A Special Move in the African Union to Maintain Peace and Security in the Continent

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Abstract

The establishment of OAU had not brought significant change in the continent, particularly, in maintaining peace and security. AU, replacing it, could show great effort in establishing mechanisms so as to maintain peace and security. The establishment of APSA, in this regard, could be mentioned as important change at least in showing the special attention given for the peace of the continent. Accordingly, APSA could play some role; however, it has not been as to the expectation. Thus, though AU show a special move in maintaining peace and security as compared to OAU, it is expected to do more to go beyond a mere institutional arrangement.

Key words:

African Peace; Security Architecture; African Union; Peace; Security

BRIEF BACKGROUND ON AFRICAN UNION

African countries suffered worst kind of exploitative colonialism besides the interstate and intrastate conflicts. As a result, pan African movement began abroad and subsequently the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed in 1963 (Kumar, 2009). African leaders showed strong commitment in joining hands for African liberation, adhering to the principle of 'African solutions for African problems' (Cervenka, 1977; Kumar, 2008). Since some African countries were still under the yoke of colonialism, OAU from its very establishment assumed the task of supporting collective struggles for liberation (Cervenka, 1977; Abubakar, 2008). Accordingly, OAU had played a great role in the liberation of the continent and the development of a common identity and unity in the continent (Hassan, 2006; Siradag, 2012). However, since OAU was pre-occupied with the program of anti-colonialism, it was found to be inefficient to respond to other challenges encountered, especially in the maintenance of peace and security in the continent. It was incapable of effectively addressing interstate and intrastate conflicts in the continent (Cervenka, 1977; Siradag, 2012).

Moreover, the OAU adhered to the inviolability of the principle of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference. For this reason, it could be a silent observer of intrastate conflicts in the continent, leaving aside intrastate conflicts as an exclusive mandate of the concerned governments (Abubakar, 2008; Murithi, 2008; Kumar, 2009; Moller, 2009).

The weakness of OAU and partly the reluctance of international communities to address crisis situations that occurred in

Africa urged African leaders to discuss the establishment of `African Union (AU) in the Extraordinary Summit of the OAU in Sirte, Libya, on September 9, 1999 (Coning and Kasumba, 2010; Bogland, *et al*., 2008). Accordingly, AU was established in 2002 in the inaugural meeting held in Durban, South Africa, to deal with the multifaceted nature of problems in the continent. Unlike the OAU, the security concept of AU widened to include democracy, respect of human rights, accountability, good governance and political openness (Bogland, *et al*., 2008; Solomon, 2011). Member states in the Constitutive Act "determined to promote and protect human and peoples' rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture, and to ensure good governance and the rule of law" in the continent. This shows AU's dramatic shift of focus from OAU's state-centric conception to human-centered security as it is devoted to the rights and interests of citizens. It came up with a broad vision for African people to the extent of protecting citizens' wellbeing within the member states. This is underscored in the introduction of the principle of intervention.

Accordingly, leaders of African states conceded to the AU's power of intervention to rescue the people from a grave suffering, which is not provided for in UN Charter (Bogland, *et al*., 2008). In the interest of maintenance of peace and security in the continent, AU introduced the principle of intervention in the domestic affairs of individual countries in the cases of circumstances like genocide and severe violation of human rights. This is stipulated under article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act, being a major departure

of AU from its predecessor. AU introduced this principle as a solution for the increasing nature of intrastate conflicts in Africa, which was apparent from the experience in Somalia (1990s), Rwanda (1994), DRC (1998 and 2003), among others.

African Union, which came as a panacea for the weaknesses of the OAU, made achievement of peace and security in Africa the main goal of its activities. This is clear from the preamble of the Constitutive Act of the AU, which was adopted at Lome Summit in 2000 and endorsed in 2002 at Durban meeting. It states that "the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and of the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda" (AU, 2000: 3). One can easily deduce from this that highest concern and priority have been given to peace and security issues of the continent as a precondition to realize the other goals of the AU. This is further underlined under Article 3 (h) of the Constitutive Act, which stipulates promoting peace, security, and stability on the continent as the main objective of the AU.

Moreover, cognizant of adverse effects of wars and conflicts in aggravating insecurity, poverty and deterioration of human condition across the continent, AU gives due regard to conflict prevention, management and resolution (Aning, et al., 2010). The establishment of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) underscores this fact. APSA is one of the most important recent developments in Africa with the role of conflict prevention,

management, and resolution (Ganzle and Franke, 2010; Vines, 2013). The whole purpose of APSA is fostering Africa's capacity in addressing the peace and security challenges of the continent (Brett, 2013). The establishment of this continental architecture reveals the significant emphasis made by AU on the peace and security issues of Africa.

Generally, as can be understood from the above discussion and evident in the following capability areas of APSA, one can draw a conclusion that AU is the most ambitious institution Africa has ever seen as far as peace and security matters are concerned. Besides, one can deduce that, AU has come up with a broad objective in the area of peace and security.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

African Peace and Security Architecture is an overall framework and its aims of peace-building and conflict management are intended to be achieved through the cumulative effort of its interconnected components (Fisher, *et al.*, 2010; Vines, 2013; Coning and Kasumba, 2010). The main components of APSA are the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the African Standby Force (ASF), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Panel of the Wise and the Special Fund. These components are discussed in the sub-sections herein under.

The Peace and Security Council

African member states adopted *The Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (the PSC Protocol) in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, which came into force in December 2003 (Moolakkattu, 2010). Accordingly, the PSC, as the most decisive component of APSA, was established in 2004 to coordinate peace-building efforts in the continent. The PSC was created modeling the UN Security Council although there are some important differences (Kumar, 2009; Adamu, 2008; Brett, 2013). For instance, the PSC has fifteen members, which are elected on the basis of equal rights. However, there are no member states with the right to veto the decision of the PSC and no state is entitled to permanent membership, unlike the UN Security Council system. Ten members are elected for a two year period, while the remaining five are elected for a period of three years representing the five regions, namely North, West, Central, East and Southern Africa as defined by AU (Brett, 2013).

The establishment of the PSC brought significant emphasis to the restoration of peace and stability in the continent (Kumar, 2009). The PSC is the main mechanism of AU's conflict prevention and management architecture with the support of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (Moolakkattu, 2010). This can also be understood from Article 2 of the PSC Protocol. Accordingly, Article 2 (1) of the PSC Protocol affirms that the PSC is "a standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts", which operates as "a collective security and early warning arrangement to facilitate timely and

efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa".   Hence, it is the principal decision-making organ of AU on all areas of security matters in the continent. In other words, it is this body, which decides, after analyzing the situation, whether certain action is to be taken so as to prevent, manage, or resolve conflicts. The decisions of the PSC are essentially made on the basis of consensus. If not possible to reach consensus, the PSC will adopt its decisions on procedural matters by a simple majority, while decisions on all other matters are made by a two-thirds majority vote (Article 13 of the PSC Protocol).

Besides, as a standing decision-making organ, the PSC has the power of legitimizing and coordinating the actions of all the other elements of the architecture, which are supportive agents to its broader function (Vines, 2013; Vines and Middleton, 2008). Thus, the PSC is the prime concerned body with the leading role concerning the security matters of Africa, which is analogous to the role of the UN Security Council in maintaining international peace and security.

As the primary responsible body of peace and security in the continent, the PSC has been provided with ambitious and broader functions to carry out on the area. Article 3 of the PSC Protocol stipulates wide ranges of functions of the PSC.   These are advancing peace, security, and stability in Africa; predicting and averting conflicts; performing peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities; managing endeavors to avert as well as struggle against international terrorism; developing a continental defense policy; and encouraging democratic practices.

Thus, it is safe to say that the PSC is endowed with a significant power in the process of realizing the purpose of maintaining peace and security in the continent. However, it cannot unilaterally accomplish its purposes; rather it needs other agents to support its work. Accordingly, AU Commission, Panel of the Wise, a CEWS, ASF and a Special Fund are important instruments to support the work of the PSC pursuance to article 2(2) of the PSC Protocol.

To sum up, the creation of the PSC was taken as a historic turning point in the process of building a durable peace and security in Africa. This body made several discussions over peace and security issues of the member states and authorized peace operations, *inter alia*, in Sudan, Somalia and Comoros (Boutellis and Williams, 2013) (the areas where most tragic scene of conflicts prevail, especially the first two).

African Standby Force

The idea of establishing a Pan-African military force is not a new phenomenon. It goes back to the early 1960s when Kwame Nkrumah proposed the establishment of African High Command for the primary purpose of safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of newly independent African states (Girmachew, 2008; Vines, 2013; Biney, 2012). Besides, this force was proposed to intervene in intra-state and inter-state conflicts in Africa (Girmachew, 2008). However, due to suspicion of its impact on states' sovereignty, the proposal was objected (Dier, 2010; Girmachew, 2008; Biney, 2012). The continental military force, thus, was not realized during the age of OAU.

Later, on the emergence of AU by the Constitutive Act of AU, African leaders took common position in the establishment of Africa-wide military force, which seems that they took the brainchild of Nkrumah. Accordingly, African Chiefs of Defense and Security (ACDS) adopted *The policy framework document on the establishment of the African Standby Force and of the Military Staff Committee* (MSC) (the ASF framework) in May 2003 which was approved in July 2004 by African Heads of States (Cilliers and Malan, 2005; Coning and Kasumba, 2010). The establishment of ASF with the aim of providing AU with reliable deployable force is based on the model of the Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), which was created to improve the rapid deployment of UN peacekeeping force.

The emergence of ASF follows from the adoption of two historic documents. The first one is the Constitutive Act of AU, which provides AU the right of intervention in member states' crisis situation while the second is the PSC protocol, which recommended the establishment of ASF for the implementation of this right of intervention. Hence, it is the executing wing of the PSC. ASF is a multi-dimensional force - consisting military, police and civilian components - intended to be trained in line with the UN training standards to effectively perform a wide range of functions[1]. Taking into consideration of the existing nature of conflict in Africa (Abubakar, 2008), ASF is intended to operate, in performing its functions, in line with the possible incremental ranges of scenarios[2] within their corresponding prescribed time limit. This is, ASF is assumed to respond to conflicts ranging from scenario 1 (simple military advise) to scenario 6, which is grave circumstances requiring a robust AU military intervention. To this end, according to the ASF framework and the *roadmap for the operationalization of the ASF*, the capacity development of ASF has intended to develop in two phases. In the first phase (up to 30 June 2005), ASF should develop the capacity to manage scenarios 1 and 2, while regions were anticipated to build standby brigade capable of handling scenario 4. Whereas in the second phase (1 July 2005 to 30 June 2010), ASF is expected to manage up to scenario 5, while all regions should develop their capability to a standby brigade level and those that already established the brigade should raise their capability of rapid deployment. The understanding was by June 30, 2010 ASF will achieve its full operational capacity (Williams, 2011). However, the goal was not achieved to the entire extent; the force still may not respond to scenario 5 or 6 to the expected level (*ibid*).

The ASF undertakes its responsibilities in two forms: peace support missions from scenarios 1 to 5 and intervention which is scenario 6 (Batware, 2011; Solomon, 2010). Hence, peace support missions are deployed in the different level of conflicts which fall under scenarios 1-5 with the consent of the host country, whereas deployment in genocide, crime against humanity and war crimes as embraced by scenario 6 does not need the consent or request of the concerned country (Batware,

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[1] See article 13(3) of the PSC Protocol

[2] See Paragraph 1.6 of the ASF framework

2011). It is logical not to wait the consent of the hosting country and to deploy within 14 days (the shortest time limit compared to other scenarios) in the case of scenario 6 taking into consideration of the dangers it entails. Nonetheless, having a vigorous troop and adequate logistics to respond to it has been challenging.

African Standby Force is not a single army unit. Rather, it is a combination of standby forces from five regional brigades. It is made up of the pledge of member states or the contribution of sub-regional brigades. Hence, ASF established to comprise five sub-regional standby forces in the Northern, Western, Central, Southern and Eastern part of Africa. Each of the five regions with 3,000 – 4,000 troops with a sixth formation at AU's Headquarters at Addis Ababa for a combined capacity of 15,000 to 20,000 peacekeepers constituted ASF (Neethling, 2005). All these constituting ASF expected to operate under the direction of a proper mandating authority. However, ASF is not still well equipped to serve its purpose.

Continental Early Warning System

Continental Early Warning System was established within article 12 of the PSC Protocol of 2002 as one important pillar of APSA so as "to facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts". CEWS is an intelligence gathering and analysis mechanism that provides latest information on potential, actual and post conflict situations to the AU decision-making organs and operational arms (Brett, 2013; Vines and Middleton, 2008). Hence, it is important primarily for conflict prevention as it attempts to discover and informs timely the potentially serious threats to the

Chairperson of the Commission, who, in turn, advises the PSC.

The PSC Protocol requires CEWS to consist observation and monitoring centre (the Situation Room) located at the AU's Conflict Management Directorate and five regional observations and monitoring units, which are linked with the situation room. The situation room is assumed to be in a constant communication with the regional early warning centers to get information on the regional situations. In this regard, a good progress was achieved after the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding, which strengthened the collaborative work of CEWS and regional early warning mechanisms (IPI, 2012).

The CEWS gathers security information from a variety of sources. It collects data from independent media, the AU's Liaison Offices and Field Missions situated in crisis areas, and from the sub-regional organizations (Vines, 2013; Brett, 2013; Vines and Middleton, 2008). As stated in Article 12 (5) of the PSC Protocol, the data gathered from such sources will be used by the Chairperson of the Commission of AU to advise the PSC on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa and suggests appropriate responses to be taken. The information will have paramount importance in guiding the decisions of the PSC and directing the subsequent deployment of the ASF (Vines, 2013; Vines and Middleton, 2008). However, this system is not without challenge. Lack of capacity of both AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) limits the full operationalization of the system (Kimathi, 2011; IPI, 2012).

The Panel of the Wise

The Panel of the Wise consists of individuals who have a highly dignified personality. The Panel of the wise is one mechanism of the AU in the process of ensuring peace through the effort of well known African personalities. The Panel of the Wise is composed of five individuals representing the five regions of the continent, which are nominated by the Chairperson of the Commission and appointed by the Assembly for the term of three years with the expressed purpose of supporting the PSC to prevent conflict. As per article 11 (3) of the PSC Protocol, the Panel of the Wise is mandated to "advise the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the Commission on all issues pertaining to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa" (the PSC protocol: 16). It holds politically autonomous individuals assigned to advise the PSC and provide AU's initial response to crisis situations in the form of personal mediation (Ganzle and Franke, 2010; IPI, 2012). They are supposed to perform actions pertinent to the prevention of conflict. As the *Modalities for the Functioning of the Panel of the Wise*, adopted by the PSC on November 12, 2007, reveals the Panel of the Wise is mandated to carry out fact-finding missions as a means for conflict prevention. Thus, like CEWS it has the role of conflict prevention.

Moolakkattu (2010) noted Kofi Annan's mediation in Kenyan election crisis of 2007, Joachim Chissano's participation in Northern Uganda crisis, Thabo Mbeki participation in Zimbabwe's electoral tension as practical examples of wise men method of addressing crisis situations. This approach is applicable through employing the wisdom of the elderly and experienced personalities in addressing conflicting situations and maintaining peace and security (*ibid*). However, there is still a need to make the Panel of Wise more active, flexible and expeditious to serve its purpose effectively (IPI, 2012).

The Peace Fund

The Peace fund is associated with provision of financial budget for the purpose of undertaking different missions and operations in maintaining peace and security in Africa. Moreover, the objective of peace fund is designed to strengthening Africa financially to solve its problems by its own, promoting African unity and African overall development (Golaszinski, 2004). As illustrated in article 21 (2) of the PSC Protocol, the sources of peace fund may be AU's budget, the contribution of member states as well as other private sources in Africa.

Besides, the fund also comes from outside Africa. As per article 21 (3) of the PSC Protocol, "the Chairperson of the Commission shall raise and accept voluntary contributions from sources outside Africa, in conformity with the objectives and principles of the AU". As a solution to financial constraints, African leaders adopted a resolution at the African Union Summit in Maputo in July 2003, requesting the European Union to establish a Peace Facility from funds allocated to their countries under the existing cooperation agreements with the EU (Golaszinski, 2004). Accordingly, the European Council has taken positive step to promote African peacekeeping operations. Thus, the peace fund is a financial support of all activities in the area of peace and security. However, it is

not sufficient enough to support AU's peace support operations financially.

In a nutshell, the whole purpose of all the aforementioned components under the umbrella of the APSA is to maintain peace and security in the continent and shows the significant focus made on the security policy of the continent. Components are characterized by uneven development; some components are relatively better developed (PSC, CEWS and the Panel of the Wise) than the others (ASF and the Peace Fund) (Brett, 2013). Nonetheless, APSA as a whole has played a role in the reduction of conflict in the continent through its peace-making, peace-keeping, peace-building and conflict transformation efforts (Addo, 2011). It has been responding to several crisis situations notably Mali (2012/2013), Darfur, Somalia, Northern Uganda, eastern DRC, Guinea-Bissau and South Sudan (Brett, 2013).

Needless to say, however, AU still has a number of shortcomings. AU requires a wider range of capabilities, beyond the above discussed APSA capability areas, to effectively address Africa's diverse peace and security challenges, *inter alia*, security sector reform, counter terrorism and maritime security (*ibid*). APSA's progress in these areas is negligible and it needs external support as well as partnership to effectively address those issues (*ibid*). AU is yet on the way of building up its capabilities in responding to crises; hence, it is confronted with multiple challenges. Thus, despite its ambitious plan and some practical contribution in the area, there are challenges ahead like coordination and capacity problem. Lack of commitment and political will of member states in terms of providing personnel, material and

financial support could be mentioned as great challenges to the realization of AU's intended objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

Africa had experienced intrastate and interstate conflicts. It had faced serious insecurity and instabilities. Though OAU was established at the time, it was not in a position to address the issue and instabilities remained intact. Later, AU replaced OAU and placed the peace and security of the continent at the center of its main agendas. AU has laid down the framework of APSA. APSA consists of components mainly PSC, ASF, CEWS, The Panel of the Wise, and the Peace Fund. The whole purpose of these components of APSA is maintaining peace and security in the continent. Accordingly, they contributed some part in the continent. However, it is clear that great effort is yet needed to improve such components thereby to meet the ultimate objective of AU. Africa is not yet free from conflicts, especially, interstate conflicts. The strong commitment and political will of member states would have paramount importance in better achieving the AU's objective of maintaining peace and security in the continent.

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