

DEMOCRACY, THE ARAB SPRING OR A NEW AGENDA FOR A SECOND COLONIZATION OF AFRICA? LESSONS FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

G.S. Mmaduabuchi Okeke*

Recibido: 3 Septiembre 2012 / Revisado: 7 Octubre 2012 / Aceptado: 12 Octubre 2012

INTRODUCTION

There is an unstoppable surge for democratization sweeping across the Arab world. For a long time, the Arab countries have been under the yoke of repressive dictatorial regimes. Recently the problems of youth unemployment, poverty, corruption, demand for rule of law, social justice and human dignity, coupled with the paradox of visible economic growth without corresponding impact on the peoples socio-economic wellbeing, triggered off a revolt of unprecedented proportions. This revolt could not just be said to be spontaneous, because of several outstanding issues which we shall discuss later in the paper.

The manner of participation and level of involvement of the West, especially in the Libyan civil war, has raised a lot of questions as to whether indeed the West loves the Arabs so much as to protect them from their oppressor-brother leaders, using the instrumentalities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, and the United Nations Organization, UNO, as diplomatic contrivances; or it is a sugar-coated jingle for a new agenda for a second colonization of Africa. The latter stance is strengthened by the fact that most of the Western countries championing the wave of democratic revolutions in the Arab world, were also the brains behind the partition of Africa, occasioned by the Berlin conference of 1884/85, which led to the pillage of the African continent for centuries.

This however does not preclude the fact that there had been a subsisting argument that Africa

has always remained under colonialism, considering the fact that what she got at independence was only a flag independence. In other words, Africa has long been recolonized, and needed no physical presence of the West in Africa for it to happen. Even so, the economies of African countries are tied to the apron strings of the economies of their colonial masters in the metropolises, actively supported by the national bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, it could be contended that the present effort of the West is a 'civilized' attempt to make deeper incursions into the Arab economies and by logical extension to continue to maintain its stranglehold on Africa. This is so because of the stiff competition initiated by the rise of China in global economy.

In this light therefore, the paper examines the unfolding scenarios in the Arab world, with a special focus on Libya, against the backdrop of the true motive of the West as to whether or not they are truly having the genuine interest of the Arabs in mind. It also poses some critical questions and investigates the possible lessons the sub-Saharan Africa could learn from the Arab experience. These issues are addressed in the paper under four major sections in addition to the section on conclusion. Aside the ongoing introduction, section two compares democracy and the Arab Spring, otherwise titled, "democracy and the Arab Spring: An Interface"; the second section interrogates the invasion of the Arab world by the West, with special focus on Libya, while the third section attempts a comparison of the commonalities of the Arab experience in the light of Western interest in Africa:

* University of Lagos (Nigeria). E-mail: gokeke@unilag.edu.ng

The fourth section draws lessons for the sub-Saharan Africa, against the backdrop of the Arab experience. The final section is the conclusion.

1. DEMOCRACY AND THE ARAB SPRING: AN INTERFACE

It is not within the purview of this paper to discuss the rigours of the scholarly democratic debate. This is because, among political scientists, around the globe, there is no generally acceptable definition of democracy, especially in regard to its application on a functioning statehood. We try to pigeonhole our understanding of democracy within two popular spectrums:

- The maximalists, as represented by Dahl (1989)¹ who advanced the necessary conditions central for a well-functioning multi-party democracy, and;
- The minimalists, as represented in the work of Schumpeter (1942), who, argues that democracy is not synonymous with rule by the people, but “...a method by which decision-making is transferred to individuals who have gained power in a competitive struggle for the votes of the citizens”.² The second spectrum is expected to create *majoritarian rules* as a result of competitive politics.

Even so, the imposition of Western standards of democracy on Africa, and perhaps the Arab world could mean as Crepaz contends,

“putting an adult jacket on a five year old and then tell her to run. This will most likely end in a bad spill and perhaps with a bloody nose”³.

The reference here to Africa and the Arab world is instructive, because of the peculiar nature of their politics. This does not imply that elements or principles of Western democracy cannot be found or applied in the two examples in focus. As Mazrui (2002)⁴ affirms, ‘the most fundamental goals of democracy’, are:

- To make the rulers accountable and answerable for their actions and policies;
- To make the citizens effective participants in choosing those rulers and in regulating their actions;
- To make the society as open and the economy as transparent as possible; and
- To make the social order fundamentally just, equitable to the greatest number possible.

In the light of the above, we can then ask whether or not the situation in Libya before the revolt, and other Arab countries approximate the above conditions. In this sense therefore, we are saved the rigours and encumbrances of trying to define democracy, but to focus on those elements that make democracy preferred. This is because democracy should be culture-bound, though there are general and essential ingredients that make it stronger; i.e., when the principles of democracy are functional and the people have confidence in them, and the institutions harbour them, and they produce affordable goods and services, good roads, good education and health care systems, available social services, obedience to the law, and there is research and development taking place; that is what the people will attach significance to as a workable democracy. These are key issues on the agenda of the Arab Spring.

It is in the light of the foregoing therefore, that the Arab Spring can be gleaned. As we explained earlier, the Arab Spring is a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests occurring in the Arab world. It is sometimes called the ‘Arab Spring and Winter’, ‘Arab Awakening’, or ‘Arab Uprisings’, though not all participants in the protests are Arabs. For instance, the small Jewish minority in Tunisia which was initially divided by the protests against Ben Ali, later changed their mind and joined the protesters. It is in the same vein that Coptic minority in Egypt, represented by Pope Shenouda III of the Coptic Orthodox church

¹ See, Dahl R. (1989). *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

² See, Schumpeter, J. (1942). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. London: Routledge, cited in Moshe, L and Osman, A.A. (2008) (eds.), *Democracy and Culture: An African Perspective*. London: Adonis and Abbey Publications Ltd, p.19.

³ Crepaz, M. M. L. “Reflections on Recipe for Democracy in Africa,” in Moshi, L. and Osman, A. A. (eds.) (2008) *Democracy and Culture: An African Perspective*. London Adams and Abbey Publishers Ltd, 25.

⁴ See, Mazrui A. (2002). *Who Killed Democracy in Africa?*, Available on the Internet: <http://igce.binghamton.edu/igcesite/dinton9.htm>. Retrieved on September 10, 2010.

of Alexandria (now late), called for them to end participation in the protest, but a significant number of Coptic Christians chose to join in demonstrations against the regime with their Muslim compatriots. Also, the Berbers of Morocco saw it as a Berber revolution, linking it to the Berber uprising in their historical past.

There are remote causes of the Arab Spring (we shall come to this later), but the most recent one that could be easily recalled is the American invasion of Iraq by the George W. Bush administration, which unleashed a political tsunami in the region. This was followed by the Iranian demonstrations, which was quickly put down by state repression, with governmental apparatuses. However, the immediate spark that ignited the 'youthquake', was the first protests that occurred in Tunisia on December 18, 2010, as a result of Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation in the protest against police brutality, corruption and ill treatment. The success of this protest, that led to the overthrow of the Ben Ali regime, had a spillover effect, as a wave of unrests hit Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and other countries⁵.

There are several factors that were responsible for the frustrations which led to the self-immolation of Bouazizi. These issues which cut across the Arab world include, absolute monarchy and dictatorship, government corruption, severe human rights violations, economic meltdown which created a high youth unemployment rate, extreme poverty and the structural demographic imbalance created a large percentage of educated but dissatisfied youth within the population. Added to these are the disproportionate distribution of state wealth which were concentrated in a few hands, especially the autocratic leadership. There was also rising cost of food and famine rates were on the increase. Therefore the perceived economic growth has not positively impacted on the socio-economic wellbeing of the generality of the people. The situation in the Arab world was described by Ajami⁶ thus,

"There, tyrants had closed up the political world, become owners of their countries in all but name. It was a bleak landscape: terrible rulers, sullen populations, a terrorist fringe that hurled itself in frustration at an order bereft of any legitimacy. Arabs had started to feel they were cursed, doomed to despotism. The regions exceptionalism was becoming not just a human disaster but a moral embarrassment".

This is a state of hopelessness, which also threatened food security, as the youth refused to accept the status quo. As it were, the Arabs did not need a 'human development report' to tell them of their desolation. This desolation led to the draining of consent out of public life, leaving suspicion and fear as the only glue between the ruler and the ruled. Ajami's position was also supported by observed background information on the Arab spring. As has been stated,

"In recent decades rising living standards and literacy rates, as well as the increased availability of higher education, have resulted in an improved human development index in the affected countries. The tension between rising aspirations and a lack of government reform may have been a contributing factor in all the protests"⁷.

Again, many of the internet-savvy youths of these countries who studied in the West see autocrats and absolute monarchies as anachronisms. It was therefore under these harsh realities that the people demanded for democracy, the rule of law, social justice and dignity.

Certain fundamental observations and contradictions have been made about the Arab Spring. They include the following:

- The Western media perceives the Arab world as ubiquitous terrorists, unrepentant Islamic fundamentalists, bearded radicals and their companions trying to impose Sharia. Inversely, there were corrupt, brutal despots who were the only option for control of the undesirables;

⁵ Several Arab countries are experiencing this momentous uprising, two heads of state have fallen Tunisia and Egypt, while Libya's Gaddafi has been forced out of power in Tripoli and recently captured and executed, thereby paving way for the declaration of the 'Liberation' of Libya. Other Arab countries experiencing protests and revolutionary pressures are; Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Western Sahara, and Israeli Borders. For details, see, Arab Spring; available on the Internet: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring.

⁶ Fouad Ajami, "The Arab Spring at One: A Year of Living Dangerously". *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2012, 56.

⁷ See, *The Background Motivations to the Arab Spring*, available on the Internet: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring; retrieved on October 15, 2011.

- The view of the “us versus them”, which includes not only the entire bureaucratic empires engaged in fighting the “war on terror”, but also the industries that supply this war and the battalions of contractors and consultants so generously rewarded for their services;
- There is the possibility that things could change for the worse in the Arab world which could dampen the hope of a new democratic beginning⁸. This is because at the moment the real transformation has not begun, not even in Tunisia (where general elections held on October 23, 2011), and Egypt where the despots are gone, and with the winding up of the raging civil war in Libya, of which the final outcome has not been determined.

On the other hand, the contradiction in the Arab Spring lies in the fact that democratic demands are not new in the Arab world. In fact this is the third Arab awakening. The first was a political-cultural renaissance born out of a desire to join the modern world in the late 1800s. The effort at this period was geared toward reforming political life, separating religion from politics, the emancipation of women and moving past the experience of the Ottoman Empire. The second awakening came with the era of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia and the early leaders of the Baath Party in Iraq and Syria. As Ajami⁹ notes,

“...the leaders of that time were intensely political men engaged in great issues of the day. They came from the middle class or even lower and had dreams of power, of industrialization, of ridding their people of inferiority instilled by Ottoman and then colonial rule...; they had monumental accomplishments, but then, explosive demographics and their own authoritarian proclivities and shortcomings undid most of their work. When they faltered, police and political Islam filled the void”.

This void is what partially triggered of today’s Arab spring-the third phase, which is still in the

scales of history with dyadic possibilities of prison and freedom .

However, it could be recalled that in 1906, Iran had established a constitutional regime. Again, during the interwar period and afterward, the semi-independent and independent countries of the region were mainly governed by constitutional authorities. These efforts were hamstrung by entrenched interests, the autocratic proclivities of rulers, and massive illiteracy and poverty¹⁰. The failures to establish sustained constitutional governments were not limited to the above factors. It has been contended that,

“These governments were systematically undermined by the imperialist great powers, whose ambitions and interests were often obstructed by parliaments, nascent public opinion and a press that insisted on national sovereignty and a fair share of their own resources. From the European powers’ undermining of the Iranian and Ottoman constitutional governments in the first decades of the twentieth century, to America’s interference in Lebanon and Syria and overthrow of the Iranian government in the 1950s, the pattern was continually repeated. The Western powers not only gave little or no support to democratic rule in the Middle East, they often actively undermined it, preferring to deal with pliable autocrats who did their bidding. In other words, the pattern of Western support for easily manipulated dictatorial regimes is by no means a new one¹¹”.

What this implies is that the Arabs are not averse to democracy, as the above evidence shows. In essence therefore, the recent turn-around by the West in support of the democratic upsurge in the Arab world is not surprising. But a peculiar character of the Arab Spring is that they are not even demanding for the establishment of an Islamic State. The emphasis has been on democracy, the rule of law, social justice, human dignity, among others, the absence of which are at the root of their problems. These also were promised them, and upon these their nationalist leaders rode to power

⁸ Rashid Khalidi, “The Arab Spring”, *The Nation*, March 21, 2011, Available on the Internet: <http://www.thenation.com/article/158991/arab-spring>; retrieved on October 15, 2011.

⁹ Fouad Ajami, op. cit. 65.

¹⁰ Rashid Khalidi, op. cit.

¹¹ Ibid.

in the 1950s, as they fought colonialism and neo-colonial powers. Hence, the focus has been largely on internal problems, with little emphasis on foreign policy, no visible anti-Western feeling, and limited mention of Israel or Palestine.

The Libyan case is instructive for the following reasons:

- Gaddafi the Libyan leader was for a long time a torn in the flesh of the West;
- The Libyan oil was of great interest to the West;
- The Gaddafi repressive leadership style had always been used as negative human rights record against him, including being implicated in some terrorist activities;
- The manner the West handled the Libyan case, which led to China and Russia, vetoing the Resolution on Syria to avoid a repeat of the Libyan experience, where the West used the ‘no fly zone to protect Libyan civilians’ as guise to deal with the Gaddafi regime.
- The Libyan case displays serious diplomatic treachery by the West, since what they preached was different from what they acted on the ground in Libya.

It is also an open secret that the West surreptitiously penetrated the Gaddafi regime and quietly undermined it, thereby accentuating the revolt against him. Evidence from the various interactions between Gaddafi’s heir apparent to the throne, Saif Al Islam, and other efforts to open up Libya to the West support this. We shall return to this later.

2. EXPLAINING THE WESTERN/IMPERIALIST INVASION OF THE ARAB WORLD

The intellectual debate on imperialism may not be necessary for our purpose here. What is important is that imperialism has developed neo-colonial strategies that are used for the continued and continuing domination of world politics. By neocolonialism we mean “... the establishment of dependency relationships between formally independent countries and imperialist powers... It is the maintenance of colonial methods of domina-

tion without the existence of the colonial form itself”¹². This unholy alliance is made possible with the collusion of the ruling class of the neocolonial state and the bourgeoisie of the imperialist country. As Onimode contends,

“Neocolonialism is the dominant form of multilateral imperialism that emerged after 1945. under US hegemony. The dissolution of empires under American slogans like ‘self-determination’ and ‘open door policy’, with war-paralysed Europe and the dominant USA (which was excluded in the earlier colonial divisions) meant that the US wanted to use her new economic power for world domination –just as Britain preached free trade as a strategy of world domination¹³”.

On the basis of this, the US domination has been enhanced by the collapse of socialism, though still checkmated by the rise of China. This conspiracy of the West against the Arab world, and by extension Africa, is allegedly being championed by the US. But in the case of Libya, where the US withdrew to the background after providing initial leadership, it has been observed that the UK and France took over the leadership in the NATO military campaign in Libya, in the guise of protecting the civilians. This is because the Libyan oil is known to have greater acceptability or value in the European market than in the US¹⁴.

It is important to note that the present role being played by the West in the Arab world did not just start at a knee-jerk. While the West preaches liberal democracy and pushes towards liberalizing the economy, the underlying philosophy is seemingly economic domination. This is so because, it is a more civilized way of continued world dominance. While the West pretend to emphasize the rule of law, human rights, and dignity, freedom, democracy, etc, the overriding motive is that the sustenance of these principles would ensure stability, which also guarantees a conducive environment for the penetration and exploitation of all available economic resources. It is a known fact that dictatorial regimes are discouraged or antagonized only when they are no longer serving the interest of the West, or when there are greater gains to be made by changing the system.

¹² Onimode, B. (1985). *An Introduction to Marxist Political Economy*. London: Zed Book Ltd, 236.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Interviewee’s Observation on CCTV, Monitored, September, 2011.

There are some remarkable events which could explain the present role of the West in the Arab world. It is very important because it would be misleading to believe that the present crises in the Arab world are as a result of a spontaneous reaction. A lot of water has passed under the bridge, though there is no uniform script being played for the Arab regimes. The West has been planning and waiting for this moment. Some of these fundamental events are:

- The impact of the non-violent revolution rule-book on the Arab youth;
- The Bush Doctrine,
- Obama’s speech in Cairo, and;
- In the case of Libya, the West have some other reasons’ to force Gaddafi out of power at all costs.

For the purpose of explanation, we must note that the nonviolent rulebook, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*, by Gene Sharp had a strong influence, especially on the Egyptian revolution. Gene Sharp, the world’s foremost expert on non-violent revolution is credited with the strategy for the toppling of the Egyptian government. This book states certain key steps on the path to revolution, and has been slipped across borders and hidden from secret policemen all over the world. The steps include;

- Develop a strategy for winning freedom and a vision of the society you want;
- Overcome fear by small acts of resistance;
- Use colours and symbols to demonstrate unity of resistance;
- Learn from historical examples of the successes of non-violent movements;
- Use non-violent “weapons”;
- Identify the dictatorship’s pillars of support and develop a strategy for undermining each;
- Use oppressive or brutal acts by the regime as a recruiting tool for your movement, and;

- Isolate or remove from the movement people who use or advocate violence¹⁵.

This book with more than 198 methods, was originally written in 1993, for the Burmese democratic movement after the imprisonment of Aung San Suu Kyi, whose central message is that, “The power of dictatorships comes from the willing obedience of the people they govern – and that if the people can develop techniques of withholding their consent, a regime will crumble”¹⁶. Sharp has a stern warning that, “As soon as you choose to fight with violence you’re choosing to fight against your opponents’ best weapons and you have to be smarter than that”¹⁷.

This is the book that the *April 6 Movement* and many others in Egypt read, swallowed and practiced in the Egyptian revolution, which reverberated across the Arab world. It is also known that this book was translated into Arabic and distributed on the demonstration grounds as a guide to action.

Another contributory element in the Arab Spring is the ‘Bush Doctrine’, otherwise called the ‘National Security Strategy of the United States’. The four major components of the Bush Doctrine are:

- Preemption,
- Military Primacy,
- New Multilateralism, and;
- The Spread of Democracy¹⁸.

Under the principle of democratic regime change, several dictatorial regimes were marked out for change at all costs, including Libya, and other Arab countries. This stance was supported by the extremist tendencies of some of the regimes in the Arab world, and was given impetus by the September 11, 2001, attack on the US.

The Obama Speech in Cairo, Egypt on June 4, 2009, also had a strong message for the Arab world. This could be likened to the President Bush’s Speech to USSR, which contributed to the break-up of the Soviet Union, and subsequently the collapse of socialism. The Obama Speech was hinged on seven key issues:

¹⁵ See, *The Explanations by Ruaridh Arrow*, Director of Gene Sharp – How to Start a Revolution; available on the internet: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12522848>, accessed on September 6, 2011.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ For details see, “Bush Doctrine”, available on the internet: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bush_Doctrine.

- Confrontation of violent extremism,
- Israelis, Palestinians and the Arab world;
- The rights and responsibilities of nations on nuclear weapons;
- Democracy;
- Religious freedom;
- Women's rights, and;
- Economic development and opportunity¹⁹.

The issue that is most central to our discussion is democracy. Although, Obama said he was not there to impose American democracy on the Arab world, he succeeded in sending across a fundamental message, about democracy that,

“...Each nation gives life to this principle in its own way, grounded in the traditions of its own people. America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election. But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. Those are not just American ideas, they are human rights, and that is why we will support them everywhere”²⁰.

This very speech is quite pointed and fundamental for the Arab to liberate themselves from the oppressive regimes under which they have lived over the years. In other words, it helped to prepare the ground for opportunity to seek democratic justice in their country.

There is also the case of Libya with its enormous oil and gas reserves, with a ‘recalcitrant’ leader, Colonel Muammer Gaddafi. Gaddafi refused to ‘cooperate’ with the West, and was only able to let them have only 30% access to Libya's oil and gas resources. It was Gaddafi who helped to liberate Africa from the telecommunication stranglehold of Europe; who has been central to making

African Development Bank, ADB, African Monetary Fund, AMF, and African Investment Bank, AIB, truly African. The role of Gaddafi in ending Apartheid can also not be ignored, as well as the mobilization of Africans for a truly United States of Africa²¹. In all these, he committed enormous resources and energy. The West would ultimately lose its stranglehold on the African economy, if Gaddafi were not stopped, checkmated and he could succeed in genuinely uniting Africa, along the lines of his dreams. Therefore, Gaddafi must be forced out of power in order to disorganize the African Union, into which he has committed enormous resources. He has also made huge investments in several other African countries to help their economies grow. This does not however mean that Gaddafi did not have his own problems. By his style of leadership, several crimes and acts of terrorism were linked to him, and recently accused of corruption amidst his country's dwindling economy. In the light of the foregoing therefore, we examine the Arab world, Africa and the West.

3. THE ARAB WORLD, AFRICA AND THE WEST

It may not be necessary in this paper to dwell on the perceived prejudices between the Arab world and their African brothers. It could be tantamount to collective social blackmail to raise these issues, in the face of the globalization machine sweeping across both continents in which both Arabs and Africans are weaker partners. The wind of change sweeping across the Arab world, from what we can see beyond the horizon, is a Western master-plan, crafted overtime, and only waiting for this opportunity.

Tunisia and Egypt did not give the West the opportunity to penetrate and dictate from the background. This is mainly because the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt were able to decipher the reality that their time was up. In the case of Libya, which had major issues with the West, the West used the UN resolution 1973, as a diplomatic contrivance

¹⁹ See the *New York Times*, “Text: Obama's Speech in Cairo”, published June 4, 2009; available on the internet at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/us/politics/04obama.text.html?pagewanted=all>, accessed on September 10, 2011.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ See Jean-Paul Pougala, “Why the West wants the fall of Gaddafi”, available on the internet at: <http://36ohk6dgmcdln.yom.mail.yahoo.net/om/api/1.0/openmail.app.invoke/36ohk6dgmcdln>. Retrieved on September 10, 2011.

to cut their pound of flesh from Gaddafi. Syria has only escaped temporarily with the veto exercised by China and Russia, which stopped another likely Western invasion of an Arab country.

But there is a problem here. What this implies is that if the West had any honest intentions for Syria, it would have been emasculated by the action of China and Russia. It does not help the growth of the UN, and its method of dispute settlement. This is temporary, because, as it stands, from the point of view of US National Security Strategy, the US can invoke the principle of Unilateralism or Preemption to attack Syria, if the unrest continues. However, it is envisaged that the recent Kofi Anan plan might be a face saving device for Syria.

Incessant unrest has not allowed for normal business flow. This is not good especially at this time when the Western economy is also in dire stress. There is serious Structural Adjustment Programmes going on in major European countries, especially Greece, Portugal, Italy, the United Kingdom, France etc. The US is also presently undergoing very serious economic meltdown and there is very high level of unemployment. There have been demonstrations against 'corporate greed', and protest movements calling for the widening inequality to be bridged.

One would also see that the global economic meltdown has some impact in the unfolding scenario. The West are fighting like jackals and wounded lions to secure tight economic influence in the Arab world and Africa. The true motive of the West was revealed with the indecent haste with which they started invading Libya, with the crisis which they incited in the first instance. They quickly called for a conference on Libya in London, which,

“...not only deals solely with Libya, but holds the blue print to a new imperialist re-division of the entire African continent. Libya, which became a holdout when Quaddafi changed his mind, will be used to complete the “Union

of the Mediterranean” and as a new bridge-head into Africa. This is the start of major steps that will be taken by the U.S. and the E.U. to purge the growing Chinese presence from Africa”²².

From this standpoint therefore, it is obvious that, “... Not only has the revolt in Libya been instigated by Washington and its allies, but it has been nurtured and armed by them too”²³. It is also laughable when the NATO started bombing Libya, in the pretext that they were protecting the Libyan civilians from their brother leader. We have to also note that the undercurrent moves at the London conference on Libya reveals the true colour of the coalition formed against Libya;

“In a clear breach of international law, the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, and their allies are making decisions about the future of Libya ahead of any changes on the ground... Democracy is a bottom-up process and governance is an internal matter to be decided upon by the Libyans themselves. These decisions cannot be made by foreign powers that have been the staunch supporters of some of the worst dictatorships”²⁴.

It is therefore a far cry from reality that indeed the West is protecting the Libyan's or Arabs from their oppressor brothers. The case of Libya clearly shows the true motives of the West for the rest of the Arab world and indeed Africa. For one thing, the Arabs and the rest of us should know that the West cannot fire their Tomahoc missiles in vain. The West cannot send their air planes, and give all the military support, just to set Libya or the Arab world free. As they also say, 'there is no free lunch'. Even so, they have also virtually lost decades of diplomacy in the Arab world. This is a price they cannot pay in vain. Galtung²⁵ has pointedly stated that the primary aim of the West in the Libyan war was to stop Gaddafi's economic plan for Africa. This therefore aptly describes the ultimate motive of the West in Libya, and by possible extension to the rest of the Arab World.

²² See, “The War on Libya and the Coming Imperial Re-division of Africa – Part 1, available on the internet at: <http://www.mathaba.net/news/libya>, Accessed on September 10, 2011.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Johan Galtung, (Professor of Peace Studies, Transcend Peace University) answering questions on the Arab Spring, on Aljazeera Television, on June 15, 2012, 3.30pm-4.00pm, Nigerian (local) time. Monitored from the researcher's office, University of Lagos.

Ordinarily, the West cannot set the Arabs free in order to give them 'a murderous competition'. The Libyan civil war, therefore cannot be anything less than 'politics by other means', and politics can not truly survive where there is no economy. In other words, the primary interest of politics everywhere is economics. The true motive of the West in Libya, the Arab world or Africa, as elsewhere, are the resources, so let the National Transitional Council and the other Arabs, not be deluded that the Libyans and other Arabs are being 'set free' as such.

4. SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: ANY LESSONS FROM THE ARAB SPRING?

There are quite a lot of lessons that Africa, south of the Sahara could learn from the Arab Spring. We could indentify some significant lessons from issues raised by the Arab Spring. Critical questions may be raised as to why Libya, for instance was invaded without exhausting the whole gamut of applicable avenues for dialogue and peaceful settlement. What role did the African Union, AU, play? What of other African countries that have benefited from Gaddafi? Again, what about the regional conflict resolution mechanisms, and their expected roles as envisaged in the collective security strategy of the entire African continent, under Article 4d of the AU Constitutive Act? Why did the UN not allow Regional Arrangements as provided in the UN Charter, which could have given African Union and perhaps the Arab League the opportunity to find solution(s) to the Libyan crisis and the Arab Spring respectively? How can the UN be violating its own rules, applying different strokes to different folks?

These issues and questions are important because they clear the air on the true motive of the West in Libya and the Arab world. It is very important to note that the West control largely the machinery in the UN Security Council. They determine when there is a breach of International Peace and Security, which is the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council. It will therefore be a tall dream for African countries to think that the UN which was formed when most of the African countries were under the yoke of colonialism, which is still under their stranglehold, and which they also use as a diplomatic contrivance to legitimize their actions, could just agree to invite their slaves to eat on the same table with them.

This very fact underscores the very urgent need for a serious reform of the UN. This is also why the ignoble role played by Nigeria and South Africa in voting 'Yes', to Resolution 1973 which opened the way for the invasion of Libya, should be condemned. If they are expecting to be made permanent members of the Security Council, with veto power, if the UN is democratized, they should be made to know that a reform of the UN is not even yet on the agenda. They should ask also why it was not possible, for instance for Mitterrand's France to help Helmut Kohl's Germany to achieve this dream. Therefore the need to push for reform is more honourable than a 'Yes' vote against an African country.

The positive actions, steps and investments Gaddafi made in Africa, do not require that Africa should just abandon him at a time of great need, at least in recognition of his positive contributions to the AU. This is unfortunate. The AU did too little, too late. It was the intervention of Eminent Africans that even made some kind of push to make definitive statements on Libya, which is a position the AU was expected to take. We also saw this in Cote d'Ivoire, where ECOWAS and AU were virtually out of action. The apparent timidity of African leaders in the face of obvious challenges to African existence is quite deplorable.

The message to the remaining despots and dictators in Africa, is very simple. They had better start immediate plan for succession. It is dangerous to stay too long in power, because it creates the opportunity for leaders to delude themselves that they have answers to all the questions. Africa should learn the lesson of allowing every generation to produce its leaders. In this way, some dynamism will be introduced in African politics, and every generation should therefore be able to determine its destiny.

It would be emphasized that governance without considering the people's welfare is dysfunctional. To continue to look up to the West for direction is a mark of unseriousness, and so long would they continue to take us for a ride, and Africa will continue to remain susceptible to the manipulations of the West.

The issue of racism has been raised between Arabs and Africans, and even how Arabs have murdered Africans like chickens. This is condemnable and Africa south of the Sahara (black Africans), already know this. What Gaddafi did to embrace

black Africa, was to fight the West who have not made any meaningful development in Africa. Africa should look at the bigger picture, and not allow the issue of racism to divide us. After all, it was the West who invented racism and legitimized racist theories that have informed Europeans since the 18th century. With regard to this, their strong-point is that North Africa has nothing to do with sub-Saharan Africa, because North Africa is more evolved, cultivated and civilized than the rest of Africa. Therefore, to turn round now to fly the racist kite is propagandist and hypocritical.

We should also know that the West have never wanted Africa to unite. We recall that Gaddafi was not the pioneer of African unity. Kwame Nkrumah's effort as one of the pioneers of African unity was scuttled by the West. Nkrumah advocated the immediate surrendering of the sovereignty of the emergent independent African states for a greater United States of Africa. Some African leaders, including Nigeria's saw him as being overambitious and rather opted for functional regional cooperation, which innately introduced further division among Africans. The recent African renaissance by the likes of Gaddafi, has also suffered the same fate. It will be difficult to see another person or country that will commit resources and pursue the African unity with the same zeal as Gaddafi.

Following the emanent dangers, there is a perspective that Africa should adopt the Chinese method, by quitting the United Nations Organization and returning only when the long-standing demands are finally met. This is because the UN, "by its very structure and hierarchy, is at the service of the most powerful".²⁶ This call for Africa to quit the UN is to register Africa's rejection of a worldview based on the annihilation of those who are weaker. China faced this kind of unfavourable system, when the international community chose Taiwan as the sole representative of the Chinese people, instead of Mao's China. It took the UN 26 years to reverse itself, when on October 25 1971, it passed Resolution 2758 for China's re-admission. When China eventually returned to the UN, it was on its own terms, as it spelt out guarantees for China's dignity to be respected, as specified in the response from the letter

written by Chinese Foreign Minister to the UN Secretary General on 29 September, 1972, and without any thank you,²⁷ or appreciation.

The Chinese example is very instructive here, because of the inherent lessons Africa could learn from it, if it wants to be serious about asserting herself more positively in the international system. We should not forget that the Arabs are united more by their religion, Islam. This partly defines their identity and general way of life. In the case of Africa, their religion has been taken to the backwaters, and the foreign religion mostly Christianity and Islam, are now the official religion of Africans. This has added to the continued colonization of the African consciousness, thereby making Africans strangers to themselves. In the final analysis, if Africa wants to pursue genuine development, it must subject itself to serious self-analysis. This is very important in order to protect Africa from undue external influences which make her vulnerable and which tend to undermine her development. The unity of Africa is also very important so that we can act more assertively within the international system.

CONCLUSION

One major lesson from the Arab spring is that truly, they yearn for self determination. The issues of social justice, freedom, reduction of inequality and poverty are very important ingredients in the kind of change they want. It has been said about the Egyptian revolution that when the dust settles, three forces will contest the country's future- the army, the brotherhood, and a broad liberal and secular coalition of those who want a civil polity, the separation of religion and politics, and normal democratic political life. The latter looks more appealing in the light of the unstoppable forces of globalization and the attendant wave of changes sweeping across the world, and also by the majority of the demands of the revolutionists in the Arab world. There is likely to be a high risk of the cost of continued persistence of an Islamic state in the Arab land.

The suspicion remains the role the West is playing in bringing about this. It is a fact that the Arabs do not have the requisite technology to unseat their oppressive regimes, hence the reliance

²⁶ Jean-Paul Pougala, *op. cit.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

on the West for assistance, technologically, acquisition of modern weaponry, logistics and otherwise. The West cannot render these services *ex gratia* knowing full well that they have their eyes on the enormous oil and gas reserves and other interests that abound in the Arab world. It will be wishful thinking to ever imagine that they would not have any role to play in the emerging order in the Arab world, especially, when they are already on ground.

What is worrisome however, is that the new order in the Arab world is still hazy. The kind of democracy that may emerge is yet indeterminate, because in all the places where there were revolts, rebellion, revolutions, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and others, there are no defined fundamental structures yet to chart the designed change and new order. Tunisia and Egypt are still festering. Libya civil war has wound up, but there are still several skirmishes by rival gangs and the remnants of the ousted Gaddafi regime, and the ignoble role played by the NTC in the capture and murder of Gaddafi, their leader for 42 years has been frowned at by the civil rights and a section of the international community, who prefer that he faced justice.

Gaddafi's murder has implications even for members of the NTC, some of who defected from the Gaddafi regime. Their inability to give clear answers to the execution of Gaddafi, shows that by logical extension, some of them especially those that defected, may have questions to answer on the roles they played why serving in Gaddafi's government. His death therefore may be to hide their secrets, and this may turn-out to be an albatross on the neck of the West and the National Transitional Council, NTC. This is because, though they may have made obvious gains, the final outcome is yet inconclusive.

As for the West, they have a preconceived plan of what they want from the Arab Spring, and they

will continue to push for their accomplishment. This will largely depend on how the Arabs play their cards. Since they also understand the true motive of the West, they may not totally leave their rear open for the kind of bargain that will follow when the dusts of battle settle.

Africa, South of the Sahara has always been a pun in the hands of the West. With the African countries tied irretrievably to the apron strings of their colonial masters, the dream of African unity remains a mirage, and the kind of synergy required to galvanize a genuine African development continues to be illusory. In essence, Africa faces multiple jeopardy. Not only do the West and some of our Arab brothers prey on us, but we also on us. It therefore requires a total re-education of the African consciousness for a gradual re-emergence of the new Africa we desire to make a meaningful impact in the new and emerging world order.

Several issues should be addressed if Africa intends to command the respect of the international community. Sit-tight leaders should learn the lesson of transforming to democracy. After all, there really would not be any need for Western intervention if there was functional democracy in the areas involved. This makes it difficult to blame the West for the consequences of intervention. In other words, we should put our house in order first. Without this, the second colonization of Africa will continue to stare us in the face. The Arab Spring is also real. Africa faces the weight and impact of both developments. Again, the on-going Chinese influence in Africa cannot be ignored. The extent to which the West can checkmate the Chinese influence on the Arab world and Africa, according to its master plan for the new re-division and second colonization of Africa, remains a mystery.