthrow Idi Amin. Nyerere was successful in ousting the Ugandan dictator and in establishing a temporary Tanzanian protectorate in Uganda before multiparty elections could be held. Nyerere made two mistakes in his protectorate over Uganda. He made his *Pax Africana* too brief, and he tried too hard to ensure the return of Milton Obote to power. Both decisions were catastrophic for Uganda. The interlude of *Pax Africana* was good but not well-focussed. And the second Obote administration in Uganda turned out to be a tragedy, only to be ended by Yoweri Museveni' s triumph in 1986.

Then came the military coup on Sierra Leone in 1997, which overthrew the elected government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. In this case *Pax Africana* took a wholly unexpected turn. A military government in Nigeria decided to defend, and attempt to reinstate, a democratically elected government in Sierra Leone.

This was certainly an improvement on the older story of Western democracies propping up military regimes like that of Mobutu Sese Seko which was twice saved militarily by the West in the face of a domestic challenge from its own Shaba province.

I personally would rather see a military regime like that of Nigeria defending democracy in Sierra Leone, than see a democracy like that of France or the United States propping up military dictatorships in Less Developed Countries. Yet for the time being the story of Sierra Leone seems to be a stalemate. *Pax Africana* has not yet fully triumphed, though the whole of Africa has condemned the June 1997 coup in Freetown.

The idea I have recommended of a Pan-African emergency force is also gathering momentum in the 1990s. The Blue Eagle Project in Southern Africa has involved training the troops of at least eight African countries to be in readiness for special responsibilities in situations of political crisis. Much of the training so far has occurred in Zimbabwe. The Blue Eagle could develop into the ECOMOG of Southern Africa, but with more appropriate training for a peace-keeping role. Here again is a potential arm of *Pax Africana*.

The Clinton administration in the United States has been championing a rapid deployment African force. It has also been involved in training troops from countries like Senegal and Uganda for peace-keeping roles. My own disagreement with the Clinton paradigm concerns the accountability of the African rapid deployment force. The Clinton administration would like to trace accountability ultimately to the Security Council of the United Nations, which is itself controlled by Western powers. I believe that the Pan-African Emergency force should be accountable to Africa itself, through such revised institutions of the OAU as Africa may be able to devise. Alternatively, accountability should be towards relevant sub-regional organizations in Africa to ECOMOG in West Africa, to SADEC in Southern Africa, and to a newly evolving Eastern Africa Economic Community. Only such an Afrocentric accountability would save *Pax Africana* from becoming a mere extension of *Pax Americana*.

Also relevant to the unfolding saga of self-colonization in Africa is the hesitant hegemonic role of the Republic of South Africa. Within the wider picture of Pan-Africanism is an emerging sub-theme of *Pax Pretoriana*, the muscle of Pretoria in sorting out political crises in neighbouring countries. Sorting out Lesotho' s problems with its military is one case in point.

In fact the Republic of South Africa is under pressure to be more active in other African crises from helping reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of Congo to pressuring UNITA to stop fighting and join the democratic process in Angola, *Pax Pretoriana* at its best can be a branch of *Pax Africana*.

Democratic trends in Africa are real, but still very fragile. The remaining military regimes are under pressure to democratize; single party systems have been giving way to multiparty systems; authoritarian systems like that in Kenya are facing angry demands for constitutional reform. Africa is taking hesitant steps towards democracy.

But democratization within individual African countries is only part of the process of resuming control over Africa' s destiny. *Pax Africana* is the continental face of this self-determination provided the motives, goals and means are in tune with Africa' s ultimate well-being.

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