



## Original Research Article

# Black Africa and the Nasser-Gaddafi Neo-Colonial Phenomenon: A Historical Analysis of the Dynamics of Black Africa-Arab Relations

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There is no doubt that Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser was the precursor of modern Arab diplomacy in Black Africa. In other words, what became known in the 1970s and beyond as the Arab-Sub-Saharan Africa policy stemmed from the official Egypt's Africa policy of the 1950s and to some extent the 1960s. Thus, it is impossible to speak of an Arab-Africa foreign policy without reference to Egypt. Egypt thus, could be described as the diplomatic bridge through which modern Arab diplomacy crossed to the Black Continent. The demise of Abdel Nasser in 1969 and the subsequent emergence of the Libya's Muammar Gaddafi heralded what could be seen as a continuum of the same Nasserist Arab imperial tendency in Black Africa. Seen in this light it becomes germane to place the present study in four periodic phases: the Egyptian phase, which runs from 1952 to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963; the era of containment, which began from 1963 to the six-day war of 1967; the Arab phase which extends from 1967 onwards, but which, in respect of the present study, terminates in 1993, and the Gaddafi continuum which ended with his demise in 2011.

**Keywords:** Arab neo-colonialism, Black Africa, Abdel Gamal Nasser, Muammar Gaddafi, Middle East conflict.

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## INTRODUCTION

From the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March 1977 Egypt hosted an Afro-Arab summit conference in Cairo Part of their "Declaration" on Afro-Arab co-operation stated:

The Arab and African countries condemn imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, Zionism, racial segregation and all forms of racial and religious discrimination and apartheid particularly in Africa, Palestine and the occupied Arab territories (Chibwe, 1977).

The Cairo meeting was in fact the culmination of a series of intervening diplomatic events in the history of Black Africa and Arab co-operation. Even though most of the issues embodied in the above declaration had been raised in successive meetings of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Cairo Declaration could be described as a watershed in the long struggle of the Arab nations to woo Black Africa since the appearance of Abdel Nasser's *The Philosophy of the Revolution* in 1954.

Before the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 and the subsequent publication of *The Philosophy of the Revolution* relations between the Arab nations and their Black African counterparts remained the usual old pattern of interactions in the forms of

annual pilgrimages to Mecca by Black Muslim adherents, trade in human and non-human articles. These were normally carried out through the Sahara Desert and Indian Ocean. However, there was that Arab imperial tendency to dominate Black Africans wherever contacts existed between the two peoples. Except in the annual pilgrimages to Mecca, these levels of interaction, however, were greatly weakened by the colonial interlude.

On the level of nationalism, both peoples having had divergent historical and colonial experiences with distinct cultural backgrounds pursued divergent courses of national aspirations. Thus while Pan Africanism focused on the cultural and political emancipation of the Black man from European domination, Pan-Arabism aimed at the cultural and political redemption of the Arab people, first from Turkish domination and later from the Europeans.

It was however left to Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser to redefine and redirect the old pattern of Arab-Black Africa interactions. This apparently came through the emerging Israeli-Palestinian conflict which called for an entirely new form of Arab-Black Africa relations. Arabs, cannot, Nasser declared:

“... stand aloof from the terrible and terrifying battle now raging in the heart of that continent between five million whites and two hundred million Africans. We cannot stand aloof for one important and obvious reason— we ourselves are in Africa. Surely the people of Africa will continue to look to us— we who are the guardians of the continent’s northern gate— we who constitute the connecting link between the continent and the outer-world. We certainly cannot under any conditions, relinquish our responsibility to help spread the light of knowledge and civilization up to the very depth of the virgin jungles of the continent” (Nasser, 1955).

Soon after, Egypt became a centre for Black African nationalist leaders, as well as training ground for leaders of African liberation movements. Nasser thus initiated the first ever Arab-Black Africa-centred foreign policy.

The April 1955 Bandung Afro-Asian conference was another watershed in Afro-Arab relations. Of the twenty-nine Asian and African countries that participated, only Liberia, Ethiopia and semi-independent Gold Coast were Black African nations. The weakness of these Black African States thus afforded the astute Nasser the opportunity to be the mouthpiece of the Arab World and Black Africa as well. As Mohamed A. El-khawas rightly observed, the conference provided Egypt with the opportunity to link the Palestinian question with the problem of imperialism in both Africa and

Asia. Thus, Egypt, with the backing of other Arab states, requested the inclusion of these two problems in the conference agenda (El-Khawas, 1975). Thereafter, Nasser formed the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement, whose first conference was held in Cairo from December 26, 1957 to January 1, 1958, and eventually established a permanent secretariat there.

### EGYPTIAN PHASE, 1952-1963

The Egyptian diplomatic initiative was characterized by what in broad terms was defined as *Nasserism*. *Nasserism* (*al-Nasiriyyah*) was used in derogatory terms by President Nasser’s Western opponents to describe the particular reflections of the man’s personal dictatorship or passive ideological presumptuousness. However, it later became his ideas and resulting political and socio-economic policies, which fervently centred on Arab nationalism, socialism and what he called neutralism. In strict terms *Nasserism*, according to Yaacov Shimon stands for:

“The social and political doctrine of Egypt’s Gamal Abdul-Nasser, the political and social attitudes of Arabs in many countries, mainly in the late 1950s and 1960s, who regard ‘Abdul-ul-Nasser as the leader of all Arabs, and Egypt under his leadership as the prototype of an Arab nation progressing towards national freedom and social justice” (Shimon, 1987).

Nasser’s rise to power came as a consequence of the coup of 23 July, 1952, by the Free Officers led by him, which overthrew King Farouk, and appointed General Muhammed Neguib as the Military Head of State. After a protracted power tussle between General Neguib and Nasser, the latter eventually assumed the reins of power in 1954. *Nasserism*, as an instrument of foreign policy, consists of two interrelated angles, viz: the aspect of Pan-Arabism which focused on the foreign sphere, and that of Arab socialism which involved the radical transformation of the socio-economic structure of the Egyptian society (Dekmajian, 1971). Here, however, the concern is the former, which forms the crux of Egyptian foreign policy actions, and from where other policy directions radiated. In other words, supportive of, or rather interrelated with what he called the Arab circle, were the African and Islamic circles, which constituted a tripod of foreign policy. To however get at the fundamental basis of Nasser’s foreign policy towards Black Africa, one will begin by examining in some detail, the ideological and structural constituents of the African circle, which is of most importance to the present study. In describing the motivating spirit behind the African circle, Nasser stated:

“If we direct our attention after that to the second circle, the circle of the continent of Africa, I would say, without exaggeration that we cannot, in any way, stand aside, even if we wish to, away from the sanguinary and dreadful struggle now raging in the heart of Africa between five million whites and two hundred million Africans. We cannot do so for one principal and clear reason, namely that we are in Africa. The people of Africa will continue to look up to us, who guard the Northern gate of the continent and who are its connecting link with the world outside. We cannot, under any condition to relinquish our responsibility in helping, in every way possible, in diffusing the light of civilization into the farthest parts of that virgin jungle. There is the artery of life of our country. It draws its supply of water from the heart of the continent. There remains the Sudan, our beloved brother, whose boundaries extend deeply into Africa and which is a neighbour to all the sensitive spots in the centre of the continent (Nasser, 1959).

From the above, one can discern two main propelling foreign policy objectives that constitute the basis of Egyptian diplomacy in Black Africa. These are the geo-economic importance of the Nile River, and Egypt's perceived paternalistic manifest destiny towards Black Africa. In respect of the Nile, one would assume that Egypt's foreign policy within the sub-Nile circle long predated the era of the Free Officer's revolution, extending even far to the remotest beginnings of the people as a nation. As Professor Boutros Boutros-Ghali succinctly puts it:

“From Cheops to Mohammed Ali, from Mohammed Ali to Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egyptian foreign policy has been dominated by two challenges: the first has been the physical task of mastering the waters of the Nile; the second has been the moral task of deciding how the Egyptian rulers should use the wealth resulting from the cultivation of the Nile valley... All these make the area – through which the Nile flows and which commands direct access to its resources – a ‘sensitive area’ for Egypt. A hostile power in the upper reaches of the Nile, particularly in Uganda, Ethiopia and the Sudan can bring to bear pressure on Egypt by threatening to dry up the river” (Boutros-Ghali, 1963).

Sewant (1981) further observed that even though the attempt

to block the Nile could be costly and near impossibility, there had been threats to that effect (Sewant, 1981: p. 34). For instance, in late 19<sup>th</sup> century against the back-drop of French attempt to stop British occupation, a French engineer of high repute brought up a suggestion to dam the Nile at the outlets of Lake Victoria, Lake Albert, and at the confluence of the Sobat at the White Nile (Sewant, 1981: p. 35). This action when taken would then control the fate of Egypt. Arising from these reasons, it becomes obvious that the primary objective of Egypt's foreign policy could not be short of the need to protect and utilize the Nile water resources. In other words, it is a policy that hinges on the need for Egypt to either have full control of the entire course of the Nile, or have friendly relations with the powers that control the various sections of it.

Thus there exist Nile-related policies of Egypt which underpin the fundamental importance of the river in Egypt's Africa-related foreign policies. Among these is the conquest of the Sudan in the opening era of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This action evidently led the British to extend their control over the areas of the sources of the Nile, immediately after the occupation of Egypt in 1882 (Sewant, 1981: p. 14-15).

Mohammed Awad explains that the desire of Egypt for a permanent union with the Sudan was not based on historical connection, religious, linguistic and ethnic affinities, or on mutual economic interests. He puts the reason simply as Egypt's desire to have the strongest guarantee against any interference with the Nile water supply (Ismael, 1971). General Muhammad Neguib, the first Egyptian President after the revolution affirmed this Sudanese centred policy in a statement credited to him by the *Al-Ahram* newspaper issue of February 10, 1954. In his words: “My reform program is the Nile Valley and the restoration of complete independence and sovereignty to it” (Sewant, 1981: p. 36).

Secondly, Egypt signed many treaties with the various countries connected with the Nile in respect to its utilization, such as Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia. In fact, one of the actions supportive of this policy was Egypt's contribution of the sum of one million (British) pound to Uganda to the construction of the Owe Falls Dam at the outlet of Lake Victoria (Sewant, 1981: p. 74). Another of such actions was Egypt's withdrawal of support for the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) as a condition for improvement of relations with Ethiopia in 1956. This action was no doubt taken because of the latter's control of the sources of the Blue Nile and the Atbara, the two most important tributaries of the River Nile (Ismael, 1971).

However, Egyptian Africa policy regarding the unity of the Nile began to have a gradual modification when it became apparent that the Sudan might not after all integrate with Egypt after the British withdrawal, following the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of February 1953 on the Sudan. Thus, by the declaration of independence on December 19, 1955 by the Sudanese Parliament, Egypt's Unity of the Nile policy

suffered a major setback and was later abandoned for a broader Africa policy.

Consequently, in January 1956, Nasser decided to constitute a Supreme Committee to re-evaluate the direction and objectives of Egypt's Black Africa policy. The report of the committee stated that Egypt had to plan its new African policy in line with the idea of Africa for the Africans. This meant engaging on the policy of Africa's liberation from foreign influence, politically, economically, socially, culturally and militarily. The report further harped on Egypt's new resolve to defend the rights of men based on liberty for all and equality in rights without distinction (Ismael, 1971).

This policy-review was to herald Egypt's policy of the chosen agent of civilization, or its manifest destiny role in Black Africa, which in fact had been earlier enunciated in the African circle section of *The Philosophy of the Revolution*. However, the idea of Egypt's imperial interest in Black Africa would appear to have predated the 1952 revolution. In 1940, the then Egyptian Prime Minister, Ali Mahir, stated, after a tour of the Sudan, in a speech to the Egyptian Parliament:

"It is my pleasure to renew together with you the memory of Egypt's greatness in the Pharoanic era during the Ayyibid Dynasty when our forefathers extended Egypt's influence into Africa and flew the banner of progress on the banks of the Nile and its happy valley" (Ismael, 1971).

It was evidently on the basis of this that Nasser's Africa circle took its form and manner. It is instructive that Nasser was not alone in this idea. Husain Munis had in 1954 laid credence to Nasser's view when he stated in his book: *Misra Wa Risalatula* (Egypt and its Mission), that:

We are the meeting point between three continents. We, and we alone, are the ones who are able to be the messengers between the two sides...we are the door to Africa. Transfer to its people what we have and what others have and we will hold it out to all comers on this oppressed continent which has not been fairly treated by anyone (Ismael, 1971).

Munis went further to accuse the Europeans of attempting to build barriers and obstacle on the continent, pointing out Black Africa's desire to look upon Egypt as a model nation-state (Thompson, 1969). But the most flagrant expression of Egypt's imperial desires towards Black Africa came from the official Government Newspaper *Al-Akbar* in a 1953 editorial statement, which overtly described the fundamental motives of Egypt's policy in Black Africa:

"We look for a power, which will protect Africa and play the same role as the United States vis-a-vis the American continent. We see no one but Egypt. It is the greatest power with a personality that is universally recognized. It is necessary for Egypt to pursue one African policy, the enfranchisement of the continent" (Sewant, 1981).

The summary of the above statement of policy is that Egypt's relations with Black Africa were hinged on its desire to replace the European model of domination with its own. In other words, as Nasser rightly put it in his African circle, Nasser by his words and policies, as will be later shown, regarded Black Africa as the Dark Continent in the same manner the Europeans viewed the continent. Like Europe, Egypt saw herself as the agent of civilisation. The task here therefore is for one to establish whether it is possible for a nation to be both paternalistic and neo-colonialist towards another nation at one and the same period. But one cannot fully discern this paradox except an analysis of the different steps in Egyptian foreign policy initiatives is carried out.

One of such steps, as identified by the revised Nasser's Africa policy included the support for African liberation from both colonialism and post-colonial European domination. Suffice it to say that Egypt's desire to involve herself in anti-colonial struggles predated the revised Africa policy, since it is obvious that Egypt's interest in the Sudan could not have been separate from the desire to end British control there. This also cannot be isolated from Egypt's manifest destiny towards Black Africa – that is the overall desire to play a godly father role in the affairs of the continent. There is equally no doubt as to the fact that tied to this godly father role were exclusive political and economic interests.

Ankush Sewant expressed his mind on the same line when he noted that Nasser's main objective in trying to get the Black African States on his side was to avoid their aligning with any of the ideological power blocs. If the new Black African states were allowed to join any of the blocs, then it would mean bringing the cold war to Egypt's doorstep. But if they kept away from the cold war politics, they would then become part of the states professing neutrality, and since Egypt belonged to this group, it would mean boosting its membership to Egypt's advantage. This further meant increasing Egypt's diplomatic influence against Western imperialist pressures (Sewant, 1981).

In other words, the political intent of Egypt was to assume the championship of African nationalist struggles, and by so doing appropriate the erstwhile influence being wielded by the European Colonial masters. This position appears to have been supported by the fact that what constituted Egypt's pro-African nationalist liberation policy

was at variance with pre-Bandung Egypt's support for African liberation. Egypt's position then was restricted to Arab North Africa. In fact, Egypt's programme objective to the 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia was clear on this matter:

The question of North Africa will be the most important questions to be discussed at the conference.... Henceforth, the President will struggle... for the liberation of North Africa... As for the African continent, Egypt sympathizes with the demands for racial equality in Africa, the Egyptian government does not await and will not request any aid for the liberation movements in Africa and Asia, from the Bandung conference. But she believes that the condemnation of imperialism by 20 states in Africa and Asia which represent half the population of the globe... will have a significant impact on the liberation movements of Arabs and Blacks... Egypt will try to alienate the Afro-Asians from Israel.... (Ismael, 1971).

The presence of such African countries as Ethiopia, Liberia and semi-independent Gold Coast led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, at the Bandung Conference, further convinced President Nasser that a broader Black Africa policy needed to be adopted. Hence Nasser was to initiate wide-ranging contacts with African leaders and nationalists present at the conference. And this in fact was an important factor in the revision of Egypt's Africa foreign policy. It was therefore a matter of coincidence that while Bandung conference held in April, Sudan formally institutionalised its rejection of Egypt's unity of the Nile by declaring her independence on 19 December 1955.

Arising from these challenges was Egypt's desire to review her foreign policy, which took place early the following year, 1956 in the attempt to achieve its objectives; Egypt adopted the concept of anti-imperialism as the uniting cord between her and Black Africa. Consequently, Nasser invited African nationalists to establish Bureaus in Cairo with full Egyptian Government support. As Tareq Ismael puts it:

Through the establishment of African Bureaus in Cairo, Egypt attempted to perpetuate and nurture anti-Western sentiments and rally African nationalists behind the anti-imperialist banner. For example, they used Cairo radio facilities to broadcast anti-Western propaganda throughout Africa. By allowing Cairo to become the headquarters of African liberation movements, Egypt attempted to become identified as the centre for African

Liberation (Ismael, 1971).

Thus, Egypt became a breeding ground for future African radicals. By so doing she hoped that by the time these people returned home and became leading politicians in their various countries, she would be able to exercise considerable influence through them.

In 1952, Egypt made an attempt to forge closer co-operation jointly with Ethiopia and Sudan. In April 1957, the three leaders met in Cairo and discussed the prospect of forming what was called the "Cairo-Khartoum- Addis Ababa axis" (Ismael, 1971).

Explaining the motive behind this Egyptian initiative Tareq Ismael once again writes:

It was hoped that such an alliance would serve as the nucleus for African unity and eventually develop into a 'Greater State of the Nile Valley', encompassing the Sudan, Egypt and Uganda (Ismael, 1971).

Unfortunately, the axis could not agree to come together in line with Nasser's proposal. This failure to yet create another Nile-based African unity forced Nasser to initiate a policy of African solidarity, using the non-governmental liberation movements as a framework. The principal action in this policy was the formation in late 1957 of the African Association. The major function of the African Association was, in addition to boosting the activities of the African Bureau, to specifically co-ordinate its activities vis-à-vis Egypt African Policy (Ismael, 1971). The African Association thus was the major framework within which the African nationalists living in Cairo carried out their activities. As Ismael further puts it:

"The African Association sponsored celebrations for African States achieving independence, protests against imperialism, and trips to Egypt by African dignitaries. It also published periodicals such as the monthly journals *Nahdhat Ifriqiya* (Renaissance Africa) and *Al-Rabita al Ifriqiya* (The African Association)" (Ismael, 1971).

In a further move to show her commitments to both Africa and Asia, Egypt in December 1957 organised the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in Cairo. It was apparent that by doing so, Egypt was beginning to see herself not only as an African leader, but one that equally had a strong stake in the leadership of the Asian world, to which traditionally the Arabs belong. The outcome of the conference was the establishment of the Cairo-based Afro-Asian Solidarity Council, which had as its first President, an Egyptian. By establishing this council, and in addition having an Egyptian

as its head, Egypt appeared to have placed herself in an advantageous leadership position among the Afro-Asian world (Ismael, 1971).

The coming of age of the Gold Coast, which became Ghana on independence in 1957, was to become a limiting factor to Nasser's towering ambition to remain the undisputed leader of the African continent. The emergence of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on the international political scene presented grave difficulties to the aspirations of President Nasser. As the first Black African state to actually gain independence from European colonial domination, Ghana, as personified in Nkrumah, saw herself as the authentic heir to African leadership.

The root of Nkrumah's threat arose from the fact that, first, Ghana at the time, was, in Nasser's eyes, a neo-colonial state, since she was in good diplomatic relationship with the West. Second, Ghana enjoyed, not only full diplomatic relationship with the State of Israel, but received enormous aid in both economic and technical forms from the latter. And third, Nkrumah was proposing to organize a Pan-African Movement, which, in Egypt's view was intended to undermine Nasser's Afro-Asia Solidarity Movement and thence adversely affect the prospect of Egypt's leadership in both Africa and Middle East.

In April 1958, Ghana manifested her threat to Egypt by organizing the Conference of Independent African States in Accra, which was also aimed at, in the manner of Egypt, presenting her as a leading State in Black Africa. With the Arab States of North Africa presenting the highest number of independent African States at that time, the Conference was nearly aborted by the decisions of Nasser, Bourguiba of Tunisia and the Libyan Prime Minister, to boycott the Conference. By this action, the Arab States proved that they were not prepared to subject themselves to the leadership of a true Black African. In fact, it was a clear signal that they were distinct from the rest of African peoples. A pre-Conference official Egyptian statement on the Accra Conference stated:

“Although the Accra Conference was called because of the efforts of Nkrumah, the Prime Minister of Ghana, its meetings will be held under the shadow of Nasser and in general under the shadow of the five Arab States represented in the conference which will have the majority of the votes when decisions are made” (Ismael, 1971).

There is therefore no doubt that the above statement coming from the official Egyptian quarters clearly manifested the Arab tendency to see Black Africans as a second-class people who are predestined to be dominated by the white-shinned. For example, when the Accra Conference

designated April 15 of every year as “Africa Freedom Day”, Egypt in a counter-move through her Afro-Asian Solidarity Council, designated December 1 as *Quit Africa Day*. In fact, for the rest of 1958, Egypt through her radio network, which was transmitted to Ghana, carried out severe anti-Ghana propaganda campaign, accusing her of being an imperialist tool in Black Africa serving Israeli and Western interests. To say the least, Ghana's Union with Guinea in November 1958, to form what they called a “nucleus for a Union of African States,” further infuriated Egypt which saw this as a clear act by Nkrumah to undermine Nasser's leadership in Africa. In a further move to undermine Nasser's ambitions, Nkrumah on December, 1958, organized an All African Peoples' Conference, which, unlike the earlier one, was made up of political parties, associations, and trade unions, all of which put together amounted to sixty-two organizations from twenty-eight African countries. In addition, eight independent African States of which Egypt was one sent official representatives. As in the previous conference, Egypt's mission in this was obvious. The *New York Times* described the Egyptian delegation thus:

“Their task at Ghana obviously is to see that the conference does not show too strong a Western feeling and to keep prominently before the delegations the name of Nasser and his role as freedom leader of Africa and the Middle East” (Ismael, 1971).

However, in Ghana, it was not to be so; the Ghanaians succeeded in keeping the Egyptian delegations in a tight corner. The conference witnessed a fervent attempt to undermine Egyptian participation as a leading country in Africa by drawing a distinction between Arab North Africa and Black Africa. To the majority of the delegates therefore, Egypt was first and foremost an Arab nation, which racial terms was not qualified to be called a Pan-African nation. Egypt's dilemma at the conference is well summed up by Ahmad Bahai el-Din, one of the Egyptian delegates, in these high sentimental words:

“A great effort was made to isolate the U.A.R at the conference... These attempts were concentrated in a poisoned propaganda campaign... which asserted that the U.A.R is an Arab, not an African State” (Cervenka, 1977).

But in what appeared to be a counter move against the Accra Pan-African Conference, Egypt in January 1959 organized an Afro-Asian Youth Conference. This was attended by delegates from fifty-four African and Asian countries. The conference simply reaffirmed the need for positive neutrality, Afro-Asian solidarity and anti-imperialism, all of which formed

the kernel of Egypt's foreign policy.

The year of Africa's independence, which is the designation of 1960, saw the coming of political age of additional thirteen African States by their admission to the United Nations. With the power of bloc-votes in mind Nasser more than ever before intensified his bid to Africa's leadership. As a prelude to his energized Africa policy, Nasser in July 1960 hosted a special conference of Egyptian ambassadors in African countries, with a view to strategize their policy.

On January 3, 1961, King Mohammed V. of Morocco called a conference of some selected African leaders, primarily to discuss the problems of the Congo and Algeria. This was the famous Casablanca Conference, which gave birth to the Casablanca group of African States. The countries involved in this conference included the host country Morocco, the Provisional Government of Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea and Mali. President Nasser clearly tried to use the avenue to sell his anti-Israeli policy to the African leaders present. In his address to the conference, he stated:

"What was the aim of the imperialist powers in creating Israel? Their primary aim was to make it a spearhead for their advance and a base for their aggression... Where did the Franco-British troops come from at the time of the Suez affair?" From Israel? For this Israel received \$400 million as a compensation from the imperialist powers for using the country as a base for imperialist infiltration into Africa and Asia... Israel is at present granting aid in Africa, even though we know that she is not in a position to balance her budget from her own resources. That is because this country is acting as a go-between, between the colonial powers and the countries of Africa, passing on aid to them Israel is the wolf which has got into the sheepfold" (Cervenka, 1977).

In this appeal, Nasser was so to say, partially successful in drawing the attention and sympathy of the members. Thus a resolution in this regard was adopted as a show of solidarity to the Egyptian anti-zionist position. It noted with indignation that Israel has always taken the side of the imperialist each time an important position had to be taken concerning vital problems about Africa, notably Algeria, the Congo and the nuclear tests in Africa. The Conference, therefore, denounces Israel as an instrument in the service of imperialism and neo-colonialism not only in the Middle East but also in Africa and Asia upon all the states of Africa and Asia to oppose this new policy which imperialism was carrying out to create bases for itself (Cervenka, 1977).

Nasser's achievement in this regard could only be said to be marginal, especially when Ghana, the only non-Muslim country among the bloc had strong diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. Added to this was the fact that Nigeria, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sudan, Togo and Gambia conspicuously declined the invitation to attend the Casablanca Conference, while the group of French-speaking African states, who had earlier formed what became the Brazzaville Group were not invited.

Thus from the onset, the Casablanca Group was set to estrange itself from the rest of Africa. Moreover, the invitation of those Asian countries that attended the Bandung Conference-India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Indonesia, in which only Ceylon sent an observer, did not go down well with most African States, since it tended to give the Conference an Afro-Asian coloration. Furthermore, subsequent events showed that the resolution on Israel became the major undoing of the group, as it was fully resented by majority of Black African States, and later became a binding condition for unity with the Casablanca Group.

In what appeared as a counter-move against the Casablanca Group, a Conference was held in Monrovia in Liberia from 8 to 12 May 1961. This was to become the famous Monrovia Group of African States. Attended by delegates from twenty African nations — Liberia, the host, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Dahomey (Benin), Ethiopia, Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Togo, Tunisia, Libya, and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), the Conference no doubt, was the first most representative gathering vis-à-vis the Brazzaville and Casablanca Groups. Of the Casablanca group, only Libya attended. The rest boycotted the Conference in protest against the non-invitation of the Algerian Provisional Government, as well as the invitation of Mauritania. The result of the Conference was the adoption of five guiding principles of inter-State relations as follows:

Absolute equality and sovereignty of African States; Each African State to have the right to exist and no State to try to annex another; Voluntary union of one State with another; Non-interference in the affairs of other African States; No dissident elements from one state to be harboured by another State (Ismael, 1971).

The Monrovia Conference was followed by the Lagos Conference of January, 1962 by the same Group, and came out with a charter of the Organization of African and Malagasy States, which was finally adopted by the Monrovia Group countries on December 20, 1962. The success of the Monrovia Group in mobilizing the majority of the African States, not only tended to isolate Arab North Africa, but in

effect dealt a devastating blow to the Casablanca Group, who saw themselves being isolated from the mainstream of African affairs. But to Nasser in particular, it was an open expression of the failure of his African foreign policy. Tareq Ismail posits five basic factors that led to the failure of Nasser's Africa policy:

1. The U.A.R's policy in the Congo had proven ineffectual in influencing the course of events there and was in opposition to that of the majority of the African states, which supported U.N action.
2. Nkrumah's rivalry with Nasser for leadership of Africa contributed to a dissipation of Nasser's influence on the continent.
3. The U.A.R's radical anti-Westernism and cooperation with the Soviet Union alarmed the more conservative African states.
4. Racism in African politics threatened to isolate North Africa from Black Africa.
5. The injection of Arab issues into African politics, especially the Israeli issue, created a frequent source of tension (Ismael, 1971).

On the whole, a number of the Monrovia principles clearly pointed against Nasser's policy in Africa, hence he saw himself as the main target of the Group. The result of this was another re-evaluation of Egypt's foreign policy to meet with the emerging challenges. This was initiated on November, 1961 and later gave rise to a Charter. The new Charter of Egypt's foreign policy was ratified by the Assembly of the National Conference of Popular Forces in May, 1962, and later adopted as the National policy (Ismael, 1971). Section 10 of the Charter which embodied the African policy treated Africa as a marginal issue in Egypt's foreign policy, which only had relevance so long as it related to the Israeli problem (Ismael, 1971). In other words, Egypt's interest in Black Africa was predicated on the curtailment of the Israeli incursions and the subsequent mobilization of the former against the latter. The idea of an all-powerful Egypt under the towering leadership of Gamal Abdel-Nasser dictating the pace and direction of African States thus appeared to have hit the roadblock of diplomacy.

#### **THE ERA OF CONTAINMENT, 1963-1967**

With Egypt now forced relatively to the background of African politics, Nasser's next option was to seek integration, but this time with utmost caution. Tareq Ismail again explains Nasser's root problem and subsequent revision of policy. According to him, U.A.R's initial problem was the attempt to integrate Afro-Arab policies. This could not work because it found that whenever African and Arab interests conflicted, Egypt had always supported the Arab position. As a result of this, after 1962, Nasser began to deal separately with these

two primary areas through the channels of Afro-Asianism and Non-Alignment (Ismael, 1971).

It was therefore not surprising that the subsequent Addis Ababa Conference of African's Foreign Ministers in May 1963 was to see Egypt towing the line of reconciliation and acceptance among the Monrovia Group-dominated African States. The Egyptian Foreign Minister Dr. Mahmud Fawzi attempted, in the course of the occasion, to allay the fears and suspicion people had about Egypt's pro-Arab identity, by saying that Egypt, from a geographical point of view was both in Africa and Asia and thus could not be misinterpreted for claiming to be both Arab and African. In his words, "the U.A.R was truly an Afro-Asian country in that she is geographically on both continents and racially involved in both" (Ismael, 1971).

But it was President Nasser who finally cleared Egypt from further suspicion in that regard. In his address to the Assembly of African Heads of State in Addis Ababa, but before the debate on the O.A.U Charter began, he stated that the Egyptian Government had come there without selfishness. Even the problem which Egypt considered to be her most serious problem — namely the problem of Israel, and one on which the group of Casablanca member states rightly shared their view she promised not to submit to the organisation for discussions, in the conviction that the endeavours progress of free African will, through trial, reveal the truth day by day and lay it unmasked before the African conscience (Nasser, 1955).

The above position of President Nasser was applauded by many African Heads of State, thus paving the way for them to move the formal arguments on the principles of forging African unity, which resulted in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). However, the Israeli issue began to re-echo within the official OAU circle through the other Arab North African leaders. For instance, during the July 1964 OAU Summit Conference in Cairo, the issue of Israel was raised by the Algerian and Tunisian Presidents.

However, that did not in reality herald a complete resignation of Nasser's bid to keep a strong and recognizable presence in Black Africa. In other words, what Nasser did was to then put more efforts on the third circle of his philosophy of the revolution, which is the Islamic circle. To Nasser, Islam as a matter of fact should go beyond the realm of the spiritual to that of practical modern politics. Expressing this position in reference to the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Nasser in his *Philosophy of the Revolution* stated, "the third circle now remains; the circle that goes beyond continents and oceans and to which I referred as the circle of our brethren in faith who turn with us, whatever part of the world they are in, towards the same kibla in Mecca and whose pious lips whisper reverently the same prayers" (Nasser, 1955).

But ironically, in mapping out areas of potential Islamic population and power, Nasser took cognisance of Black



Africa, which in this regard constituted what he described as “other millions in the distant parts of the world” (Nasser, 1955). To state it fully in his words:

“When my mind travelled to the eighty million Muslims in Indonesia, the fifty in China, and the several other million in Malaya, Siam and Burma and the hundred million in Pakistan, the hundred million or more in the Middle East and the forty in Russia as well as the other millions in the distant parts of the world, when I visualize these millions united in one faith I have a great consciousness of the tremendous potentialities that cooperation amongst them all can achieve: a cooperation that does not deprive them of their loyalty to their countries but guarantees for them and their brethren a limitless power” (Ismael, 1971).

However, that notwithstanding, when it came to the question of pursuing the narrow Egyptian interest in Africa, Nasser was quick to recognize the fact that there exist millions of Muslims in Black Africa, with which Egypt had a long history of cultural linkage. It was in pursuance of this notable asset that Egypt adopted several policies that tended to compliment her Africa policy since the year immediately after the revolution. Among these pro-Islamic policies was the establishment of an Islamic Ideological Front between 1953 and 1955. Part of the activities of this front included the organization of the First Arab Islamic Conference of the Liberation Organization held in Cairo in August, 1953, as well as the First East African Islamic Conference held at Nairobi, Kenya, in December 1953. Furthermore, in August 1954 President Nasser, in conjunction with King Saud of Saudi Arabia, and Prime Minister Ghulan Muhammad of Pakistan, established an Islamic Congress, and appointed Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt as its General Secretary. The aims of this Congress included:

To study the affairs of Muslims and the conditions they live in, in their different countries... religiously, historically, and socially, offer technical assistance, strengthen economic and financial ties, which include commercial, agrarian and industrial development; coordinate Islamic religious and legal affairs; create and strengthen cultural relations and cooperate in educational matters (Ismael, 1971).

This intended to afford Nasser the opportunity to counter Israeli influence in Black Africa by the informal diplomatic means of granting aids and technical assistance. Egypt,

therefore, operating within the ambit of the Congress began to compete with the State of Israel in matters of economic aid and technical assistance. Using also the prestigious Al-Azhar University, scholarships were awarded to Black African students, mainly for Islamic Studies and Islamic Scholars were sent abroad in the name of technical assistance. For instance, in early 1956, the Egyptian Minister of Endowment under whose Ministry the Department of Islamic Affairs was placed, visited Senegal and Liberia. The aim was:

To watch over Muslim affairs there and to continue a message carried by Egypt since the beginning of the nineteenth century, which was interrupted for a while and should be revived – it is Egypt’s concern for the affairs of the Black continent and its Guardianship over the welfare of the Muslims there (Ismael, 1971).

But it was in the activities of Al-Azhar University that the depth of Egypt’s Islamic revolutionary tendency was fully manifested. In pursuance of this role, the University was in July, 1961 reorganized in order to meet the emerging challenges, into five semi-autonomous administrations. These include the Supreme Council of Al-Azhar, the Islamic Research Council, the Cultural Administration and Islamic Missions, Al-Azhar University, and Al-Azhar Institutions. Article two of the law empowering the reorganization clearly stated the role of Al-Azhar in the challenging mission of spreading Islam to the outside world:

Al-Azhar carries the burden of the Islamic missions to all nations and works to expose the truth of Islam and the influence of it on the progress of..., and civilization and the renaissance of the scientific and cultural heritage of the Islamic people... and expose the influence of the Arabs in the development and progress of humanity (Ismael, 1971).

But it was Sheikh Muhammad Chaltout, the Rector of the Al-Azhar University, who gave the full interpretation of the above statement of the law regarding the functions of Alzar, which include:

The fight against Israeli political and economic action; the admission of Egypt as the natural representative of all Africa on the international scale; development of Egypt’s cultural and political influence over East Africa and Upper Nile countries; ousting the West in order to improve Egyptian positions; neutralizing the advance of Christianity by

showing that the latter is a Western religion linked to imperialism, while Islam is an emancipating religion whose teaching coincides with the requirements of African nationalism (Ismael, 1971).

In furtherance of its objectives, the Congress of Al-Azhar Academy of Islamic Research organized the first Afro-Asian Islamic Conference in March, 1964, and the second in May 1965. In both conferences, attempts were made to use religion as a vehicle for Egypt's foreign policy. In fact, by 1964, Al-Azhar had begun to send Ulamas outside Egypt, mostly to Black Africa, for the purpose of spreading Islam and promoting Egyptian Arab interests. Cultural centres were established in such countries as Morocco, Libya, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Tanzania. Scholarships were awarded to foreign students to study in the University. And Africans constituted the largest in number. In addition, missions were established in several African countries, which were mainly charged with the establishment of Islamic and secular high schools. These missions, as the Egyptian Newspaper *Al-Ahram* described them, were "the callers for Islam who will meet the enemy of Islam and the Arab revolution" (Ismael, 1971).

Al-Azhar also instituted a thirteen-hour daily radio programme code named "Voice of Islam", which chanted the Koran. Later in 1965, one year after its introduction, it expanded its activities to include the entire sub-Saharan Africa, involving selected indigenous languages. Its programme expanded from the chanting of the Koran to actual propagation of Islam. In complementing the activities of the University and Research Academy sections of the Al-Azhar, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs engaged in the publication of a monthly magazine, *Manbar al-Islam* (The Forum of Islam), which was also translated into some other languages. This was followed by the publication of two pamphlet series, *Kutub Islamiyyah* (Islamic Books) and *Derasat fi Islam* (Studies in Islam) (Nasser, 1955).

There is no gain-saying the fact that Egypt's success in this regard was more than marginal, especially in predominantly Muslim countries. However, these activities were greatly undermined by the presence of large Christian communities in most Central and Southern African and to some larger extent, West African countries. Even in those countries of West Africa where Muslims were in majority, like Guinea, Niger, Senegal, Mauritania and Mali, which were former French colonies, the pattern of colonial experience with its policy of assimilation gave no room for Islam to develop as an ideology of modern politics. Moreover, since some of the leaders of these countries had already identified President Nasser as one of the patrons of subversive elements in many African States, many countries did their best to counter the propagation, which they regarded as mere political subterfuge to further his narrow imperialist

interest.

However, the greatest achievement which could be credited to this Egyptian policy, was the formation of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1969, following the bombing of *Al-Aqsa* Mosque. For, although the Conference was summoned by King Hassan II of Morocco, its principles simply confirmed President Nasser's nearly two decades of tireless efforts in trying to mobilize the Muslim World as a force in Global politics. It was unfortunate that Nasser died one year after the organization's formation. However, it could be said that he died fulfilled in the course, having witnessed the birth of a larger than Arab organization to take over his policy.

### THE ARAB PHASE, 1967-1973

That Gamal Abdel-Nasser was first and foremost an Arab, and only an African by the marginal factor of geography is no longer a subject of debate. There was a clear divergence in his respective foreign policies towards the Arab World and Black Africa. While the former tended to be paternalistic, the latter was in fact imperialistic. In other words, while he laboured to become the first among equals in the Arab world, for Black Africa, it was the case of reoccupying the vacuum being left by the European colonial masters. This divergent position is well summed up in his *Philosophy of the Revolution*:

There is no doubt that the Arab circle is the most important and the most closely connected with us. Its history merges with us. We have suffered the same hardships, lived the same crises and when we fell prostrate under the spikes of the horses of conquerors they lay with us (Turner and Freedman, 1966).

It is therefore beyond all reasonable doubt that Egypt's policy towards Black Africa, as well as her use of Islam as a foreign policy instrument were predicated on the Nasser's interests vis-à-vis the Arabs as a people with common historical root and experience. In fact, as Arthur C. Turner and Leonard Freedman clearly pointed out:

Pan-Arabism had much to offer Nasser. For one thing, it made an existing slogan for the Egyptians; for another, it held out the promise of a new political and military strength. Arab unification could help solve Egypt's economic problems, both by providing additional resources and by increasing Nasser's international nuisance value. And it could also bring him within striking distance of a second round against

Israel, thereby buttressing his claim to be the true successor to Saladin (Turner and Freedman, 1966).

Unfortunately, in both circles, he met with stiff oppositions, resulting in failures. He was never successful in urging Black Africa to take up the Arab cause in the Middle East Crisis. For the Arab circle, he came very close to success when in February 1958, Egypt merged with Syria to form the United Arab Republic (U.A.R). However, following the more than two years of unequal political experience, Syria in September 1961, seceded from the union, and Egypt was left alone to bear the name UAR for nearly one decade.

However, it was the Six-Day War of 1967 in which Israel took the Sinai and occupied a large portion of the Asian part of Egypt that brought Egypt's cry of wolf closer to Black Africa's sympathy. African nations were for the first time unanimous in condemning the State of Israel. From then onwards, the once sharp dividing diplomatic line between the Arab world and Black Africa began to be blurred, until 1973, when it became difficult to separate Black Africa's commitments to the Middle East conflict from those of the Arabs. Afro-Arab relations thus became institutionalised.

### THE GADDAFI DIPLOMATIC CONTINUUM

A critical examination of both internal and external policies of Muammar Gaddafi reveals a wholesome adoption of Nasser's ideological strategy of Arab policy in Black Africa. For instance, he meticulously expanded Nasser's three circles to seven. Titled "Support of the Peoples' Causes", and placed under the section dealing with "Political Action" in the *Third International Theory*, it includes "the National Scale", "the International Scale", "the African Scale", "the Islamic Scale", "the Mediterranean and European Scale", "the Third World and Non-Aligned Countries Scale", and "the Revolutionary use of Oil Weapon."<sup>1</sup>

At the level of international politics, this Arab imperial concept of superiority over the Black Africans took the form of a Black garb upon a white skin. Like a hunter dressing in a wild animal skin in order to deceive the animals, Gaddafi believed that Abdel Nasser's failure in spreading the vile wind of Arab neocolonialism in Black Africa arose out of his inability to claim African descent. For Gaddafi therefore, he must claim African descent in order to conquer the Black African mind.

But to what extent could the Libyan leader be described as an African stands to be proved by the direction and feature of his Africa policy. As earlier pointed out, the core features of his foreign policy were centered on a scripted

version of Abdel Nasser's three circle -policy objectives- the Arab, African and Islamic circles. He only went further to expand the dimension of his objectives on lines hitherto not mentioned by Nasser. Thus like Abdel Nasser, even though Islam never formed the basis of the nation's administrative framework, it however acted as the major instrument for the pursuit of the other two objectives. Like Abdel Nasser also who used the Muslim Brotherhood to come to power and later proscribed it, Muammar Gaddafi rode to power through the support of the *Sannusiyya* Brotherhood and later outlawed it.

In place of Abdel Nasser's *Philosophy of the Revolution*, he equally published the *Green Book* (Al Qaddafi, 1991). Although unlike Nasser's *Philosophy of the Revolution*, in which the subject of Islam appeared prominent, the *Green Book* down-played Islam as the main ideological basis of his Arab People's Socialism. This was evidently in stark contrast to what was contained in *The Third International Theory* in which Islam featured prominently.<sup>2</sup> However, both Arab nationalists agreed that Black Africa was backward and thus needed to be placed on proper modern civilized state within the precept of the Arab mind.

In line with Abdel Nasser's thinking therefore, Muammar Gaddafi stated in his *Green Book* concerning the Black people thus:

The latest age of slavery has been the enslavement of Blacks by White people. The memory of this age will persist in the thinking of Black people until they have vindicated themselves. This tragic and historic event, the resulting bitter feeling, and the yearning for the vindication of a whole race, constitute a psychological motivation of Black people to vengeance and triumph that cannot be disregarded.... Black people are now in a very backward social situation, but such backwardness works to bring about their numerical superiority... (Al Qaddafi, 1991).

Thus, to Gaddafi, the assumed backwardness of the Black man and his uncontrolled population explosion must be utilized to rent vengeance against his erstwhile White colonial masters. Like Abdel Nasser therefore, Gaddafi sees himself in competition with the West for the imperial control of Black Africa. This was no doubt the thrust of his *African Scale policy*, in which he earlier stated that:

... the Libyan Arab Republic has adopted a series of effective moves aimed at liquidating Zionist influence in the Africa continent. The results of such moves are crystal clear in the

<sup>1</sup>*The First of September Revolution Achievements, 1969-74*, (1974) Tripoli: General Administration for Information, Ministry of Information and Culture, p. 17-25.

<sup>2</sup>*First of September Revolution Achievements*, p. 9.

positive response adopted by the Africa Continent in favour of the Arabs during the Ramadan war; the response took the shape of breaking diplomatic relations with the Zionist enemy.<sup>3</sup>

This accounts for dramatic assumption of cloned African identity, which consequently led to his enormous commitment of financial resources in support of dissident groups in those African nations whose leaders overtly opposed his imperial Arab designs, formation of numerous internationally-based non-governmental organizations as instruments of opposition against their respective governments, and above all sacrificially working for the emergence of the African Union (AU).

In all these schemes, conversion to Islam formed a major aspect of operation. The aspect of Gaddafi's policy dealing with political action was emphatic on the role of Islam in his foreign policy objectives:

"In reshaping their way of life, in accordance with the spirit of the noble Islamic law, the Libyan Arab Republic calls for fraternity and solidarity among all Muslims, as it urge to shoulder responsibility of waging a holy war in the service of God and of the unification of Muslims".<sup>4</sup>

In pursuing this objective of Islamization the Libyan leader constituted and funded what could be described as grassroots organization. Among these were, Forum of kings, Sultans, Princes, Sheikhs and Mayors of Africa, the Social Popular League of Great Sahara Tribes, and the Social People's Association of Sahara Tribes among others. Mass conversions of Black Africans to Islam often formed part of the ceremonial agenda of these organizations.

For instance, during the *Second Conference of the Forum of kings, Sultans, Princes, Sheikhs and Mayors of Africa*, which the present writer attended, a number of Black African delegates from predominantly Christian countries, like Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Congo Democratic Republic, and Central African Republic, among others, were made to publicly denounce Christianity and convert to Islam on promise of financial rewards. Similar rituals of conversion also took place during the *Sixth Conference of the Social Popular League of Great Sahara Tribe*.

It is therefore clear that Gaddafi's main objective for the formation of these organizations includes first, the gradual Islamization of Christian Black Africa, and secondly as a source of popular opposition to Western influence among the

people. The latter objective is in fact the main focus of the *Popular Social League of the Great Sahara Tribes*, formed in Timbuktu, Mali Republic in 2006. This was primarily an Islamic organization that tried to unite the Islamic nations of Africa and Arab World under the leadership of the Libyan leader.

The character of this organization was made vivid in an opening speech during its formation in Timbuktu, Mali thus:

"On 12 *Rabie A-Awal* 1374) (2006) in Tombouctou City, Mali, the Tombouctou Pact, the Pact of the Social Peoples Association of Sahara Tribes, was celebrated in the leader of the Revolution's meeting, in his place of residence in Tombouctou with the kings, Sultans, Sheikhs, and Chiefs of Sahara tribes from Senegal and Mauritania in the west to Iraq in the east passing through North Africa, the Nile Valley, the Syrian Desert, the Arabian Peninsula, the African Horn, as well as Sudan, Chad, and Niger whose historical and big home is the Sahara. The celebration was attended by a number of Heads of Islamic Institutions, Sheikhs of Sufi trends and members of the World Islamic Peoples leadership... In that meeting the leader of the Revolution, the leader of the World Islamic People's leadership led thousands of Muslims from around the world in prayers of *Maghreb* (sunset) and *Ishaa* (evening).<sup>5</sup>

Its fundamental objectives were clearly laid out in paragraphs five and eight, article 3, of the first chapter of its *Statute*. Paragraph five states succinctly as one of the organization's objectives, the defense of "the Great Sahara against any danger", while paragraph eight in like manner talks of "combating imported colonialist culture".<sup>6</sup> The question which arises from these two objectives then is, what better danger other than Western influence, and what imported colonialist culture other than Christianity could be threatening the said Great Sahara Tribes?

This question was however expressly answered in the historic *Tombouctou Pact of the Social People's Association of Sahara Tribes*. In its innermost conviction, the fact was direct to the point:

<sup>5</sup> The Popular Social League of the Great Sahara Tribes (2006), *Celebration of the Establishment of the Social People's Association of the Sahara Tribes*, Tombouctou: n.p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> The Popular Social League of the Great Sahara Tribes (n d) *The Statute of the Social Popular League of the Tribes of the Great Sahara*, n. p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *The First of September Revolution Achievements*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *The First of September Revolution Achievements*, p. 23.

“On this great day, these tribes stress that they may even face death in order to achieve the security, independence, and stability of the Sahara. They declare that they will not forsake a grain of sand of the Sahara, that Sahara tribes will have no life without freedom, and that the freedom of the Sahara and its people is indivisible. We declare that we shall be enemies of whoever is against us, and we will be at peace with whoever is at peace with us. We declare that all Sahara tribes will confront any new attempt made by any party to threaten the security, stability independence, and freedom of the Sahara and its people. The Sahara sands, stones, and air will turn into scorching fire against whoever will be occupying the Sahara or threatening its security, freedom, independence, or stability.<sup>7</sup>

There is therefore no gainsaying the fact that the *Popular Social League of the Great Sahara Tribes*, in which Gaddafi was described as the leader of the World’s Islamic leadership, was one of the international instruments of his anti-West campaign among the Arab and African Muslim grassroots.

On the other hand, the *Forum of Kings, Sultans, Princes, Sheikhs and Mayors of Africa* which was formed in August 2008, became the main vehicle of his Africa-Circle objectives. Its fundamental objectives were subsumed in the first two paragraphs of Article Four of its *Statute*:

“To contribute in the achievement of the African Union moved by the fact that true unity is the one realized by the will of the masses. To support African peoples in relation to self-determination...”<sup>8</sup>

This initiative coming at the time the Libyan leader was the Chairman of the Africa Union, he used the occasion to fulfill his utopian imperial objectives, if not in deed but in words, when he convinced the gathering local African royalties to crown him the *king of Traditional kings of Africa*.<sup>9</sup> As the king of Traditional kings of Africa, the Libyan leader received annual homage and tributes in the form of gifts from these

<sup>7</sup> *Celebration of the Establishment of the Social Popular Association of Sahara Tribes*, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> *Statute of the Forum of Kings, Sultans Princes, Sheikhs and Mayors of Africa*, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> *The Foundation Conference of the General Forum of Kings, Sultans, Princes, Sheiks and Mayors of Africa* Benghazi, August 26<sup>th</sup> – September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, 1

kings and other royalties. Interestingly enough, none of these kings and Princes was influential enough to initiate in any form, pro-Gaddafi policies in their respective countries.

However, while the first objective could be said to be utopian in projection, it did not appear so with the second objective, which dealt with support for insurgency among African nations. This objective in fact clearly accounted for the huge amount of support the Libyan leader rendered to dissident groups in many African countries.

But beyond his role as the god-father of International terrorism and insurgency, the Libyan leader had no doubt created indelible track records in Black Africa-Arab relations, even though selfishly tailored. He invested enormously in the formation of the Africa Union in which he was more at home than in Arab League. If Libya is painted today in black racial color to the disappointment of the present post-Gaddafi regime, it was the result of Gaddafi’s effort to become truly African, if not in color, but in political orientation. There was no doubt that Muammar Gaddafi was truly a Tran-Saharan Pan-Africanist, the type Professor Ali Mazrui calls “Ideological Afrabians” (Mazrui et al., 1991).

## CONCLUSION

To properly understand Muammar Gaddafi’s political heart-beat therefore, one must first be acquainted with the *Three-Circle Foreign Policy* objectives of Gamal Abdel Nasser, from which it was obvious Gaddafi cloned his ideological principles. Nasser had propounded the three circles of the “African”, “Islamic” and, “Arab”, which were fundamentally aimed at reclaiming in Africa what is often described as the stolen Arab world supremacy by the Western powers as well as isolate the State of Israel from Black Africa. The African circle involved the total de-westernization and subsequent Arabization of the continent, the Arab circle on the other hand involved the creation of a greater Arab nation strong enough to confront the West and Israel, while the third circle, Islam was to act as the ideological vehicle for achieving the two other objectives.

Although, no one could easily deny the fact that Nasser evidently contributed in small measure to the progress of African liberation through overt support for those liberation movements that accepted to drink from the cup of his wine of Arab radical nationalism, his reputation among his fellow African leaders was greatly marred by his overt support for subversive elements in those African countries described as pro-West and reactionary.

There is no doubt that the removal of Gaddafi from power had government one of the most colorful but vociferous ideologues and ecstatic imperial adventurer after the likes of Kwame Nkrumah and Gamal Abdel Nasser. The fact however is that his theatrical roles as an exporter of Islamic fundamentalism and supporter of dissident groups with obsession for power, no doubt seemed to have widened

the gap between him and his fellow African Union leaders, much in the same case with the Arab League; otherwise how could somebody who tirelessly worked for the actualization of the dream of Africa Union as well as fanatically pursued the causes of Arabism and Islam have been left in the ditch like a political orphan by the same institution at the time of his need? But one question which readily comes to mind following the demise of Muammar Gaddafi is will Black Africa's relations with Libya in particular and the Arab world ever be the same after Gaddafi? In other words, could the exit of Muammar Gaddafi herald the end of Trans-Saharan Pan-Africanism? This question appears obvious in the light of a policy statement credited to the NTC Libyan Foreign Minister, Achour Ben khayal, in which he said that the new Libya will definitely play a different role from what obtained during the Gaddafi era.<sup>10</sup> The question which thus arises from the new Libyan policy, particularly with the current spate of organized hostilities against Black African immigrant workers in the country is, what is the prospect of an enduring Black Africa-Arab relations in post-Gaddafi Libya? Does the exit of Muammar Gaddafi mean the end to Pan-African spirit in Libya?

### Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

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<sup>10</sup> "Ping Defends Africa Union Mediation in Libya" *RFI* <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20120126-ping-defends-africa-union,i/26/2012,5:19pm>.