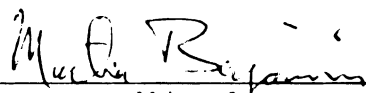This is to certify that the

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ETHICS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS? THE CONTRADICTIONS AND
ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF FOREIGN AID IN AFRICA.

By

Adeyinka Christopher Thompson

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

ETHICS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS? THE CONTRADICTIONS AND

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF FOREIGN AID IN AFRICA.

By

Adeyinka Christopher Thompson

Instead of the economic prosperity that was supposed to be associated with the acquisition of political liberation; independence brought, for many African nations and peoples, a return not only to repressive and authoritarian government, but also to economic decline and hardship. Many theorists have contemplated the cause and/or solution to these problems in Africa. Some have blamed the international community— primarily the Western or developed nations. My task, in this dissertation, is to examine this view and to give an ethical analysis of the relationship between African nations and the developed world—with specific reference to foreign aid.

Bearing in mind that the applicability of normative ethics to international relations has, for a longtime been a minority view amongst scholars, I, in this dissertation, examine the question; Are moral categories and judgements simply out of place in the realm of international affairs? After considering and offering objections to some of the arguments put forward by realists, I go on to argue not only that normative questions are central to the discipline/practice of international relations, but also that actors in international relations (and citizens in general) cannot help but raise normative questions when deciding what to do in their relations with other states.

Having successfully made my case that ethics is central to the discipline of international relations, I go on, in chapter two, to consider one of the pressing and

difficult issues that are raised in the practice of international relations—i.e., the foreign aid program and whether there is an obligation for Western developed nations to assist poor under-developed Third world (in particular African) nations. I evaluate some of the arguments for and against the obligation to assist and contend that Western nations have an obligation to assist.

In the third chapter, I present a case study of aid to Somalia. Somalia, I believe, is paradigmatic not only because it is probably the sub-Saharan African country that received the most aid, but also the country in which the debilitating effects of aid are most glaring. In this case study the conclusions in chapter two are substantiated.

After the case study, I, in chapter four, examine three key issues/questions facing African nations—(a) the question of what type of democracy is suitable; (b) corruption; and (c) the issue of compromising sovereignty by allowing intervention. With respect to the first question, I argue that a consensus one-party system of democracy—one that is congenial to the African political and socio-cultural context—is most suitable. I then go on to recognize the role corruption has played in the devastation of most African nations. I adumbrate some of the causes of corruption and offer some solutions to combat it. Regarding (c), I argue that intervention must be done at an early stage, limited to aid and censure of flagrant abuses of human rights. I end with the point that the complexity and difficulty of the above issues and questions reinforces the need for ethics in international politics. Without morality to guide and evaluate our actions we would be lost and unaware of what we are doing.

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER

AND

MY CHILDREN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people I am indebted to whose influence in one way or another contributed to the completion of this dissertation.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my guidance committee: Dr. Donald Koch, Dr. Richard Peterson, Dr. Stephen Esquith and Dr. Martin Benjamin. I thank you for your constructive criticisms and suggestions that are responsible for the value of this dissertation. All errors are my own.

I give special recognition to Dr. Esquith and Dr. Benjamin. Without their encouragement and confidence in my work, this dissertation may not have come to fruition. Many thanks also go to all other professors in the Department of Philosophy whose instruction has contributed to my success here.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to my family and friends. Your support, love, and understanding during the arduous days of writing this dissertation are very much appreciated. I am especially grateful to my mother. Her love, support and encouragement was very valuable on those days the end of the road seemed unattainable. Chinue, I am grateful for the unique way you showed your understanding when I had to go to the library instead of play with you. Enam, I value your timely birth which allowed me the peace of mind requisite to complete this daunting task. Thelma, I thank you for the financial support you provided us, which afforded me the luxury of occasionally taking time off work to complete this dissertation. Last, but not least all praise and thanks be given to God almighty. Without his grace and mercy completing this dissertation would have been impossible.

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INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I evaluate the moral content and ramifications of current foreign aid policies. The main question I try to answer is this: Granting that morality has a place in international politics and morality demands that Western developed nations assist poor under developed nations, why has the current foreign aid program contributed to the breakdown and destruction of most African societies and economies? Drawing some conclusions about ethics in judging, guiding and criticizing foreign policy and using Somalia as a principal example, I argue that a lack of commitment and dedication on the part of Western nations to the true interests of poor African nations has partly led to the failure of the current aid program. On the other hand, the prevalence of corruption, lack of patriotism and the absence of good management and true democratic systems in most of Africa have also contributed to the failure of aid programs in most African nations. With these facts established I call for reform, on the part of both the donor and recipient, of the way the aid program is managed and monitored.

I begin, in chapter one, by examining some realist arguments against the applicability of ethics to international relations. After subjecting these arguments to close scrutiny, all of them are found to be untenable. Following the conclusion, in chapter one, that normative theorizing is very much in place in international relations, I go on, in chapter two, to evaluate some arguments put forward for and against the obligation to assist the poor. I refute the argument against helping the poor that is put forward by Garrett Hardin. With the help of arguments propounded by Peter Singer and Henry Shue, I argue that rich developed nations do have an obligation to help poor underdeveloped nations. With the

above point established, I embark, in chapter three, on a case study. Using Somalia as a paradigm case, chapter three demonstrates that the conclusions arrived at in chapter two are reinforced—that is, that the current aid program has not been designed with the interests of the recipient country being primary. Consequently, there is a need for reform.

One conclusion arrived at in chapter three is that the domestic political situation in recipient African nations is a major contributor to the failure of the aid program. This stated, I look at some of the contributing factors to the political demise of some African nations which, in turn, led to their economic collapse. Chapter four is thus devoted to looking at three issues/questions impinging on the domestic political situation in many African nations (a) the question of what type of democracy is appropriate; (b) corruption; and (c) the issue of compromising sovereignty by allowing intervention.

CHAPTER ONE

ETHICS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS:

AN OVERVIEW

Prelude

On the question of the applicability of ethics to international politics/foreign affairs, much debate exists today as it existed thirty to fifty years ago when Reinhold Niebuhr[1], Hans J. Morgenthau,[2] and others wrote on the subject.[3] The former, one may say, was the purveyor of the amoralist view of international politics; while the latter, who wrote later on, expanded on Niebuhr's view and helped, as Michael J. Smith quotes Kenneth Thompson as having written, "...lay the foundation for international politics."[4] The difference between Niebuhr and Morgenthau, says Smith, is comparable to that between theology and political science: "Niebuhr was concerned to reassert the relevance of a Christian approach to man and society, whereas Morgenthau, trained in political theory and international law, sought to incorporate Niebuhr's insights (in the process, of course, secularizing them) into a general theory of international politics." The difference between these two theorists will be revealed later when we take a look at their respective views on international politics.

Strictly speaking, though, one may be hard pressed to characterize what went on back then as a debate. This is because, at that time, the prevailing view amongst most theorists was that moral categories and judgments were simply out of place in the realm of international affairs. Serious challenge to the view held by Niebuhr (and subsequently Morgenthau) did not come till much later on in the century when theorists such as

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[1] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 1946).
[2] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 5th Ed., 1973).
[3] The works of both Niebuhr and Morgenthau span several years, and the above work that I use of each author is just one out of a collection of works written over several years.

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Marshall Cohen[5] and Mervyn Frost[6] argued that normative questions are central to the discipline/practice of international relations. Actors in international relations, they argue, cannot help but raise normative questions when deciding what to do in their relations with other states. Conversely, advocates of the view espoused by Niebuhr and Morgenthau, now referred to as political realists, "insisted that the nature of politics is fundamentally determined by the struggle for power and power positions among individuals and groups within... various political units...."[7] Seeing that international relations is a branch of politics, the relations between states would, by implication, also be fundamentally determined by the struggle for power. Thus, political realists argued that the conduct of nations should be guided and judged not by morality, but rather "by the amoral requirements of the national interest".[8]

The realist view continued to be dominant throughout the first two decades of the second half of the twenty-first century. Any hope, at this time, of a serious challenge to the realist position being mounted was further dampened with the rise of the positivist school of thought. This doctrine is based on the distinction between the empirical and the metaphysical. Positivists argue that the former, the empirical, is testable and therefore verifiable and meaningful. The latter, the metaphysical, is unverifiable and therefore meaningless. In describing the positivist view, Moritz Schlick says, "[t]he principle, that

[4] Michael J. Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger*, (Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 134.

[5] Marshall Cohen, "Moral Skepticism and International Relations" in *Political Realism and International Morality: Ethics in the Nuclear Age*, ed. Kenneth Kipnis and Diana T. Myers. (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987).

[6] Mervyn Frost, *Towards a Normative Theory of International Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[7] John H. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theory and Realities*, (University of Chicago Presss, 1959), 24.

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the meaning of every proposition is exhaustively determined by its verification in the given, seems to me a legitimate, unassailable core of the positivist school of thought."[9] The given, for the positivist, is a term for that which is simple and no longer open to question or interpretation. It is that of which we cannot be mistaken and with which we verify. Knowledge and the advancement of scientific knowledge were, for the positivist, based on the empirical or the given. This doctrine had an enormous impact on other disciplines. Scholars in various disciplines either began to adopt a more scientific approach to the study of their disciplines or faced serious opposition from those in the positivist camp. For example, the study of ethics was threatened when a strong distinction between fact and value was drawn. Facts are believed, by the positivists, to be inter-subjectively verifiable, i.e., accessible to the senses of anyone who would observe them. They are therefore informative in that they give us knowledge about the world. Value statements, on the other hand, are subjective and arbitrary. They are neither right nor wrong. In its attempt to construct a more scientific approach to the social studies, this school of thought, positivism, did not fail to influence the study of international relations. The influence of positivism led to the desire to establish international relations as a discipline independent from all ethical and philosophical presuppositions. This desire was premised on the core positivist assumption that only the empirical/factual is testable/verifiable and therefore meaningful/informative. Thus, the positivist influence in international relations may, in part, have resulted from the positivist (erroneous) belief that they could construct a value-free science. Frost argues that this "bias towards

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[8] Cohen, 15.

[9] Moritz Schlick, "Positivism and Realism" in *Philosophy of Science*, ed. Richard Boyd, Philip Gasper, J.D. Trout. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), 54.

explanation in its positivist form is the most basic reason for the persistent neglect of normative questions in international relations."[10]

Though the positivist school had considerable influence in the early years of the second half of the twenty-first century, it received its own share of criticism. Theorists like Ludwig Wittgenstein,[11] Norwood Russell Hanson,[12] and Thomas Kuhn[13] have argued that because of the difficulty we face drawing a line between the observable and the unobservable, the distinction between fact and value is not as evident as positivists claim. Contrary to the view held by the positivists, Wittgenstein and others claim that observations (facts) are theory (value) laden. According to Frost, such "insights have had a major effect on international relations for it is now widely accepted that there is no single scientific paradigm accepted by all scholars in the discipline. In other words, there is no normal science in international relations."[14] As we shall see later, the challenges to positivism helped to revive the discussion on the role of ethics in international relations. With this revival in the discussion, some theorists have tried to show that there is a significant parallel between the relation of individuals in the domestic context and the relation of states in the international system. Proponents of this view argue that the moral principles that are used to guide behavior in the domestic context can be reinterpreted to apply to the international system. To demonstrate this, they offer a number of examples

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[10] Mervyn Frost, *Ethics in International relations: A Constitutive Theory*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18.

[11] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, transl. G.E.M. Anscombe 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1997).

[12] Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

[13] Thomas Kuhn, *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

[14] Frost, 17.

of (domestically) morally reprehensible behavior. The aim of the examples is to show

that if we are willing to condemn such behavior as morally wrong, then we should do the

same in the international realm if comparable circumstances/conditions apply. We shall

take a look at only one of these examples. Gordon Graham in his article "Morality,

International Relations and the Domestic Analogy" offers the following example:

> A man is standing in a park when fighting breaks out between some children. It is
> clear to him that a weaker party has been subject to unprovoked attack, possibly
> with the intent of robbery or subjugation. The bystander is stronger than either of
> those involved in the fighting, and being relatively impartial and uninvolved,
> could intervene to good effect, repel the aggressor and thus defend the innocence
> of the victim and prevent injury on both parts. Yet he limits his intervention to
> remonstrating with the aggressive child, and his remonstrations going unheeded,
> remains on the sidelines and lets violence take its course.[15]

Obviously, we would find this behavior of the bystander to be reprehensible. Because of

this, defenders of the domestic analogy "readily ask whether the moral dimension of

[such an example] is any different to that which obtains between states who stand idly, or

at least ineffectually by where there is armed aggression by one nation against

another...."[16] Though the decision to intervene in another country is more complex than

this analogy reveals—the intervening nation has to weigh the risks involved against its

interests and the urgency of the crisis—the point being made here is that when the risk

involved is minimal, inaction, on the part of the stronger party, is reprehensible. The

invasion of Kuwait by Iraq is a paradigm case for reinterpreting the moral principles of

the interpersonal realm to the international. Though some critics have questioned

America's true reasons for going to the aid of Kuwait, one must concede that the given

reason—protecting Kuwait's independence—was morally commendable. If America had

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[15] Gordon Graham, "Morality, International Relations and the Domestic Analogy" in *Morality and International Relations: Concepts and Issues,* ed. Moorhead Wright (Gt. Britain: Avebury, 1996), 5.
[16] Ibid., 6.

stood by and allowed Iraq to plunder Kuwait, we all would have condemned such action (or should we say non-action) as morally wrong.

Though rare, says Gordon, such moral certainties, as demonstrated above, seem to make a strong case for the view that some general principles of right and wrong can be reinterpreted or built upon to apply to the international realm. However, as with any other argument that has been put forward, the domestic analogy argument has received its fair share of criticism. Apart from the difficulties attached to the basis and extent of the analogy, Graham claims that exploring the analogy further leads to at least two sorts of relevant differences between the domestic and international realms—namely, differences in the moral dimensions and fact. At this point, I do not intend to go into the arguments for and against the domestic analogy. My purpose in mentioning it is to point to an attempt made to defend the place of ethics in international relations. Later, I shall examine some arguments put forward in defense of this position—the applicability of ethics to international relations. For now, seeing that, for the past thirty years or so, the realist tradition has remained the dominant paradigm within the discipline of international relations, I want to take a look at some of the realist arguments put forward against ethics in international relations/politics.

Before examining the first argument, I feel the need to make a few parenthetical remarks. These remarks, obviously, should not be construed as a sign of defeat or resignation to the opposition. I only want to give the reader an insight into the status of the debate. In my research I found that there is a dearth of articles written in support of the place of

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ethics in international relations. Clearly, proponents of this view are outnumbered. This study will, hopefully, add to the literature. Most of the available work on this subject is done in the field of applied ethics and not international relations itself. I must confess, though, that I found some of the arguments put forward by the opposition to be quite convincing, and I almost became a convert to them myself. However, after thorough analysis of the issues, I am convinced that there is a need and place for ethics in international relations. As will become clear later on, I have been moved, though, to revise my position a little. I now argue for a limited role of ethics in international relations.

Why is it the case, one must ask, that in a discipline such as international relations, "in which most of the scholars in the discipline claim to be motivated by an urgent moral concern for the world polity," there has been so little normative theorizing?[17] As we examine the history of international relations and the impact realism had on it, we shall come to see why there has been such neglect of normative theorizing.

Platonic Realism

Very briefly, I must note that the realist tradition dates back to the writings of the ancient thinkers, for example, Thucydides or Plato. Because of some of the arguments they put in the mouths of their characters, both Thucydides and Plato are considered to be the founders of this tradition. Two figures that stand out clearly during this period as proponents of political realism are the two sophists in Plato's dialogues, Thrasymachus and Callicles. In *Plato's Republic*, Thrasymachus, in a debate with Socrates, expresses

the view that "...'Just' or 'right' means nothing but what is in the interest of the stronger party."[18] When urged by Socrates he offers the following explanation:

> Well then, in every case the laws are made by the ruling party in its own interest; a democracy makes democratic laws, a despot autocratic ones, and so on. By making these laws they define as 'right' for their subjects whatever is for their own interest, and they call anyone who breaks them a 'wrongdoer' and punish him accordingly. That is what I mean: in all states alike 'right' has the same meaning, namely what is for the interest of the party established in power, and that is the strongest. So the sound conclusion is that what is 'right' is the same everywhere: the interest of the stronger party.[19]

Thrasymachus later goes on to express the view that the best sort of state is the one which carries injustice to perfection. "For Thrasymachus, injustice of this consummate kind is the highest wisdom and excellence of a state, and there is no valid moral claim against a state which pursues its own interest to the total exclusion of the interests of others."[20] As we shall later see this view espoused by Thrasymachus is not much different from the one advocated by the realists of the twentieth century.

This argument, like most of the other realist arguments that come after it, can be shown to be untenable. In fact, Socrates himself offers an argument that easily defeats Thrasymachus' argument. He shows that if we take the true definition of an art or skill, Thrasymachus' argument proves to be inconsistent. First, like a physician or a ship's captain (who has only the interest of his/her patients and crew respectively); a ruler qua ruler only has the interest of his subjects at heart. Socrates says:

> Well then, Thrasymachus, it is now clear that no form of skill or authority provides for its benefit. As we were saying sometime ago, it always studies and

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[17] *Towards a Normative Theory of International Relations*, 1.

[18] *The Republic of Plato*, translated with introduction by Francis Macdonald Cornford, (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 18.

[19] Ibid.

[20] J.E. Hare and Carey B. Joynt, *Ethics and International Affairs*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 24

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prescribes what is good for its subject—the interest of the weaker party, not of the stronger. And that, my friend, is why I said that no one is willing to be in a position of authority and undertake to set straight other men's troubles, without demanding to be paid; because, if he is to do his work well, he will never, in his capacity of ruler, do, or command others to do, what is best for himself, but only what is best for the subject. For that reason, if he is to consent, he must have his recompense, in the shape of money or honour, or of punishment in case of refusal.[21]

Secondly, after getting Thrasymachus to agree that justice implies superior character and intelligence, Socrates presents a quite forceful argument against Thrasymachus' realist position—i.e., that there has to be honor among thieves. He asks Thrasymachus "whether any set of men—a state or an army or a band of robbers or thieves—who were acting together for some unjust purpose would be likely to succeed, if they were always trying to injure one another. Wouldn't they do better, if they did not?"[22] To this question, Thrasymachus has no choice but to accede. With this acquiescence on Thrasymachus' part, the argument he presented is virtually defeated. Subsequently, Socrates shows that the conclusion that the just man is happy and the unjust man unhappy follows from the above.

From the point of view of showing Thrasymachus' position to be inconsistent, Plato's argument is successful. However, one may ask whether the premises of Plato's argument are true. Do rulers truly act in the best interest of their subjects and not in the interest of themselves? Because this is what *ought* to be the case does not mean that it is *necessarily* the case. As we will see in chapter three, the people of Somalia and some other African countries would wish the premises of Plato's argument were true. I am sure, though, that if one asked the former president of Somalia (Siyad Barre) and the warlords, they would

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[21] *The Republic of Plato*, 28.

all say they were acting in the interest of the people of Somalia. This raises a difficult question: who determines what is in the interest of the people? The responses to this question would be as varied as there are different political ideals.

The Lockean-Hobbesian Debate

Though the realist argument of the classical period is shown to be untenable, realism rears its head once again in the Lockean-Hobbesian debate.[23] The debate here is between those who propose a Lockean state of nature (in which moral laws, if not civil laws, apply in a pre-political state) and those who propose a Hobbesian state of nature (in which there is no pre-political idea of right and wrong) in describing the condition/relationship of states in international affairs. The former argue that an analogy can be drawn between the individuals in Locke's state of nature and the condition of states in the international realm.[24] We shall later see that this analogy, if tenable, allows for normative theorizing in international affairs. According to John Locke, all men are naturally in a "*state of perfect freedom* to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature; without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man."[25] Based on this conception of mankind, he constructs a theory on how political societies are cultivated. He says:

> Men being as has been said, by nature, all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another, without his consent. The only way, whereby anyone divests himself of his natural liberty, and puts on the *bonds of civil society*, is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living

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[22] Ibid., 35.

[23] The crux of the idea espoused here was generated from Gordon Graham's *Ethics and International Relations*, (Oxford: Blackwell publishers, 1997), 17-20.

[24] It is worth noting that this is another version of the domestic analogy argument

[25] John Locke, "Second Treatise of Government" in *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, ed. Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co. 1992), 738.

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one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any, that are not of it.[26]

It has been argued, says Gordon Graham, that there is a parallel between the condition of individuals in Locke's state of nature and nations in the international order. Theorists claim that, in the absence of world government, the international realm is somewhat like a state of nature in which nations are sovereign—that is, nations are free to decide matters for themselves. However, under these conditions, a state may find that it is too weak to defend itself against aggression, plunder or war. To alleviate or avoid these difficulties or perils, "individual nation states, just like individuals in Locke's state of nature, have reason to combine in a federation which results in institutions of international government more powerful and more authoritative than those of the nation state. The end result, in world society just as in any national society, is a rule of law, which constrains individual behavior in accordance with moral rights and international order, while at the same time leaving the individual nation state with some rights of its own."[27] From the above, it appears that we can reasonably assume that, if the analogy works, we can extrapolate from the domestic to the international context—establishing moral rules to guide the actions of states in international affairs.

As promising as this possibility may seem, the assumption on which the analogy rests—that is, that there are at least some moral laws in a pre-political state—has been disputed by those realists who propose a Hobbesian state of nature in describing the relation of states in international affairs. Realists have argued that a Hobbesian state of nature, instead of a Lockean state of nature, best describes the relation of states in international

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[26] Ibid., 768.

affairs. According to Hobbes, there are three principal causes of dissension in the nature of man—competition, diffidence, and glory. As a result of man's nature he is in a constant state of war—of every man against every man—when there isn't a "common power" or authority to control his actions.[28] A consequent, says Hobbes, of this state of war is:

> [T]hat nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice. Force, and fraud, are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice, and injustice are none of the faculties neither of body, nor mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his senses, and passions. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude.[29]

Consequently, there is no concept of ownership, no *mine* and *thine* in Hobbes' state of nature.[30] Any resource is equally available to each individual if he/she has the means to procure and keep it. Seeking "power after power" is therefore a requirement in the Hobbesian state of nature, "and in this situation 'to have all, and do all, is lawful to all.'"[31] The only passions, says Hobbes, "that incline men to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them."[32] The above outline of Hobbes' state of nature, argue realists, is what best describes the relation among states in international affairs. In describing the realist position, Graham says that this relation is one "in which concepts of moral right and wrong do not apply, and where the sole consideration upon which international relations, including international co-operation, are to be conducted is one of national self-

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[27] Gordon Graham, *Ethics and International Affairs*, 17-18.
[28] John Hobbes, "Leviathan" in *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, ed. Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co. 1992), 621.
[29] Ibid., 623.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Cohen, 25.
[32] John Hobbes, 623.

interest."[33] Thus, if one grants that the international order is Hobbesian instead of Lockean, we see that the realists have good grounds for denying the relevance of the domestic analogy. Though the relation between individuals in a state of nature may be a moral one, the relation between states is not.[34] This is because in the international realm there is no common power or authority. Nor is there, realists believe, the possibility of such a common power among sovereign states in the international realm. Thus, because there is no common power "there in no law, where no law, no injustice." For this reason, realists argue that the primary concern of a state is and should be its national interest and "seeking power after power." Unlike the relation between individuals in a state of nature living within a commune or state, in which there is an enforceable social contract and where the fear of death compels them to seek peace, no such enforceable contract (nor its possibility) or inclination prevails in the international realm. As such, it is the opinion of realists that the possibility of a common power is absent in the international realm and, in the absence of a common power, there can be no law or morality. This last point is, however, debatable. Even if we grant that the international realm is as chaotic as Hobbes' state of nature, we can still picture a world in a state of nature with nations that are technologically advanced. However, in this international state of nature the ever-present threat of attack compels states to come together to form a world community or government. In imagining a world that is advanced in the means of communication and technology, we can mirror the conditions within a state that make an enforceable contract possible. Nations in such a world, faced with the threat of attack, will be inclined to form a world government in the interest of peace and safety. All the Unions or organizations

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[33] Gordon Graham, *Ethics and International Relations*, 19.
[34] Ibid.

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(for example, UN, NATO etc) that were formed after the First and Second World Wars are evidence of this possibility.

Cohen, in his article "Moral Skepticism and International Relations" renders a formidable objection against Hobbesian forms of skepticism concerning the role of morality in International Relations. He shows that, contrary to the opinion of Hobbesian skeptics, ethical principles do apply in the state of nature. He does this by dismantling certain key tenets of Hobbes' theory. First, he shows that Hobbes' claim that "Sovereigns 'make the things they command just by commanding them and those which they forbid unjust by forbidding them'" makes no sense at all.[35] If this claim were plausible, says Cohen, "acts and omissions to which the sovereign's law does not speak could be neither just nor unjust."[36] This, however, is not the case because we do consider "harsh actions, chilly responses, and accusing words" unjust even though the law does not forbid them.[37] Likewise, we do consider "acts of restoration or recompense to be demanded by justice although the law does not require them. More importantly, if justice is what the sovereign commands and injustice what he forbids, it would make no sense to judge the sovereign's own acts and rules just or unjust."[38] Next, he argues that the right to self-preservation (and its implications in the state of nature) does not necessarily carry over to the international arena; nor does it require that states "pursue the national interest and maximize national power (to seek 'power after power') without regard to other moral

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[35] Cohen, 24-25.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

considerations."[39] Further, though individuals in the state of nature may have a right to self-preservation, this does not mean that they have a right to attack others when doing so is not required for self-preservation. Also, even though Hobbes claims that all men in the state of nature are equal and that the weakest can kill the strongest, we still would consider it unjust to rape or kill those who are seriously incapacitated or ill.[40] This being the case, Cohen asserts that:

> If individuals are prohibited from attacking those who do not threaten them, so are nations. Even in the international state of nature it will not be permissible to attack the young or the unwell intentionally or, more generally, those who do not constitute a physical threat. In addition, attacks must be repelled, and offenses conducted by appropriate means.[41]

Third, though the argument may be put forward that the above objections fail to take into consideration "Hobbes's contention that the state of nature is inevitably a state of war," Cohen argues that there are inherent differences between the state of war among nations and the state of war among individuals.[42] These differences are noteworthy because they have important moral consequences. First, nations do not share the vulnerability of individuals in the state of nature and their citizens do not live in perpetual fear of violent death. "Nations in the state of nature are better able to defend themselves than individuals are."[43] Second, nations, as opposed to Hobbesian individuals, have the option of increasing their security in ways that need not alarm others. "Their best defense is not always an attack, and they can often give evidence of their peaceful intentions by choosing weapons and strategies that do not threaten others."[44] Third, "individuals in the Hobbesian state of nature are anonymous and ahistorical. But nations have names and

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 26.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 29.

reputations, geographies and histories, principles and purposes, and these allow others to judge their intentions with considerable confidence."[45]

It is clear from the above that the conditions of Hobbes' state of nature—unpredictability, chaos and fear—that preclude the possibility of morality in the state of nature are almost non-existent in the international arena. Contrary to the opinion of Hobbesian theorists, there is some predictability in the international arena; and the unbridled propensity to attack others, that one would expect in the state of nature, is not apparent in the international realm. Moreover, according to Cohen, Hobbes himself observed that the degree of misery associated with the state of war among individuals is not the same with the state of war among nations.[46] Thus, even if one grants that the international order is Hobbesian and not Lockean, it is clear that the conditions for cultivating an international morality are apparent in the state of nature among nations. In fact, one may assert that it is precisely in the state of nature—a situation in which one's actions can be easily misconstrued—that men and nations need to acknowledge their moral responsibilities and conduct themselves accordingly in order to preserve the peace.[47]

Thus far, we have examined some of the earlier versions of realism and their rejection of morality in international affairs. We found that all the arguments looked at did not stand up to close scrutiny. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on one's position), realist thought, in the midst of objection, has survived the passage of time and it continues to

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[43] Ibid., 30.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 29.

thrive in the twentieth century. The basic idea (principle) of realism has not changed much and the premises of the argument are similar to the early realist arguments. With this point of similarity noted, I shall now move on to discuss some realists of this century. Before I do so, I want to refer to Michael J. Smith, who gives an erudite outline of modern realism in his book, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger*. He says:

> In its most basic outline, the realist picture of the world begins with a pessimistic view of human nature. Evil is inevitably a part of all of us which no social arrangement can eradicate: men and women are not perfectible. The struggle for power—which defines politics—is a permanent feature of social life and is especially prominent in the relations between states. In the realm of international politics, states are the only major actors and no structure of power or authority stands above them to mediate their conflicts; nor would they peacefully consent to the creation of such a structure, even if it could be shown to be workable. States act according to their power interests, and these interests are bound at times to conflict violently. Therefore, even if progress toward community and justice is possible within states, the relations between them are doomed to a permanent competition that often leads to war. However deplorable, this permanent competition remains an unavoidable reality that no amount of moral exhortation or utopian scheming can undo. Only by appreciating its source and its permanence can interstate conflict be moderated.[48]

Modern Realism

The subject of modern realism cannot be discussed without mentioning the names of three important theorists—Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan. These three figures have dominated contemporary debate on morality and international relations, but the first two are more influential. I shall take a look at their views now.

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[47] Ibid., 32.

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Reinhold Niebuhr:

Born in 1892, Reinhold Niebuhr was a theologian, whose work was a combination of theology and social commentary.[49] Most of his influential work in international politics was done around the time of the First and Second World Wars. His position, says Hare and Joynt, was "a 'Christian Realism' which was supposed to steer a course between optimistic illusion on the one hand and cynical despair on the other."[50] Niebuhr argues that there is an inherent distinction between ethics and politics. Since most of Niebuhr's work was theological in nature, it is difficult to separate his views on international politics and ethics from his theology. Thus, he places himself "in the tradition of those Protestant theologians who wanted to make acute the tension between this-worldly and other-worldly values".[51] An example of a this-worldly value is justice and a other-worldly value is agape. Following Soren Kierkegaard and Anders Nygren, Niebuhr ascribes, says Hare and Joynt, a superior position to agape. Whereas other kinds of love are "alterable, preferential, and ultimately reducible to self-love; agape is self-renunciation, it is 'a lost love'."[52] Because of its nature, agape "cannot be manifested in its full purity by any group or even any individual."[53] It is, however, reasonable, to expect it "in a tainted form from individuals in some contexts; but... it is never reasonable to expect it from groups."[54] This distinction between this-worldly (justice) and other-worldly (agape) values points to the reason why Niebuhr believes that there is a conflict between ethics and politics. Ethics and politics ultimately have different goals—

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[48] Smith., 1.
[49] Hare and Joynt, 28.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
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[54] Ibid.

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for the former, agape (self-renunciation), for the latter, justice. In *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Niebuhr says that:

> A REALISTIC analysis of the problems of human society reveals a constant and seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the needs of society and the imperatives of a sensitive conscience. This conflict, which could be most briefly defined as the conflict between ethics and politics, is made inevitable by the double focus of the moral life. One focus is in the inner life of the individual, and the other in the necessities of man's social life. From the perspective of society the highest moral ideal is justice. From the perspective of the individual the highest ideal is unselfishness. Society must strive for justice even if it is forced to use means, such as self-assertion, resistance, coercion and perhaps resentment, which cannot gain the moral sanction of the most sensitive moral spirit. The individual must strive to realise his life by losing and finding himself in something greater than himself.[55]

It seems clear, therefore, that for Niebuhr "there are two conceptually autonomous spheres, politics and ethics".[56] Looking at his views on ethics and politics, it is no wonder that he has such a pessimistic view of the morality of nations and the possibility of international ethics. Not only do ethics and politics have different goals, but he also argues that "group relations can never be as ethical as those which characterise individuals".[57] As a result of this moral 'handicap', Niebuhr concludes that nations—being "the human group of strongest social cohesion"—cannot help but be selfish and we could expect nothing else from them but the pursuit of their own interest.[58] By the same token, a statesman who pursued other than his nation's interest deserved to be hanged.

Thus, for Niebuhr, whereas the obligation or goal of the individual is to obey the law of love and sacrifice, this is not and cannot be the case for states. Though, "from the

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[55] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 1946), 257.
[56] Hare and Joynt, 29.
[57] Niebuhr, 83.
[58] Ibid.

viewpoint of the author of an action, unselfishness must remain the criterion of the highest morality," states, says Niebuhr, cannot abide by this rule because they are not individuals and cannot be sacrificial.[59] States and their representatives are responsible for the interests and happiness of their citizens, and states are not actors. "An individual may sacrifice his own interests, either without hope of reward or in the hope of an ultimate compensation."[60] But how, asks Niebuhr, is an individual, who is responsible for the interests of others, to justify his actions if he did the same? Quoting Hugh Cecil, he concludes that unselfishness "is inappropriate to the action of a state. No one has a right to be unselfish with other people's interests."[61]

Niebuhr offers a number of reasons why nations are selfish, which in turn precludes the possibility of an international morality. First, he says that nations are not in direct contact with each other, which impedes the formation of an international community. Because of this indirect knowledge, nations cannot appreciate the problems of other nations. "Since both sympathy and justice depend to a large degree upon the perception of need, which makes sympathy flow, and upon the understanding of competing interests, which must be resolved, it is obvious that human communities have greater difficulty than individuals in achieving ethical relationships."[62] He adds that though the "rapid means of communication" and the "general advance of education" have increased the knowledge and rationality of citizens of various nations about international affairs; "there is nevertheless little hope of arriving at a perceptible increase of international morality

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[59] Ibid., 258.
[60] Ibid., 267.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 85.

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through the growth of intelligence and the perfection of means of communication."[63] The advancement of technology, international commerce, and economic interdependence, he asserts, have done nothing but "increase the problems and issues between nations much more rapidly than the intelligence to solve them can be created."[64]

In this day and age of technology, the above claims made by Niebuhr are highly debatable. Maybe, at the time he was writing they might have been true, but today, with the Internet and satellite communication, information is transferred from one nation to another quickly and accurately. There is more widespread access to information by citizens of nations in which such information and access to it was denied or restricted. Today, more and more people are able to make informed decisions about international affairs and the goings-on in other nations. Even in technologically less advanced nations there is much more access to information about other nations. I recall when growing up in West Africa that the average citizen (with basic reading and writing skills) did listen to the world news. I may even go so far as to make the claim that, in my experience, the average citizen in Africa has more of an interest in (and perhaps even knowledge of) what is going on in the rest of the world than the average citizen in the technologically advanced nations has of what is going on in Africa and the rest of the world. Admittedly, the information people in technologically less advanced nations receive from the news is tainted and perhaps even rudimentary, but the fact is, more information is available to individuals today than ever before. Besides, in most nations, the people that have the means and power to influence policy invariably have access to information about other

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

countries. The point I am trying to make here is that, for the most part, the average uneducated citizen living in a rural area is hardly concerned about international politics. For this reason, such individuals hardly, if ever, take advantage of their right (where available) to influence policy. In most cases, it is citizens who have some education with access to information about other nations and do exercise their political rights that can and do influence policy. This information about other nations equips such citizens with the necessary knowledge to make choices and influence policy through political institutions that permit citizen input, e.g., the democratic process. With technology, the world has literally shrunk and the insightful words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. underscore this point: "All inhabitants of the globe are now neighbors. This world-wide neighborhood has been brought into being largely as a result of the modern scientific and technological revolutions."[65] If this statement was true three decades ago when Dr. King wrote his book, how much more would it be true today?

I must, however, concede that, with this increase in information and the means of communication come the attendant risks of misunderstanding the intentions and proclivities of other nations. However this is not quite different from the situation that prevails among a community of individuals within which Niebuhr allows the possibility of morality. Niebuhr, in his argument, seems to say that individuals, because of their closer contact, are better suited to appreciate each other and achieve ethical relationships. This is not quite the case anymore. Not only has communication between nations greatly improved, but also, it is a fact that, amongst individuals, misunderstanding or failing to

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[65] Martin Luther King, Jr. *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 167-168.

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appreciate another's problems is also very possible. Accepting this as a fact—the possibility of misunderstanding—I must emphasize that my aim here is not to claim that states are now fully capable of understanding and appreciating the problems of other nations. This, I will be the first to admit, is not always true as evidenced by the views I express in the following chapters. My aim rather is to question the focal point of Niebuhr's above claim—that is, that states are not in direct contact with each other. If, contrary to Niebuhr's view, nations are in much closer contact today and misunderstanding is just as possible among individuals, I do not really see what the difference is between individuals and nations that makes the former capable of morality and the latter incapable as Niebuhr claims. One thing that made a difference—the fact that individuals and not nations were in close contact—is no longer true today.

Secondly, because the number of intelligent citizens—who are able to clearly assess the issues between their own and other nations—in every nation is so small, Niebuhr claims that they are usually unable to halt any move towards "extreme types of national self-seeking."[66] Due to its size, this group of rational citizens is, for the most part, powerless to influence national attitudes in a crisis. Consequently, most of the actions of nations are supported and carried out by force and emotion rather than by mind. Niebuhr concludes then that since "there can be no ethical action without self-criticism, and no self-criticism without the rational capacity of self-transcendence, it is natural that national attitudes can hardly approximate the ethical."[67] Others, he says, will construe any attempt at criticism as disloyalty.

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[66] Niebuhr, 87.
[67] Ibid.

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Niebuhr seems to be making a number of assumptions in the above argument. First, he equates high intelligence with having a sense of morality. Implicit in what he says is the view that high intelligence is a necessary requirement for one to take a moral stand. This is not necessarily the case. Instead of high intelligence being a requirement for one to take a moral stand on international issues, what is required is information about other nations and a fairly reasonable understanding of them. As we saw above, advances in technology have made it possible for citizens of a nation to access information about other nations. To the degree possible, citizens with access to information about other nations are able to gain *some* understanding of what goes on in other nations. Thus, contrary to what Niebuhr presumes, citizens are today able to make reasonably informed decisions about other nations and influence policy *where possible*. Though a higher level of intelligence may help one make better decisions, this does not mean that those of a lower intelligence cannot make good decisions or be guided to make good decisions. Secondly, he assumes that those persons who lack intelligence or a sense of morality cannot be guided to develop these qualities. Moreover, he fails to acknowledge the fact that most human beings have some sense of morality, of right and wrong. If this fact is recognized, the conclusions he draws in the above argument will be untenable. That is, the number of intelligent or morally conscious citizens in a nation would be much greater than he assumes, and they should be able to influence national attitudes.

Third, the need to use force, as mentioned in the second point, to maintain unity in a national community, "and the inevitable selfish exploitation of the instruments of

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argues that the powers that be or the "economic overlords" in a nation exploit the weaker

citizens for their own (i.e., the economic overlord's) interests—that is, "in the profits of

international trade, in the exploitation of weaker peoples, and in the acquisition of raw

materials and markets."[69] Though these interests are only remotely relevant to the

welfare of the whole people, the whole nation is called upon to protect these interests.

Because of the present organization of society—the unequal distribution of wealth—the

ordinary citizen has no choice but to support and protect these interests. This loyalty to

the nation, says Niebuhr, becomes "the vehicle of all the altruistic impulses and expresses

itself, on occasion, with such fervor that the critical attitude of the individual toward the

nation and its enterprises is almost completely destroyed. *The unqualified character of*

this devotion is the very basis of the nation's power and of the freedom to use the power

without moral restraint"(Emphasis mine).[70] Any altruistic passion of the individual is

easily "sluiced into the reservoirs of nationalism" and anything that lies outside of the

nation, "the community of mankind, is too vague to inspire devotion."[71] Obviously, says

Niebuhr, there is an element of "projected self-interest" in this "patriotic altruism." "The

man in the street, with his lust for power and prestige thwarted by his own limitations and

the necessities of social life, projects his *ego* upon his nation and indulges his anarchic

lusts vicariously."[72]

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[68] Ibid., 89.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 91.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid. p. 93.

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Though there are still some highly (morally) questionable practices in international affairs, I feel that not all the above assertions made by Niebuhr hold true today. First, because of the increase in democratic societies today, we see that citizens can be critical of their country's foreign policies and still be very patriotic. What he says may hold true in an aristocracy or some other autocratic society, but not so in a democracy. Though one may argue that we do see elements of Niebuhr's society today—that is, the wealthy/powerful controlling policy and exploiting the poor/weak—there are, in many nations, avenues or institutions in place today through which the poor/powerless can make their views heard. Undemocratic nations, in which we find dictatorships or political turmoil, may be the only exception to this. Secondly, because of the economic dependence of nations and the number of international organizations today (e.g., OAU, UN, EEC, ECOWAS), the possibility of one nation selfishly pursuing its own interest at the expense of another nation(s), is highly unlikely. Invariably, any attempt made by a nation to do so is met with disapproval from other nations and the guilty nation is, for the most part, pressured into adopting more egalitarian/fair practices. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the latter eventually succumbing to pressure from the international community serves as a good example here.

It is clear from the above that Niebuhr's arguments are somewhat dated. They may have held true at the time he was writing, but when they are scrutinized from the perspective of today's technology and global dependence, they fall short of making the case that there is no place for ethics in international affairs. We shall now move on to examine Morgenthau's views on this subject.

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Hans Morgenthau:

Hans Morgenthau has, for the past forty years, been one of the most important figures in the debate on morality and international relations. In fact, he practically set the terms for the conduct and direction of this debate. According to Robert McElroy, "it is little exaggeration to say that every contribution to the postwar literature dealing with the role of morality in foreign policy is essentially either an elaboration of, or a response to, themes presented by Morgenthau."[73] His most important book, *Politics Among Nations,* undoubtedly had a considerable impact on this discussion. It is reported by Hare and Joynt that the "philosophical position which underlies this book receives its most sustained treatment in an earlier book, *Scientific Man and Power Politics.*"[74] It is in this earlier book that the similarities between Morgenthau and Niebuhr are revealed. Though Morgenthau's interest is not theological and he does not offer a doctrine of human nature as Niebuhr did, he does, however, offer a view of human nature in the final chapters of *Scientific Man.*[75] The view of human nature that he offers is essential to his account of morality in international politics. Michael Smith adumbrates two aspects of Morgenthau's view of human nature. He says "Morgenthau places selfishness and the lust for power at the center of his picture of human nature."[76] All human action and intentions emanate from and refer back to the self. Even an action that has an unselfish intent cannot "completely transcend the selfishness to which it owes its existence."[77] "The second aspect of human nature is the universal desire for power." There are two sources for this desire: "the first reflects a Hobbesian logic of competition; the second, a

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[73] Robert W. McElroy, *Morality and American Foreign Policy,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 19.
[74] Hare and Joynt, 34
[75] Smith., 135.

universal *animus dominandi*, is rooted in man's nature." Because the lust for power is universal, there is no escape from the evil of power, no matter what one does. For Morgenthau then, reports Smith, it follows "that politics is an unending struggle for power and that political ethics is indeed the ethics of doing evil."[78] As we examine Morgenthau's theory further we shall see that he bases his views on international politics on his pessimistic account of human nature. The argument he seems to put forward is this: if man himself cannot be moral, how much less can this be asked of a state?

In *Politics among Nations* Morgenthau claims that the history of modern political thought has been one of a "contest between two schools that differ fundamentally in their conceptions of the nature of man, society, and politics."[79] One school holds the view that "a rational and moral political order", which is derived from "universally valid abstract principles" is attainable here and now. Underlying this view is the assumption that human nature is essentially good and infinitely malleable. It blames the " failure of the social order to measure up to the rational standards on lack of knowledge and understanding, obsolescent social institutions, or the depravity of certain isolated individuals or groups: It trusts in education, reform, and the sporadic use of force to remedy these defects."[80] According to the other school, the world, though imperfect, is "the result of forces inherent in human nature," for example, the universal lust for power. Any improvement of the world must be conducted by working with these forces, not against them. In this world—one of opposing interests and conflict—moral principles cannot be fully realized,

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 136.
[78] Ibid., 136 – 137.
[79] Ibid., 136 – 137.

but must, at best, be approximated.[81] The contest that Morgenthau is referring to here is the one between idealism and realism. Realism, obviously, is the school of thought to which he subscribes. He goes on to outline six fundamental principles of political realism. There is no need for me to discuss all six of these principles at this point because most of what he says has already been alluded to in my earlier discussion of realism. However, he does make a point that distinguishes political realism from other disciplines that deserves mention. He argues that the political realist maintains the autonomy of the political sphere in the same way other disciplines maintain their autonomy:

> Intellectually, the political realist maintains the autonomy of the political sphere, as the economist, the lawyer, the moralist maintain theirs. He thinks in terms of interest defined as power, as the economist thinks in terms of interest defined as wealth; the lawyer, of the conformity of action with legal rules; the moralist, of the conformity of action with moral principles. The economist asks: "How does this policy affect the wealth of society, or a segment of it?" The lawyer asks: "Is this policy in accord with the rules of law?" The moralist asks: "Is this policy in accord with moral principles?" And the political realist asks: "How does this policy affect the power of the nation?" .... The political realist is not unaware of the existence and relevance of standards of thought other than political ones. As a political realist, he cannot but subordinate these other standards to those of politics. And he parts company with other schools when they impose standards of thought appropriate to other spheres upon the political sphere. It is here that political realism takes issue with the "legalistic-moralistic approach" to international politics.[82]

To support the above point, Morgenthau refers to three historical examples. One of them is the war in August 1914 between Britain and Germany. Justification for this action could be founded, he says, on either realistic or legalistic-moralistic terms. A realistic justification would be that it had "been axiomatic for British foreign policy to prevent the

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[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.,12.

control of the Low Countries by a hostile power."[83] On the other hand, one could take a "legalistic and moralistic position that the violation of Belgium's neutrality per se, because of its legal and moral defects and regardless of the interests at stake and the identity of the violator, justified British and, for that matter, American intervention."[84]

The above realist defense of the political sphere's autonomy, argues Morgenthau, must not be construed as a disregard for the existence and importance of other modes of thought. Rather its aim is to guard against the subversion of the political sphere and ensure that each mode is "assigned its proper sphere and function."[85] Also, by alluding to the historical example, he seems to be shedding light on the dangers of importing morality into international politics. Certain policies that may be to the detriment of a nation can be easily justified if one takes a moralistic approach to international politics. He advises that the true nature of international politics is a never-ending struggle for power. Therefore, he urges that the national interest, rather than moral considerations, should be a nation's first priority.

Responding to the above quote, Cohen asserts that morality does not have a "discrete sphere of its own." One that is "parallel to, but separate from, the main areas of human activity."[86] Further, he agues that:

> It is not only appropriate, but characteristic and necessary, to apply its standards to economic, legal, and political phenomena. If the economist asks which of two policies produces greater utility, the moralist should ask of those policies, is the distribution of utility they propose morally acceptable? If the lawyer asks of an

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[83] Ibid., 13.
[84] Ibid., 13 –14.
[85] Ibid., 14.
[86] Cohen, 24.

action, does it conform to the legal rules, the moralist should ask, are those rules just? Similarly, then, if the political realist asks, how does this policy affect the power of the nation, the moralist must ask of that policy, does this increase in the nations power, or the method of achieving it, violate the rights of others, or unfairly threaten their security, or is it, rather, within the permissible limits of autonomous action? Moral standards can and must be applied to the same phenomena that are also judged by economic, legal, and political standards. Often, too, moral standards will have to prevail over those of special standards. As we cannot accept the extreme realist view that moral concepts and judgments do not apply in the political realm, so we must also reject the less extreme, but still insupportable, view that these judgments must always be subordinated to political ones.[87]

The above point being made by Cohen is, obviously, well stated. However, Morgenthau and other realists may object that applying moral concepts to politics can be dangerous because, as mentioned earlier, morality would sanction certain policies or actions that may be inimical to a nation's security or interest. A very good example of this is the United States (U.S.) intervention in Somalia. From the case study in chapter three, we shall, drawing from our knowledge of realism and the events that transpired up to and during the intervention, conclude that realists would have been opposed to the U.S. intervention in Somalia. The failure of the intervention, they would say, was inevitable because it was justified by morality and not by the national interests of the U.S. Morgenthau would also argue that Cohen's attempt to apply "moral standards ... to the same phenomena that are also judged by economic, legal, and political standards" is not only corruptive but also farfetched. It is corruptive because to attain the full realization or understanding of its goals, each mode of thought must maintain its proper sphere and function to the exclusion of other modes. Understanding each mode requires that we deal with it on its own terms. Subverting one mode (for example, politics) to another (ethics) would be corruptive and thus interfere with our understanding of it (politics). Cohen's

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[87] Ibid.

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attempt is also farfetched because if man himself, due to his selfish nature, cannot be moral, how much less can this be expected of a state? I do, however, anticipate some difficulties with Morgenthau's position. He seems to accept the applicability of morality to the relations between individuals within states which, in turn, must mean that moral concepts can be applied to politics within states. This is apparent because I do not believe Morgenthau or advocates of his view would deny that rulers within states do have (moral) obligations to their citizens, for example, an obligation to put the interests of their citizens above the interests of citizens of other states. As we shall later see, Morgenthau cannot consistently maintain this position and at the same time deny the morality of states and the applicability of morality to the international realm.

The crux of Morgenthau's argument is that there is a tragic and unbridgeable gap between ethics and politics. The universal lust for power, which drives a wedge between the two spheres, has not, according Morgenthau, always prohibited the realization of an effective international morality. He believes that an ethical system, which constrained the drive for power in Europe, had once existed up to the nineteenth century. This constraining influence was possible because of the European-wide moral and intellectual consensus that existed back then. He blames the recent deterioration of international morality on the dissolution of this ethical system that once imposed restraints on the day-to-day operations of foreign policy. This dissolution, he asserts, was brought about by two factors: "the substitution of democratic for aristocratic responsibility in foreign affairs and the substitution of nationalistic standards of action for universal ones."[88]

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Morgenthau claims that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, international morality was the primary concern of a "personal sovereign—that is, a certain individual prince and his successors—and of a relatively small, cohesive, and homogeneous group of aristocratic rulers."[89] The prince and the aristocratic rulers were in constant and close contact with the princes and rulers of other nations. These rulers, he says, "were joined together by family ties, a common language (French), common cultural values, a common style of life, and common moral convictions about what a gentleman was and was not allowed to do in his relations with another gentleman, whether of his own or of a foreign nation."[90] This consensus amongst the rulers of Europe kept in check the limitless desire for power. However, with the introduction of democracies in the nineteenth century, the structure of international society and international morality underwent a fundamental change. Government officials, who are "legally and morally responsible for their official acts, not to a monarch, but to a collectivity", replaced government by the aristocracy.[91] Because of this transformation within individual nations, Morgenthau argues that international morality, as a system of restraints, changed from a reality to a mere figure of speech. Any statement that we might make about the moral obligations that one nation (for example, Ghana) has toward another (Nigeria) are just fictional. This is because, for us to speak of a "moral rule of conduct", an individual conscience from which it emanates is required. However, "there is no individual conscience from which what we call the international morality of [Ghana] or any other

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[88] Morgenthau, 248.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., 252.

nation could emanate."[92]   In summing up his views on how the introduction of

democracies brought about the deterioration of international morality, Morgenthau says:

> Government by clearly identifiable men, who can be held personally accountable
> for their acts, is therefore the precondition for the existence of an effective system
> of international ethics. Where responsibility for government is widely distributed
> among a great number of individuals with different conceptions as to what is
> morally required in international affairs, or with no such conceptions at all,
> international morality as an effective system of restraints upon international
> policy is impossible. It is for this reason that Dean Roscoe Pound could say as far
> back as 1923: "It might be maintained plausibly, that a moral...order among
> states, was nearer attainment in the middle of the eighteenth century than it is
> today.[93]

Whereas the introduction of democracies destroyed international morality as an effective

system of restraints; nationalism, continues Morgenthau, destroyed international society

itself, i.e., the society within which international morality had operated. The French

Revolution of 1789 marked the beginning of the end of cosmopolitan aristocratic society

and the rise of nationalism. The nations of Europe witnessed, up until the nineteenth

century, the gradual fragmentation of aristocratic international society into its national

segments. This break up of a once cohesive international society into several morally

self-sufficient national communities that formerly operated within a common framework

of moral precepts, is, says Morgenthau:

> ...the outward symptom of the profound change that in recent times has
> transformed relations between universal moral precepts and the particular systems
> of national ethics. The transformation has proceeded in two different ways. It has
> weakened, to the point of ineffectiveness, the universal, supranational moral rules
> of conduct, which before the age of nationalism had imposed a system—however
> precarious and wide meshed—of limitations upon the foreign policies of
> individual nations. Conversely, it has greatly strengthened the tendency of

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[92] Ibid., 253 – 254.
[93] Ibid., 254.

individual nations to endow their particular national systems of ethics with universal validity.[94]

Slowly, universal ethics ceased to be the force motivating the actions of men in the international arena. This transformation, states Morgenthau, created a conflict within the individual conscience. On the one hand, the individual is pulled by the demands of national morality; on the other, he is too attached to the concept of universal ethics to abandon it altogether. The individual, claims Morgenthau, has two options to resolve this conflict: one, "He can sacrifice the moral demands of his nation for the sake of universal ethics."[95] For example, the individual may decide not to support certain foreign policies of his/her nation. Or two, the individual may identify the morality of his nation with the commands of supranational ethics. "It pours, as it were, the contents of a particular national morality into the now almost empty bottle of universal ethics. So each nation comes to know again a universal morality—that is, its own national morality—which is taken to be the one that all other nations ought to accept as their own.... There are then potentially as many ethical codes claiming universality as there are politically dynamic nations."[96] With this, nations cease to oppose each other within a framework of shared beliefs that imposes restraints upon their means to gain power. Rather, they oppose each other as the bearer of a standard ethical system that provides "a supranational framework of moral standards" which all other nations must accept "and within which their foreign policies ought to operate."[97] The stage, he says, is now set for a contest among nations. From what Morgenthau says, it seems that the stakes are much higher now because the rivalry between nations is not just to gain power but to impose one's (ethical) beliefs,

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[94] Ibid., 257.
[95] Ibid., 259.
[96] Ibid.

virtually one's way of life, on others. This makes the possibility of an international morality more and more difficult because no nation would want to accept the ethical beliefs of another country as its own. Today, we witness a similar conflict going on between Western nations and those of the Middle East. Leaders of Middle Eastern nations have argued that the governments of Western nations are trying to impose their way of life on them.

The victory of nationalism over internationalism that Morgenthau refers to poses a strong argument for the impossibility of international ethics. Based on the premises of his argument, it follows, at first glance, that a universal ethics would be impossible. If we agree that it is man's nature to lust after power and that national ethics destroyed universal ethics, it follows that each nation will be in a contest with the other to impose its standard of ethics as the universal code of conduct among nations. However, if we examine Morgenthau's overall theory, the above conclusion is not obvious at all. First, if we take it, as Morgenthau claims, that each nation is after its own interest, we can make the case that it would be in each nation's interest to abide by some rules of engagement.[98] Without these rules, international society will be one of total mayhem and it would be in a nation's interest to abide by some rules of conduct to protect its interest and avoid turmoil. Moreover, the national interest that he substitutes in place of morality is not without its own difficulties and it does not necessarily lead, as expressed above, to selfish actions. Admittedly, the value of the national interest must not be underestimated—it must, amongst other things, be a concern of each nation. However, as Arthur

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[97] Ibid., 259 – 260.
[98] Here, we may call to mind Plato's claim that there must be honor among thieves.

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Schlesinger, Jr. points out, the national interest is not "a self-executing formula."[99]

Saying that a nation should only adopt those policies that are in its national interest is one thing, defining what the national interest is, is another. Many times, says Schlesinger, those who have sung the praises of the national interest have not been very clear as to what constitutes the national interest; and, in practice, we often "quarrel endlessly over what [the] national interest prescribes in particular situations."[100] For instance, Schlesinger says that Morgenthau argued that the German leaders had on two occasions (in one generation) betrayed Germany's national interest. This, however, was not the opinion of the Kaiser and Hitler. In their minds they were protecting/securing Germany's national interest. Because of this, Schlesinger says that critics have concluded that the idea of national interest "is dangerously elastic. Far from providing clear answers to every international perplexity, national interest turns out to be subjective, ambiguous, and susceptible to great abuse."[101]

Secondly, it has been argued that the national interest is not an amoral concept as Morgenthau supposed. According to Schlesinger, morality is not incompatible with the national interest as Morgenthau argued; instead, morality complements it. He says that it "is precisely through the idea of national interest that moral principles enter most effectively into the formation of foreign policy. The function of morality is not to supply directives for policy. It is to supply perspectives that clarify and civilize conceptions of national interest. Morality primarily resides in the content a nation puts into its idea of

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[99] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. "National Interests and Moral Absolutes", in *International Ethics in the Nuclear Age*, ed. Robert J. Myers (Maryland: University Press of America, 1987), 15.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

national interest."[102]   Also, if it is agreed that all human action is subject to moral judgment, then it must follow that the action(s) of nations must be subject to moral judgment. Though Morgenthau argues that states cannot be said to be moral, we can at least say that the actions of the representatives who execute the foreign policies of nations is subject to moral judgment. By denying the morality of states, Morgenthau would seem to be making the incongruous claim that the (moral) principles upon which representatives of nations could act would be the principles they subscribed to in a personal capacity. In this age of democracies such a view would be unacceptable. As Graham says, in their capacity as representatives, "their (i.e., representatives of government) personal moral principles should no more influence their public role than should their private interests. To advance a moral cause dear to one's heart is as much an abuse of power as augmenting one's bank balance."[103] One way of making it possible for a country to have moral beliefs, he continues, is to consider its moral beliefs to be those of the majority of its inhabitants. Interpreted in this way it would seem right and proper for the representatives of a nation to "act in accordance with the moral beliefs of the majority of its citizens."[104] By so doing they would be representing the morality of their country instead of their own. Thus, any policies they implement in the interests of their nation would have a moral content and would also be subject to moral judgment.

Admittedly, there are some problems with interpreting the morality of a nation in this way—that is, because many nations are so pluralistic today there is a great diversity of moral opinion and there is no way of guaranteeing that any belief or principle would

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[102] Ibid., 27 – 28.
[103] Graham., *Ethics and International Relations*, 28.

receive majority support. Also, even if the majority of citizens supported the principle, adopting it would violate the moral freedom of the minority.[105] This objection is quite valid; however, I don't think that its validity negates the point being made for the morality of nations and the possibility of international ethics. First the examples that Graham offers to illustrate the above objection are not ones which I believe would or should be put on the table for discussion. The type of principles that I hope will be considered would be ones that not only acknowledge, but also require, by all peoples, the respect of basic human rights. Principles that exclude a section of the population based on sexuality and religion, like the ones Graham discusses, will hopefully not be considered. They would, hopefully, be principles that mirror the content and application of John Rawls' two principles of justice that apply to the basic structure of domestic society.[106] Also, as I mention below, a pluralistic society does not necessarily mean there would be total disagreement. If the principles are like the ones I suggest, there would most likely be very little disagreement. Besides, even if there is some disagreement, it would most likely not be pernicious. Isn't the democratic system valued because it allows different opinions to flourish and that it has institutions in place for individuals to make their views heard? If, under the favorable conditions of a democracy, the majority is allowed to carry the vote, I don't think there is any harm done—that is, if the policies adopted respect basic human rights.

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[104] Ibid., 28 – 29.

[105] Ibid., 29.

[106] John Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), proposes two principles of justice which he believes free and rational persons would chose to regulate the affairs of society: First, each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. Second, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.

At the risk of digressing, it is important to point out that if we are able to characterize the morality of a nation in the above way (i.e., as a nation that adopts Rawlsian principles to regulate domestic affairs), the extension to the law of peoples (that Rawls describes in his article "The Law of Peoples"[107]) is easily carried out.[108] Rawls contends that both liberal and hierarchical societies (which Rawls describes as a well-ordered and just society that often has a religious consultation hierarchy) would accept the law of peoples. If his contention is tenable, we get an idea what sort of principles will be adopted when ethics is applied to the international realm. His discussion of nonideal theory, in section VI, is insightful. He not only suggests ways in which the law of peoples guides well-ordered societies in facing and dealing with "outlaw regimes" and societies with less than favorable social and economic conditions (categories into which many African nations fall), but also suggests ways in which such societies can be brought to honor the law of peoples and become members of the society of well-ordered peoples.[109]

Third, implicit in Morgenthau's claim that the universality of ethics "is replaced by the particularity of national ethics..." is the view that a nation has, within itself, a sense of

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[107] John Rawls, "The Law of Peoples", in *On Human Rights*, ed. Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley (BasicBooks, 1993).
[108] In this article, Rawls assumes that working out the law of peoples for liberal democratic societies would result in the adoption of certain principles of justice. He offers a partial statement of these principles of justice which he believes will be chosen by free and democratic peoples: "1. Peoples (as organized by their governments) are free and independent and their freedom and independence is to be respected by other peoples. 2. Peoples are equal and parties to their own agreements. 3. Peoples have the right of self-defense but no right to war. 4. Peoples are to observe a duty of nonintervention. 5. Peoples are to observe treaties and undertakings. 6. Peoples are to observe certain specified restrictions on the conduct of war (assumed to be in self-defense). Peoples are to honor human rights." (55)
[109] In chapter four (page 213), I briefly discuss his suggestions on how well-ordered nations should deal with outlaw regimes.

morality or is capable of having moral beliefs.[110] If this is true, I don't see why an international ethics is not possible. The conclusion Morgenthau draws from the spread of nationalism may have held true back in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when each nation was trying to assert itself in the world stage. However, in today's global village, the conditions that precluded an international ethics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are not that prevalent. Today, if a nation wants to remain a key player in the international realm it must be willing to abide by some rules of conduct. Evidence of this is revealed in the Yugoslavia conflict and the pressure imposed by the international community on combating parties to respect human rights. Also, if, as Morgenthau claims, each nation has its own national ethics, the next step to an international ethics shouldn't be too difficult. Rawls, as demonstrated in our brief reference to his "Law of Peoples", makes a similar claim. A well-ordered and just nation (by virtue of its recognition and adoption of certain principles of justice to regulate the domestic affairs of society) would, in its desire to maintain peace and stability among nations, accept the law of peoples.[111] Gradually, also, those nations that are not members in good standing of a well-ordered society of just peoples can be brought, through pressure and sanctions, to accept the law of peoples.[112] One may object, though, that we live in such a pluralistic world and it would be impossible for nations to agree on moral rules to abide by. This may be true, but pluralism does not necessarily translate into total disagreement. There are surely some rules of conduct on which nations can agree. This agreement is necessary if we want to live peaceably in such an interdependent world.

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[110] This claim made by Morgenthau reveals an inconsistency in his argument. It is noted that he believes states can't be moral, but yet, he claims, in the above quotation, that they do have a national ethics that replaces universal ethics.
[111] John Rawls, "Law of Peoples", 52, 60 – 67.

Evidence of the possibility of consensus can also be seen in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, in the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

Before I conclude, there is another objection that has been levied against the possibility of international ethics that I would like to examine. I believe it is worthy of our consideration because it was one of the objections against international ethics that led me to revise my position on this issue. I am referring, here, to the argument from moral relativism. According to Frost, "The relativist position is that ... moral discussions all take place within and are relative to a specific moral practice. Within such a practice there is a wide base of mutually agreed upon premises.... Thus some statement of a moral position may be shown to be true or false relative to the basic premises held in common by the disputants within the practice. But where inter-practice disputes arise there can be no truth about the matter."[113] Skeptics have applied this view to international relations to make the case that morality in international affairs is impossible because, if this kind of relativism is true, we must not and cannot pass judgment on the practices of other nations. If there are no objective standards for settling inter-practice disputes, right or wrong would be relative to one's society. Thus we cannot look on the actions of Siyad Barre or Slobodan Milosevic and condemn them as morally wrong. The value of this objection is that it counsels caution against the sort of moral absolutism which leads to crusades and the extermination of the heathen or unclean. However, proponents of this view are wrong in thinking that it requires we abandon all attempts at formulating an international ethics. As Frost says, "It does not follow from the sceptical

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[112] Ibid., 71 –74.
[113] Mervyn Frost, *Toward a Normative Theory of International Relations*, 52.

position asserting that there are no ontological moral truths and from the fact that there exist diverse moral practices that there are good reasons for being apathetic."[114] It only means, he says, that there is no guarantee of finding the truth. There may just be no criteria for the right answer. Any agreement that is achieved amongst the disputants will have to be created by them.

Frost's view speaks to the view put forward by theorists like Isaiah Berlin[115] and Richard Rorty[116] who emphasize the contingency/fallibility and plurality of our values and principles. Acknowledging the contingency of our convictions or principles, they argue, does not, however, mean that we cannot hold on to and defend them in the interim. It only means that we do not have any guarantees that, in the light of new information or circumstances, we won't have to revise our convictions or principles. According to Berlin:

> Principles are not less sacred because their duration cannot be guaranteed. Indeed, the very desire for guarantees that our values are eternal and secure in some objective heaven is perhaps only a craving for certainties of childhood or the absolute values of our primitive past. 'To realize the relative validity of one's convictions', said an admirable writer of our time, 'and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian.' To demand more than this is perhaps a deep and incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to determine one's practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and more dangerous, moral and political immaturity.

As will be later revealed in chapter four (page 178), acknowledging the contingency/fallibility of our convictions is an important element in our attempt to

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[114] Ibid., 53.
[115] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).
[116] Rorty quotes Berlin and adopts his view in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 45.

relinquish ourselves of the metaphysical and foundational beliefs of the enlightenment, so as to successfully formulate a democratic system adapted to the African context.

Thus, as shown above, the fact that there are no ontological truths does not deter us from formulating moral opinions or views about others and ourselves. We can still hold on to our moral opinions/principles and universalize them until when and if new information or circumstances dictate otherwise. The facts do confirm this: Despite the diverse moral opinions that may exist, most of us would agree that gratuitous killing is wrong, for instance, the ethnic cleansing that occurred in Bosnia or Kosovo or the atrocities committed by rebels and other combatants in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In sum, this kind of relativism does not mean that we cannot judge the morality of the actions of other nations and so does not preclude the possibility of international ethics.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to offer an overview of the debate on morality and international affairs as well as a critique of the various arguments against the possibility of ethics in international affairs. All of the latter have been shown to be flawed or inconsistent in some way, and the position they hold against the role of ethics in international affairs is untenable. Perforce, the conclusion that one must come to is that normative theory is part and parcel of the study and practice of international relations. At the same time too this study has engendered some revision in my view on this issue. I now believe, as I did before, that ethics has a place in international affairs; however, I do feel now that it must be used as a guide to action or policy not as an in toto justification

or determinant of international policy/action. This is because of the dangers of moral

absolutism and the real threat of extremist actions being justified by morality. The view

expressed by Schlesinger echoes my views on this subject:

> Moral values do have a fundamental role in the conduct of foreign affairs. But, save in extreme cases, that role is surely not to provide abstract and universal principles for foreign policy decisions. It is rather to illuminate and control conceptions of national interest. The righteousness of those who freely apply their personal moral criteria to the complexities of international politics degenerates all too easily into absolutism and fanaticism. The assumption that other nations have legitimate traditions, interests, values, and rights of their own is the beginning of a true morality of states. The quest for values common to all states and the embodiment of these values in international covenants and institutions is the way to establish a moral basis for international politics.[117]

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[117] Schlesinger, 34.

CHAPTER TWO

AN ETHICAL EVALUATION

OF THE

FOREIGN AID PROGRAM

Introduction.

> There is nothing new about poverty. What is new, however, is that we now have the resources to get rid of it. ... famine is wholly unnecessary in the modern world. Today, therefore, the question on the agenda must read: Why should there be hunger and privation in any land, in any city, at any table, when man has the resources and the scientific know-how to provide all mankind with the basic necessities of life? Even deserts can be irrigated and topsoil can be replaced. We cannot complain of a lack of land, for there are 25 million square miles of tillable land on earth, of which we are using less than seven million. We have amazing knowledge of vitamins, nutrition, the chemistry of food and the versatility of atoms. There is no deficit in human resources; the deficit is in human will.[1]

Now that the question of ethics in international politics has been examined, I shall, at this juncture, turn to an issue that has spurred many debates within the discipline of Applied Ethics (specifically, Ethics in International Politics). A very important issue within this discipline is international aid and its justification. It is important because the questions posed and the choices that are made regarding this issue are both difficult and consequential. They are difficult because most of the answers or decisions that are required concerning international aid are not straightforward and easy to come up with; invariably they have serious ethical consequences. They are consequential because the lives of thousands of people depend upon the solutions and decisions that we come up with regarding this matter. This issue has posed some difficulty for not only ethicists, but also economists and politicians. In our quest to create a more egalitarian global society

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[1] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 177.

we are confronted with the several questions that are raised regarding international aid. The first question that is raised regarding this issue is whether countries/nations have any duties to those beyond their borders? Secondly, if they do, what type of aid/assistance should be provided – e.g. political or economic—to the poor/developing nations? Given that one can find answers to these two questions, further questions are raised: Does aid really help the targeted population? Does the need for or the giving of aid warrant the sacrifices or the cost (i.e. political, economic, moral) that is borne by both the donor country and the recipient country? Why should the donor country provide aid to other nations at the expense and sacrifice of its own nationals, who may also need assistance? If we can come up with answers to these questions that support the giving of aid, one can safely say that the practice of aid giving has been justified. The aim of this chapter is to offer and examine answers to some (if not all) of these questions. As one would expect with any issue of philosophical importance, the responses of ethicists, and other theorists to these questions have been divided. An issue as complex as this one will not engender consensus amongst theorists. Beginning with the landmark article of Peter Singer ("Famine, Affluence and Morality"[2]) in 1972, an extensive literature has developed on this subject. This article was written as a response to Garrett Hardin's "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case against Helping the Poor."[3] The publication of these two articles set the platform for the debate on duties beyond borders or world hunger. Both theorists utilize utilitarian arguments to make a case for and against international aid, respectively.[4] With the platform set, the debate became fully charged by the end of the decade with the

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[2] Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (1972) 1: 229-243.
[3] Garrett Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics: The case Against Helping the Poor," *Psychology Today* 8, (1971) no .4: 38-43, 123-126.

publication of several articles on the subject. Many of these are collected in an anthology by George Lucas and Thomas Ogletree—*Lifeboat Ethics: The Moral Dilemmas of World Hunger* (1976).[5] Non-consequential, neo-Kantian arguments were also put forward. We learn of rights-based theories propounded by the likes of Henry Shue (*Basic Rights*, 1980), Onora O'Neill (*Lifeboat Earth*, 1975) and other theorists like Charles Beitz (*Political Theory and International Relations*, 1979) and Thomas Pogge (*Realizing Rawls*, 1989) who build on John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. One would be hard pressed, in going through the literature, to find an article that fails to refer to either or both of the articles written by Singer and Hardin. In this vein, the discussion in this chapter will be centered on these two articles. I shall draw from the strengths of other pro-aid theorists to build my case for giving aid. At the same time, I recognize that those theorists who oppose aid also put forward a strong case. I shall argue for a complete revamping of the current system or process of giving aid. By this I mean that the type of aid, the conditions under which it is given, and when and how it is given should be re-examined. I shall start by outlining the articles by Singer and Hardin, but before I do so I must offer some background information on aid—what it is and the different types of aid.

SECTION ONE

Aid Defined.

A simple yet fundamental idea of aid is the transfer of resources from one country to another—mostly from the developed nations to the less developed nations. Ralph C

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[4] I must point out here that though Singer, in his article, seems to focus on what we as individuals ought to do to alleviate absolute poverty, his argument can be generalized to demonstrate the obligations rich nations, as a whole, have to work towards alleviating absolute poverty or suffering in poor nations.

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Chiaka, in his book, *Development Aid to the Third World: A Moral Question*, cautions that such a simple definition of aid may be troublesome.[6] First, many resource transfers can be disguised. Preferential tariffs that are granted by the developed nations to the third world nations for the export of their manufactured goods are an example of a disguised resource transfer. With such tariff reductions, developing nations get a higher price than they would without them for their industrial products sold in developed country markets. The net gain developing nations derive from this concession would tantamount to a real resource transfer. According to Chiaka, such "implicit capital transfers...should be counted in quantifying aid flows. But they are not."[7] Secondly, we must at the same time exclude some forms of capital transfer. As an example Chiaka cites private flows representing normal commercial transactions. For a while, he says, both official and private flows were calculated to sum up aid. This should not be the case even though they may benefit the developing country in which they take place.[8] Robert Cassen[9] agrees with Chiaka on this point. For Cassen, not only private capital transfers, but also "grants, soft loans, or credits for military purposes are also specifically excluded" from the definition of aid.[10] Cassen, however, includes within the definition of aid food aid and technical cooperation. Covered by the latter are all forms of assistance given to individuals (from developing countries) receiving education at home or abroad; and also foreign teachers, administrators, and technical experts working in developing countries.

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[5] George R. Lucas and Thomas W. Ogletree, ed. *Lifeboat Ethics: The Moral Dilemmas of World Hunger*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976)

[6] Ralph C. Chiaka, *Development Aid to the Third World: A Moral Question*, (Ibadan: Shaneson C.I. Limited, 1989), xviii.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Robert Cassen & Associates, *Does Aid Work?: Report to an Intergovernmental Task Force*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[10] Robert Cassen & Associates, 2.

Cassen prefers to use "aid" in the strict sense of official development assistance (ODA). Thus, he offers three criteria that, according to the Development Assistance Committee (the guardian of official information about aid), qualify aid as ODA. These criteria are somewhat similar to the two criteria which, according to Chiaka, are offered by economists who define aid. "[First,] it has to be undertaken by official agencies; [secondly,] it has to have the promotion of economic development and welfare as its main objectives; [third,] it has to have a 'grant element' of 25 percent or more."[11] In a nutshell:

> Aid therefore encompasses all official grants and concessional loans, in currency or in kind, which are broadly aimed at transferring resources from developed nations, and more recently...from OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries], to less developed or other 'Third World' countries, on developmental and/or income distribution grounds.[12]

A Rejection of Foreign Aid.

Turning now to Garrett Hardin's formidable article *Lifeboat Ethics: The Case against Helping the Poor*, we see that he develops a strong case against foreign aid by comparing the rich nations of the world to a lifeboat full of comparatively rich people.[13] He claims that the environmentalist's metaphor of the earth as a spaceship is misguided. Though the environmentalist may use this metaphor to make the case that we all share life on this planet and therefore must protect it, this does not mean that everyone on earth has an equal right to an equal share of the earth's resources. The lifeboat metaphor describes the situation better because outside of the lifeboat is the ocean in which swim the poor people

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Chiaka, xix.

[13] Garrett Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case against Helping the Poor" in *Morality in Practice*, ed. James P. Sterba (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1997), 78.

of the world who would like to get in or at least have a share in the wealth. Recognizing the limited capacity of the lifeboat, he asks, what should the passengers (rich nations) do? As the title of his essay implies, he argues not only against allowing those outside to come in (this only spells disaster for everyone), but also against helping those who are outside (doing so only postpones and multiplies the problem). He does this by first asking us to suppose that there are fifty people on board with room for ten more. He asks whether the people on board should allow ten more people on board. This creates a moral dilemma because any course of action/inaction has an unfavorable outcome. First we have to decide which ten to allow on board? How must one choose? The best, the neediest, or first come, first served? Also if we allow an extra ten to come aboard we would, says Hardin, have lost our "safety factor," an engineering principle of great importance. The other alternative is not to allow any more boarding of the lifeboat. Hardin admits that while this solution secures our survival, it is morally abhorrent to many people. This being the basic metaphor, he goes on to enrich it by making some substantive additions from the real world. He points out that the brutality of the ethics of the lifeboat is all the worse when we consider the reproductive differences between the rich nations and the poor nations. The latter multiply more than twice as fast as the former. This fact of reality is a key point in Hardin's argument—it negates any attempts to help the poor. By creating organizations like the World Food Bank that provides food for the world's poor, we only, he warns, make matters worse when we preserve the lives of people living in an already burdened environment. If the poor countries are already overpopulated preserving their lives by giving them food is only going to worsen the situation. Yes, says Hardin, we may feel good that we have saved some lives; but are we

doing any good if the problem is not solved, only postponed to create a much bigger problem later on? By feeding the starving today, we preserve their lives to reproduce some more, which only creates a bigger problem for us to feed them in the future. The starving population would, in the future, have grown 3 to 4 times its original size, making it all the more expensive and difficult to feed them then. Consequently, the problems we might face today if we fed the world's poor would become 3-4 times greater in the future. To prevent this, Hardin argues, we must allow death and disease to bring the population below the carrying capacity.

In his book, *The Limits of Altruism*, Hardin argues that all the attempts made so far to help the poor fail to take into consideration the carrying capacity of the environment.[14] Ignoring the carrying capacity of the environment only results in disaster. To illustrate his point he uses the population history of the reindeer on St. Matthew Island. In this environment, he says, life was too simple—food was abundant and predators were absent. "There was nothing to hold the population at or below the carrying capacity; consequently the reindeer population greatly overshot its proper level, overgrazed the plants and crashed, leaving the environment in shambles."[15] In no uncertain terms Hardin claims that this situation could have been avoided by introducing predators, in other words, death. According to him, "All organisms naturally and necessarily reproduce too much for their own good; for life to be sweet it must have death as a countervailing factor."[16] Hardin goes on to make the point that introducing bales of hay

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[14] Garret Hardin, *The Limits of Altruism: An Ecologist's View of Survival*, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977), 49.
[15] Ibid., 51.
[16] Ibid.

would only make matters worse. Deer lives would be saved and the following year the population would begin its yearly growth at a higher level. Keeping the population from dropping back to its original level may be all right "if the world were infinite and 'philanthropic' inputs could go on forever at ever higher levels."[17] However, this is not the case and, one day, when "philanthropy dries up", the "overexploited natural system" will prove to be incapable "of supporting the artificially large population. The crime of exceeding the carrying capacity is paid for with a population crash."[18] This, in essence, is what would happen in the human situation if rich countries try to help poor nations by offering foreign aid. Hardin points out that it is each nation's responsibility to ensure that its population matches the carrying capacity of its own land. Thus, "it would be foolish for other nations to accept responsibility for keeping alive millions of people the procreation of whom they had nothing to do with."[19] Offering food anytime a need develops would only breed laziness and "slovenly rulers" will not be motivated to save for the future. "Some countries will deposit food in the Wold Food Bank, and others will withdraw it."[20] As a result, poor countries will not learn to mend their ways, and it is only when a nation has become self-reliant that "it can be said to be living within the carrying capacity of its land."[21]

This last point about the self-sufficiency of nations seems to point to an inconsistency in Hardin's views. In commenting on the modern approach to foreign aid that stresses the export of technology and advice rather than money and food, Hardin appears to be

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[17] Ibid., 55.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 61.
[20] *Lifeboat Ethics*, 81.

pessimistic about this approach also. To support his skeptical view, he quotes Alan Gregg's view on efforts to teach the world's poor to increase food production. According to Hardin, Gregg compared the "growth and spread of humanity over the surface of the earth to the spread of cancer in the human body, remarking that 'cancerous growths demand food; but as far as I know, they have never been cured by getting it.'"[22] If teaching the world's poor to provide for themselves is not teaching them how to become self-reliant, I am not sure how Hardin expects them to become self-reliant. In my view, Hardin seems to be postulating an ethics of doom rather than an ethics of hope. Indeed, his view (quoted above) that "... death is a countervailing factor" is enough evidence to this fact. As will be seen later, he says that allowing some people to die now is necessary to alleviate the plight of the poor. This is not necessarily the case.

At the point when the carrying capacity of a country has been transgressed, Hardin further argues, its capacity is depleted year after year. By sending food to a starving population that has already exceeded the environment's carrying capacity, Americans become a partner in the devastation of their land. Food supplies from an external source keep more people alive who demand more food and fuel; greater demand causes the community to transgress the carrying capacity even further, which, in turn, lowers the carrying capacity. "The deficit", he argues, "grows exponentially."[23] Food aid to an overpopulated country ricochets, increasing the extent of starvation in the long run. With this, Hardin comes to the shocking conclusion that, "Our choice is really between letting

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[21] *Limits of Altruism*, 63.
[22] *Lifeboat Ethics*, 82.
[23] Ibid., 85.

some die this year and letting more die in the following years."[24] In his view, only one thing can really help poor countries: population control. "Having accepted disease control the people must now accept population control."[25] As abhorrent as Hardin's solution to the plight of the poor may seem, he is convinced this is the only and most humane solution. As a utilitarian, he calls on the words of the ethicist Joseph Fletcher to support his view: "Give if it helps, but not if it hurts."[26] As Hardin thinks he has shown, foreign aid hurts, therefore it should not be given.

Before discussing Singer's critique of Hardin's essay, there are two shortcomings of Hardin's essay that I want to point out. First, Hardin fails to take into consideration the natural and social lottery[27] that John Rawls refers to in his *Theory of Justice.*[28] Neither the inhabitants of rich countries nor those in poor countries had a say in where they were born or where their forefathers settled. A child born in a rich country didn't choose to be born in a rich country. His/her existence in a rich country is purely a matter of luck. In the same way that a child does not and cannot choose his/her biological parents, a child does not and cannot choose where he/she is born. Consequently, neither the children born in Somalia nor those born in the U.S. deserve, so to speak, to be born in the country in which they are born. Being born of certain parents or being born a citizen of a particular nation are each a result of what Rawls calls, as referred to earlier, the natural

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Rawls argues that the natural endowments of nations, the abilities of individuals, and the social circumstances in which one is born are all accidental. Thus, neither the mineral deposits of a nation nor the natural talents with which or the circumstances in which one is born are deserved or merited. A person's life prospects and a nation's propensity for growth and development are contingent upon or greatly affected by one's good or bad luck in the natural lottery. As a result, neither an individual nor a nation has an abstract right or morally deserves to benefit from its special circumstance.

and social lotteries. It is therefore arbitrary, from a moral point of view, says Rawls, to permit one's life prospects to be determined solely by the natural and social lotteries and, by rejecting foreign aid, this is exactly what Hardin is doing. In an attempt to nullify these morally irrelevant contingencies and biases of historical fate, Rawls suggests, in *A Theory of Justice* and "The Law of Peoples," principles that would discount and prevent people and nations from taking advantage of these contingencies in domestic society and the international realm, respectively.[29] Individuals and representatives of nations, he states, would choose these principles to regulate affairs in an original position from behind a veil of ignorance, such that contracting parties would not know whether they are rich or desperately poor.[30] Also Hardin fails to consider the changing attitudes to childbirth in the poor countries. With urbanization and advances in technology, e.g. other forms of entertainment like televisions and movies, people in underdeveloped countries are changing their views about having several children. These objections will be elaborated upon when reviewing Singer's response to objections to his argument.

A Case for Helping the Poor.

In a poignant essay on poverty, Peter Singer rejects the empirical basis on which Hardin's view rests.[31] He starts the chapter by stating some facts about the disparity in living conditions between the rich and poor countries. Singer asserts that Hardin is too quick to accept the certain evil of absolute poverty in developing countries in an attempt to avoid the future possibility of still greater poverty in these regions. "Absolute poverty" is a

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[28] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971).
[29] In chapter one, pages 41-42, I briefly outline Rawls principles for the domestic and international realm.
[30] *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 102f & 378f and "The Law of Peoples" pp. 67f.

term Singer borrows from Robert McNamara to describe the poverty existent in developing countries as opposed to that in developed countries, "relative poverty." In sum, absolute poverty is "a condition of life so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency".[32] In contrast, the poverty one is familiar with in developed countries is relative poverty—that is, "some citizens are poor, relative to the wealth enjoyed by their neighbours".[33] Absolute poverty is responsible for the loss of countless lives, up to 800 million (40% of the people in developing countries), according to World Bank estimates. The segments of the population hardest hit are infants and children. The most distressing thing about this untold misery that takes place in underdeveloped countries is that it is preventable. Also, in Singer's view, a serious commitment to aid on the part of rich nations would diminish the possibility of greater evil and the deterioration of conditions in both the developed and developing nations that Hardin fears. North Americans, he says, consume four times the amount of grain that is consumed by poor countries. This is primarily because most of their grain is fed to animals to produce meat, milk, and eggs. The amount of food that would be saved if we stopped doing this is more than enough to feed the world's hungry population. However, Singer cautions that a change in diet would not necessarily solve the world food problem. The problem is essentially one of distribution rather than production. "Only by transferring some of the wealth of the developed nations to the poor of the

[31] My source for Singer's "Famine, Affluence and Morality" is from a revised version incorporated in his book *Practical Ethics*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 218 – 246.
[32] Ibid., 219.
[33] Ibid., 218.

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underdeveloped nations can the situation be changed."[34] Undoubtedly, this wealth does exist in the developed countries, as evidenced by the fact that the average citizen, after providing for his/her basic needs, has money left over to spend on luxuries. Given this fact, Singer states that we cannot help but conclude that by not giving more than we do, citizens of developed nations are allowing the world's poor to suffer from absolute poverty, malnutrition and subsequently death. He then goes on to make a claim that would shock even the hardest of minds into helping: "If, then, allowing someone to die is not intrinsically different from killing someone, it would seem that we are all murderers."[35]

Admitting that there are some difficulties with this claim, Singer goes on to consider whether we have an obligation to assist the poor and, if so, how it should be applied to the present world situation. He comes up with a principle of obligation: "If it is in our power to prevent something very bad happening without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance, we ought to do it."[36] To illustrate this principle, he cites the choice between getting his clothes muddy and postponing or canceling his lecture and saving a child who is in danger of drowning in a shallow pond. The former (i.e., getting one's clothes muddy and canceling a lecture) may be a little inconvenient, but it is insignificant when compared to saving a child's life. No one, suggests Singer, would deny that he ought to wade in and save the child. Applying this principle to the subject of eradicating poverty, he states that (i) if we assume poverty is a bad thing and that (ii) "it is within the power of the affluent to reduce absolute poverty, without sacrificing

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[34] Ibid., 221.
[35] Ibid., 222.

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anything of comparable moral significance"; it follows then that "we have an obligation to help those in absolute poverty which is no less than our obligation to help a drowning child from a pond."[37] If we accept Singer's principle, helping ceases to be a charitable act—one that it is praiseworthy to do, but not wrong to omit—and becomes obligatory—something that everyone who is affluent ought to do.

It is clear from a recent publication[38] of Singer's that he still holds this view. He goes so far as to even chastise those who occasionally give to charity. He argues that our reluctance to give to charity makes us just as morally culpable as a man he refers to as Bob, who, faced with a choice of allowing a runaway train to hit either his vintage Bugatti (his pride and joy) or a young boy, decides to throw the switch so that the train hits the boy instead of his car. Singer makes the claim that, morally, we are no different from Bob in our decision to spend money on luxuries instead of giving to charity. Our attempts, he demonstrates, to distinguish ourselves morally from people like Bob, who put their vintage cars ahead of a child's life, fail. Singer argues that spending money on dinner at a fancy restaurant is just as bad because it could also help save the life of a starving child. He says: "Then, if we value the life of a child more than going to fancy restaurants, the next time we dine out we will know that we could have done something better with our money. If that makes living a morally decent life extremely arduous, well, then that is the way things are."[39] Any objection that the level of sacrifice he calls for is excessive, he says, is untenable when one considers that failure to do more than

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[36] Ibid., 229.
[37] Ibid., 230.
[38] Peter Singer, "The Singer Solution to World Poverty" in the *New York Times Magazine*, September 5, 1999.

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one's fair share results in preventable death. Reliance on government or the generosity of others is not sufficient to stave off poverty and hunger. Therefore we all should give as much as we can (anything above what is necessary), because not everyone will give their required minimum and government contributions would be inadequate. He recommends that a household with an income of $50,000 a year should donate around $30,000, and a household with income around $100,000 ought to donate $70,000.

As formidable as Singer's case for helping the poor may be, it has received a fair share of objection from different theorists. One such objection may come from libertarians such as Robert Nozick.[40] If the generalization of Singer's theory to apply to national governments (that I refer to in a footnote on page 48) is tenable, libertarians would object to his argument because of the (tax) ramifications it would have for citizens of rich nations, if their governments tried to meet his principle of obligation. Because of the importance of the libertarian objection as an opposing view, I spend a little more time discussing this position.

An Obligation or Charity?

As a libertarian, Nozick describes individual liberty as a cardinal political virtue; he places liberty at the center stage of politics. He rejects the long-standing assumption of many liberal political theorists that justice demands extensive economic redistribution. For him, the minimal state is the most extensive state that can be justified. Any attempt by the state to take our money to accomplish this redistribution is unjust and rejected by

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[39] Ibid.

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libertarians. The state is called minimal because the only legitimate function it has is to protect people against the violation of what the libertarian calls negative rights. Generally, "these rights constitute 'side constraints on the actions of others, ensuring a person's freedom from interference in the pursuit of his or her life.'"[41] Individuals must be free to live their lives as they see fit; they must be free from coercion or interference. Contrasting with negative rights are positive rights. This is a right to be provided with something, for example, education, welfare, healthcare etc. Libertarians do not acknowledge such rights because any attempt to provide them would result in the violation of one's negative rights, for example, through taxation.

With such a view as to the rights of individuals within the state, libertarians are bound to reject the redistribution of wealth that applying Singer's argument to national governments would call for. To provide the means of subsistence for the world's poor, a system of taxation would need to be put in place in the developed countries, which, in turn, would be a violation of their citizen's negative rights. Freedom and the absence of coercion are very important to the libertarian. It is on these two values that Nozick bases his entitlement theory-- "a distribution is just if every one is entitled to the holdings they possess under the distribution."[42] He states that the subject of justice in holdings consists of three major topics: First, is the "original acquisition of holdings," that is, the appropriation of "unheld" things. Secondly, "the transfer of holdings from one person to

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[40] Robert Nozick, "Anarchy, State, and Utopia" in *Justice and Economic Distribution*, ed. John Arthur and William Shaw (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1991).
[41] J. Arthur and W. Shaw, 61.
[42] Nozick, 65.

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another"[43]. Before stating the third topic, Nozick suggests that if the world were a wholly just place, "an inductive definition" would exhaustively cover the subject of justice in holdings. It reads:

1. A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to that holding.
2. A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in transfer, from someone else entitled to the holding, is entitled to the holding.
3. No one is entitled to a holding except by (repeated) applications of 1 and 2.[44]

This reliance on past events has led to the description of the entitlement theory as historical—a distribution is just depending on how it comes about—as opposed to a current time-slice principle of justice. The latter "hold that the justice of a distribution is determined by how things are distributed (who has what) as judged by some structural principle(s) of just distribution."[45] Thus, the former (historical), in contrast to the latter (unhistorical/ current time-slice), consider the past circumstances or actions of people to be relevant; they can create differential entitlements or deserts to things. Nozick refers to current time-slice principles as end-state or end-result principles.

Because poor nations have not acquired the resources of the industrialized nations in accordance with the above two principles, they are not, according to libertarians, entitled to the wealth/resources of rich countries. To be entitled they must have acquired them in accordance with Nozick's second principle. That is, citizens of developed nations must willingly give their money, without any coercion, to help the poor. Thus, a libertarian has no objection to giving charity; he only insists that the choice to do so is free. Here,

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

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the libertarian fails to realize that, if governments were to rely on willing contributions from their citizens, not everybody would be conscientious or charitable enough to help the poor nations by contributing to foreign aid. One may feel sadness at the images of poverty and suffering he/she sees on television, but not be inclined to do something about it; especially when the victims are so far removed/distant. Considering the level of sacrifice that Singer's argument—whether applied to individuals or national governments—calls for, it is unquestionable that he would reject the libertarian's emphasis on aid without coercion. As noted earlier, he does believe that our reliance on charity or the government would be inadequate in generating the funds necessary to reduce poverty. Thus, if we were to apply his argument to national governments, meeting Singer's maximum level of sacrifice would require national governments to excessively tax their citizens. Further, he would assert that the libertarian theory is unacceptable because it leaves too much to chance, i.e., the natural and social lotteries. As an example he points out that the citizens of the Persian Gulf are now fabulously wealthy just because their forefathers happened to settle on some sandy wastes which happened to have oil beneath. On the other hand, those whose forefathers inhabited better land south of the Sahara now live in abject poverty, as a result of drought and poor harvests. From an impartial point of view, he says, such a distribution would obviously be unacceptable. One can imagine oneself about to begin life as a citizen of either Kuwait or Chad. If behind Rawls' veil of ignorance we knew that when the veil was lifted we would be citizens of either Kuwait or Chad, would we, asks Singer, agree to a

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[45] Ibid., 67.

principle to the effect "that citizens of Kuwait are under no obligation to assist people living in Chad?"[46]

Further, one could object that Nozick's requirement that aid should be limited to charitable donations is unfair. This is because he fails to take into consideration the fact that a good part of the affluence enjoyed by developed nations was either due to resources taken from the poor countries or built as a result of the exploitation and enslavement of citizens from these poor countries. In response to such a view, Nozick may say that it is unfortunate that the world is not a wholly just place. People steal, defraud or enslave one another. However, as a result of these injustices, he sees the need for a third principle which is the third major topic: the rectification of injustice in holdings. This principle, according to Nozick, uses historical information about previous situations and injustices. Relying on the definition given by the first two principles of justice and the information about the actual cause of events, this principle renders a description of holdings in the society.

However, the difficulty and complexity of the principle of rectification must be recognized. Implementing it would entail taking into consideration too many factors, which might not be important, and one would not know where to draw the line of past circumstances to be considered. Nozick himself admits to this. He says, one cannot "...know of a thorough and theoretically sophisticated treatment of..." the issues involved in this principle.[47] Aside from these difficulties, there are other problems

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[46] Singer, 235.
[47] Nozick, .66.

involved with this principle. First, as the previous difficulties emphasize, rectifying past injustices in real life is not that easy. In the creation or production of an item or social good, more than one person is often involved. Likewise, the occurrence of an event in history, e.g., slavery, invariably involves more than one person and sometimes more than one generation. Deciphering who deserves and who does not deserve compensation and what type/kind of compensation is merited will be difficult. Secondly, one cannot rectify past injustices without violating the (present) rights of others. That is, for me to be compensated for a past injustice, a contemporary non-perpetrator would have to give up something that is a violation of his/her right to keep it. Does this mean that we should do nothing to help the class of people who were possibly injured or whose forefathers were injured? Even if we cannot decipher what reparation should be given and to whom, we ought to help the injured if they need our help. Though Hardin and Nozick may have doubts about this, I do believe that the fact/possibility of past injustice does present an additional case for official aid. One may even make the point that, apart from the requirements of morality, it is in the interest of developed countries to give some assistance to poor nations. If not, they will find that if the food is not taken to the poor, the poor will come to the food—in the manner of immigration. We see that happening today with the high influx of legal and illegal immigrants to rich countries. This, i.e., immigration, Hardin opposes because, in his view, it hastens the destruction of the environment of the rich countries. Probably, with the libertarian's emphasis on liberty, libertarians like Nozick may oppose restricting the movement/migration of people.

Seeing that a person needs the basic necessities, like food and shelter, to enjoy his/her right to life; the libertarian requirement of non-interference raises an important question: Does a person's right to life and non-interference require that others not interfere with his/her taking the goods he/she needs from the surplus possessions of those who already have satisfied their own basic needs? Nozick's response to this question would be no. There are certain property rights and entitlements recognized by the libertarian. What Nozick says in regard to distributive justice would be helpful in explaining his view on the above question. He claims that the term distributive justice is not neutral. "...most people", he says, "presume that some thing or mechanism uses some principle or criterion to give out a supply of things."[48] This is not the case because, as he emphasizes, social goods do not come into the world unattached, like manna from heaven. We are not like children who have been given portions of a cake by someone who attempts, at the last minute, to make adjustments that would rectify careless cutting. To focus primarily on distribution, like Singer, is to ignore production. Social goods, he says, are created by people who become entitled to them by this act of production. This is why he believes that, in contrast to end-state principles, historical principles are important—"past circumstances 'can create differential entitlements or differential deserts to things.'"[49] Thus, if one's labor or knowledge has been utilized in the acquisition or construction of an item, there are certain entitlements that are attached and anyone who has no entitlement cannot make a claim on the item. As such, citizens of poor countries are not entitled to the wealth and resources of rich countries and cannot make any claims, nor are wealthy nations obligated to them in any way. The latter claim would be fine if we did

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[48], Ibid., 64.
[49] Ibid., 62.

not live in such an interdependent society and past circumstances were not so important. If we adhere to the Nozickian entitlement theory, we do see that some poor nations would be entitled to some of the wealth in some rich countries. This is because we would, in our reckoning of entitlements, have to take history into consideration and for this we would need to factor in all the exploitation of resources and the enslavement of citizens of poor countries.

I can hear a libertarian objecting to this point by saying that, as he has already admitted, such a task would be too daunting and we cannot consider all the circumstances that came into play in the creation or production of an item or social good. Yes, this is true, but anywhere we draw a line of past circumstances would be arbitrary. By this I mean that it would, perforce, be a matter of preference or choice. This is because, when faced with the task of justifying the line that one draws of past circumstances to consider, I am not sure what justification one could offer for compensating one injured party and not the other if they both have been equally injured. Admittedly, one could offer (good) reasons for excluding one and not the other—for example, only those nations/people that were injured after say 1950 for which we have records deserve compensation—but, then, one has to deal with further questions of fairness and whether the reasons would be acceptable/satisfying to the excluded nation/people. One may rightly ask whether the injuries one or one's people suffered is made any less painful because one suffered the injuries concerned prior to 1950 or because a justification, no matter how good, is offered for one's exclusion. Put within the context of our current discussion, poor nations that have suffered some injustice would most likely not find any justification acceptable.

Thus, to avoid "opening up a can of worms," no line should be drawn so the question/debate of justifying the line is not raised. To simplify things, we must have foreign aid. This way, no claims need to be made. At the minimum, as long as a wealthy nation has had some kind of relationship with a poor country, morality dictates that, if the latter is in need and the former has the means, help ought to be given. Just as in interpersonal relationships, if my friend needs my help and I have the means, I ought to come to his/her aid. It would be immoral for me to hoard my money and allow my friend to suffer and possibly die.

Another serious objection to Singer's obligation to assist argument is that since the primary cause of poverty is overpopulation, helping the poor now would only cause more harm—it would ensure that there are more people born to live in poverty in the future. In its extreme form, says Singer, this objection recommends adoption of the policy of "triage"—a term used for medical policies during wartime. In accordance with this policy, the wounded, due to the limited number of doctors in relation to the number of casualties, were placed into three categories: those who are likely to survive without medical care; those who would probably survive if they received medical attention, but otherwise would not; and those who regardless of medical care probably would not survive. Only the wounded in the middle category were given medical assistance. It has been recommended that the same policy be applied to countries with regard to their prospects of becoming self-sustaining. In this way, aid would be given only to those countries in the middle; where the assistance would make a difference in bringing about a balance between food and population. Assistance to the other two categories (or

countries) would not be helpful. In essence, advocates of this view are suggesting that we refrain from assisting the people/countries in the other two categories—i.e., those people that are likely to survive without assistance and those who, regardless of assistance, would probably not survive. By so doing, proponents of this view would, according to Singer, basically be allowing the population of these countries to be curtailed by a rise in the death rate—that is, "by increased malnutrition and related diseases; by widespread famines; by increased infant mortality; and by epidemics of infectious diseases."[50]

The repugnance of the above view cannot be overstated. Though some writers have tried to reject this view by arguing that over-population is a myth, Singer attacks it within the context of consequentialist ethics. He argues that "[a] course of action that will certainly produce some benefit is to be preferred to an alternative course that may lead to a slightly larger benefit, but is equally likely to result in no benefit at all."[51] This calls to mind the saying "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The triage policy involves a certain great evil—population control by famine and disease. Millions of people will die if this policy is adopted. This option is weighed against a still greater evil—the same amount of misery happening many years later, but to a much greater number of people. However, before adopting such a policy, we need to ask: "How probable is this forecast that continued assistance now will lead to greater disasters in the future?"[52] How are we to know that the growth trend in population would not change in the future? Giving no assistance now may only make matters worse in the future. So it is better to help now

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[50] Singer, 237
[51] Ibid., 238.

and avoid tremendous misery (a certainty); than not help, and hope population growth will be checked in the future by death and misery (an uncertainty). Besides, as Singer points out, studies have shown that, as living standards rise, couples begin to have fewer children. They realize that to have the same number of children surviving to maturity they no longer need to have as many children as their parents had in the past. Also, as mentioned earlier, with the advancement of technology, attitudes about childbirth gradually change: more couples get into family planning; the farmer realizes that he no longer needs a lot of children to maintain his farm, and people have other interests like careers and other forms of entertainment. By giving assistance, rich countries can encourage governments of poor countries to implement programs that facilitate and encourage these trends.

Admittedly bringing about these changes will not be easy, especially when one has deep-seated cultural habits and traditions to contend with. As a citizen of a third world country, I know, and understand why, there are a lot of beliefs amongst people in third world countries regarding, nòt only the opportunity to have children, but also the number of children one has. In many African countries, children are considered to be a gift from God and, the more children that one has, the more blessed that person is. In fact, we have a saying in my beloved home country, Sierra Leone, that having one child does not provide the fulfillment of parenthood. Thus, the success of this approach cannot be guaranteed; but, as long as there is a possibility of success, the other alternative is unacceptable. As Singer himself states: "We cannot allow millions to die from starvation

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[52] Ibid., 239.

and disease when there is a reasonable probability that population can be brought under control without such horrors."[53]

In the light of the above, we need to consider what should be done about already over-populated countries who, for religious, nationalistic or cultural reasons, refuse to take the steps to lower their population or slow down its growth. Singer's view is that albeit rich countries have an obligation to reduce absolute poverty, they, however, are under no "obligation to make sacrifices that, to the best of [ones'] knowledge, have no prospect of reducing poverty in the long run."[54] Thus wealthy nations are not obligated "to assist countries whose governments have policies which will make [their] aid ineffective."[55] As harsh as this proposal may appear, I tend to agree with Singer. However, I do feel that one must not give up on the people who live in these countries. In many cases, the citizens of a nation may have views that are completely different from those of their government. Given the appropriate exposure and education they may change their ways. To date, most of the aid given to African countries has been food aid. If you continually feed a person, he or she is not going to make the effort to learn or try to provide for him/herself. Aid should be given on a case-by-case basis and must be designed to match the particular circumstances of the recipient country. This would require that the donor and recipient countries do their homework before aid is given. Thus, different types of aid would be required. Depending on the circumstances, some countries may require food aid, others technological assistance, others agricultural assistance, and others

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[53] Ibid., 240.
[54] Ibid., 241.
[55] Ibid.

educational assistance while some may need all of the above. Gary Hart in his essay "Foreign Aid Can Reduce Africa's Poverty" expresses a similar view. He says:

> Our aid efforts must respond to each country's particular economies and needs—which are as varied as the nations of Africa itself. Nigeria's problem of falling oil income and soaring food imports is far different from Zaire's problem of crumbling roads and impassable waterways. Each nation will require different solutions. We shouldn't build steel mills where the real challenge is better crops. We shouldn't send economists to nations that need agronomists.[56]

In the past, donor countries have had different motives/interests for giving aid, it is time that the interest of the recipient country becomes primary.

Other objections to Singer.

Before I end my discussion of Singer's article I need to take a quick look at two more objections to his obligation to assist argument. The first one is that his obligation to assist sets so high a standard that no one, except a saint, could attain it. Secondly, opponents of foreign aid have argued that governments of rich countries should take care of the poor at home first, before thinking about poverty in distant places. The first objection reminds me of what my mother used to tell me about my studies when I was younger: "If you work towards getting a B, you will not get a B but rather a C or lower. To get a B you must work towards an A." Yes, the standard of Singer's obligation to assist is a bit high, but the only way we can achieve our goal is not to compromise on standards. It is very easy to make a commitment but very difficult to keep it. Many times we make a commitment to give to the poor, but never do so, especially when the victims are so distant. At least, if we all attain three quarters of the standard set by

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[56] Gary Hart, "Foreign Aid Can Reduce Africa's Poverty," in *Problems of Africa: Opposing view points Series*, ed. David Bender, Bruno Leone & Janelle Rohr (Minnesota: Greenhaven Press, 1986), 50.

Singer's obligation to assist we would be able to alleviate a lot of suffering. The second objection adds to the difficulty of achieving the standards of the principle of obligation. We tend to help those who are closer to us; and many times, after doing so, we cannot or feel that it is not necessary to help those in distant places. "Few," Singer points out, "[can] stand by and watch a child drown; many can ignore a famine in Africa. But the question is not what we usually do, but what we ought to do, and it is difficult to see any sound moral justification for the view that distance, or community membership, makes a crucial difference to our obligations."[57] In an article titled, *Morality, Parents, and Children*, James Rachels[58] makes a proposal that finds a middle ground between doing nothing and Singer's somewhat extreme view. In my opinion, both authors recommend very similar courses of action. Though Rachels accepts the view of morality as impartiality, he tries to show that accepting this does not exclude our acceptance of special parental obligations. The two, he says, are compatible if we accept a partial bias view. Albeit he discusses only parental obligations to children, his conclusions can be applied to personal and nation-nation relationships in general. Thus, if one accepts his view we can find a way to balance our commitments/obligations to those close to us as opposed to distant people. Accepting the fact that we have a substantial obligation to be concerned about the welfare of all children; Rachels, nevertheless, notes that our own children come first—especially when considering similar needs. As an example he cites the choice between feeding one's own children versus feeding other children. In a case of similar needs like this, one may rightly feed one's own children first. However, if the "choice were between some relatively trivial thing [e.g. trendy toys] for your own and

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[57] Ibid., 232.

necessities for other children, preference should be given to helping the others."[59] As Rachels admits defining what "relatively trivial thing" means would be somewhat arbitrary. Depending on how seriously one takes the moral irrelevance of luck, the line could be drawn at different places. At least, we all would agree that buying trendy toys for one's children while others starve is indefensible. But what about getting a first class education? Or a nice car? Or nice/designer clothes? Are we justified in providing these for our children? In essence, what Rachels is saying is this: we may provide necessities for our own children first, but we are "not justified in providing them luxuries while other children lack necessities."[60] It is on this issue—defining that which is trivial as opposed to that which is a necessity—that I feel Rachels and Singer have very similar views. For Singer also, one has to define "what is of comparable moral significance."[61] In both cases, the definition given is fluid—depending on what the individual considers to be necessary or of comparable moral significance.

SECTION TWO

A Non-Consequential Argument for Aid

As mentioned in the introduction, Henry Shue, in his book *Basic Rights,* offers a non-consequential, rights based argument for aid.[62] I shall now take a look at the arguments

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[58] James Rachels, "Morality, Parents, and Children", in *Person to Person,* ed. George Graham & Hugh Lafolette. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

[59] Ibid., 59.

[60] Ibid., 60.

[61] It is noteworthy to mention that the recent publication of Singer's, mentioned earlier, seems to be a bit more specific on what he considers to be of comparable moral significance—"whatever money [we're] spending on luxuries, not necessities, should be given away." For a more realistic estimate—i.e., one Singer himself lives by—an article in *The New Yorker* (September 6, 1999), 53 states that Singer gives away twenty percent of his annual income, including royalties from his book *Practical Ethics.*

[62] Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy,* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980).

he puts forward for aid. Starting with a definition of rights in general and basic rights in particular, Shue states that a "right provides the rational basis for a justified demand. If a person has a particular right, the demand that the enjoyment of the substance of the right be socially guaranteed is justified by good reasons, and the guarantees ought, therefore, to be provided."[63] Furthermore, it is only when arrangements have been made for the bearers of a particular right to enjoy the right in question that it has been guaranteed. In the same way that the proclamation of a right does not constitute the fulfillment of a right, explains Shue, an undertaking to create social guarantees for the enjoyment of a right(s) by certain subjects is, in itself, not a guarantee of said rights. Included within the definition of rights is a subset of rights that specify the line beneath which no one should be allowed/forced to sink. This category of rights he calls basic rights. They are "... *everyone's* minimum reasonable demands upon the rest of humanity. They are the rational basis for justified demands the denial of which *no self-respecting person* can reasonably be expected to accept."[64](Emphasis mine) Basic rights are so important because they are essential to the enjoyment of all other rights, and it is this characteristic that distinguishes a basic right from other rights. Furthermore, explains Shue:

> When a right is genuinely basic, any attempt to enjoy any other right by sacrificing the basic right would be quite literally self-defeating, cutting the ground beneath itself. Therefore if a right is basic, other, non-basic rights may be sacrificed, if necessary, in order to secure the basic right. But the protection of a basic right may not be sacrificed in order to secure the enjoyment of a non-basic right. It may not be sacrificed because it cannot be sacrificed successfully. If the right sacrificed is indeed basic, then no right for which it might be sacrificed can actually be enjoyed in the absence of the basic right. The sacrifice would have proven self-defeating.[65]

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[63] *Basic Rights*, 13.
[64] Ibid., 19.
[65] Ibid.

There are two types of rights that meet Shue's criteria of basic rights: Security and Subsistence rights.

In justifying the former, Shue claims that without protection from rape, murder, beating etc., no one can fully enjoy any other right that has been protected by society. Also, due to the serious and widespread nature of such threats to physical security, they constitute one of the major hindrances to the enjoyment of any right. Thus, for the exercise of any other right, the physical security of individuals in any society must be protected. This is because "its absence would leave available extremely effective means for others, including the government, to interfere with or prevent the actual exercise of any other rights that were supposedly protected."[66] In regard to the latter (subsistence rights), he puts forward similar considerations. Without the essentials for a reasonable healthy and active life, no one can, if at all, fully enjoy any right that is protected by society. Like the debilitating effects caused by the violations of one's physical security, paucity in the means of subsistence can be quite incapacitating and painful as well. In both cases, the resulting damage or death prevents one from enjoying any rights. For instance, someone suffering from malnutrition or fever that causes severe brain damage, would be prevented from exercising any of his/her rights that require clear thought. Like brain injuries caused by assault, continues Shue, the effects of malnutrition or fever can profoundly disturb one's personality. In fact, he believes that preventing the deficiencies in the essentials for survival is probably more basic than preventing infractions of physical security. According to him:

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[66] Ibid., 21.

> People who lack protection against violations of their physical security can, if they are free, fight back against their attackers or flee, but people who lack essentials such as food, because of forces beyond their control, often can do nothing and are on their own utterly hopeless.[67]

As a point of illustration, Shue, in referring to subsistence, means unpolluted air and water, adequate food, clothing and shelter, and minimal preventive public health care. What he is trying to capture by the term "subsistence" is that everyone "is to have available for consumption what is needed for a decent chance at a reasonably healthy and active life of more or less normal length, barring tragic interventions."[68]

Shue is aware that most people would object to the priority he accords to subsistence rights. This objection, he believes, is due to the fact that it is often assumed that subsistence rights are positive and security rights are negative. He refutes this position by arguing that satisfaction of subsistence rights does not necessarily involve action that is any more positive than that required to fulfill security rights. Admitting that the distinctions between subsistence rights and security rights are not illusory, Shue does point out, though, that they "...are too fine to support any weighty conclusions, especially the weighty conclusion that security rights are basic and subsistence rights are not."[69] It is worthy to note that the argument he presents here can also be used against the libertarian objection to positive rights. He starts by first showing that security rights are not as negative as most people assume. For negative rights to be protected certain positive measures are required and, therefore, for their actual enjoyment positive measures are also required. It is clear that though an individual may personally refrain

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[67] Ibid., 25.
[68] Ibid., 23.
[69] Ibid., 37.

from violating someone's rights to physical security, it is impossible to protect anyone's rights to physical security without taking positive steps to put in place a system that protects everyone's rights. This would require taking/making payments—for example, taxes—to finance this system of protection. To guarantee a minimal amount of security, says Shue, any community would need a police force; criminal courts; penitentiaries; schools for training police, lawyers and guards. Also needed would be a huge system for the prevention, detection and punishment of infractions against personal security. Obviously, setting up such a system that ensures the security of individuals will be quite costly and does require positive contributions.

The above argument put forward by Shue may be substantiated by a similar argument presented by Stephen Holmes and Cass R. Sunstein, in their book *The Cost of Rights*.[70] A key to their argument is the classical legal maxim, "[w]here there is a right, there is a remedy."[71] In their view:

> Individuals enjoy rights, in a legal as opposed to a moral sense, only if the wrongs they suffer are fairly and predictably redressed by their government. This simple point goes a long way toward disclosing the inadequacy of the negative rights/positive rights distinction. What it shows is that all legally enforced rights are necessarily positive rights.

In other words, rights are costly because remedies are costly. Enforcing the law fairly and uniformly is, they argue, expensive, and without enforcement legal rights are hollow. Speaking of rights, for the most part, implies that there are correlative duties. The duties that are attached to rights, say Holmes and Sunstein, are taken seriously only when dereliction of duties are punished by the "public power" which is funded by the "public

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[70] Stephen Holmes and Cass Sunstein, *The Cost Of Rights: Why Liberty Depends on Taxes*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company).

purse."[72] This is to say that, "all rights are costly because all rights presuppose taxpayer funding of effective supervisory machinery for monitoring and enforcement."[73] Libertarians, as noted earlier, do realize the need for such an enforcement system and do allow—though at a minimal level—that taxes be paid to support the system. Though libertarians may agree with some of the points made above, they would, however, disagree with Shue when he tries to show that subsistence rights are more negative and less positive than they are normally said to be.

Shue argues that subsistence rights are much more complex than the term "positive" begins to indicate. The fulfillment of subsistence rights involves two different types of action. First, they involve "correlative duties" on the part of others to provide commodities or services for those who are unable to do so for themselves; for example, the wealthy financing food supplies and transportation for victims of famine or other natural disasters. In many cases, claims Shue, such positive action may not necessarily be more expensive than the effective protection of security rights would be. A food stamp program, he illustrates may be more or less expensive than an anti-drug program aimed at reducing muggings and murders by addicts. With this in mind, it is clear that any argument for the priority of "negative rights" which rests on the claim that securing them is cheaper or simpler than securing "positive rights" is unfounded. In Shue's words, such an argument "rests on an empirical speculation of dubious generality."[74] Secondly, the other type of action required to fulfill subsistence rights is, in his opinion, all the more

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[71] Ibid., 43.
[72] Ibid., 43.
[73] Ibid., 44.
[74] Ibid., 40.

difficult to distinguish from that required to fulfill security rights. In a good number of cases, all that is required is to protect the persons whose subsistence is threatened from the individuals or institutions that may be trying to harm them or prevent them from providing for themselves. In such cases no provision of commodities is required from others: "The request here is not to be supported but to be allowed to be self-supporting on the basis of one's own hard work."[75] The similarity between the protection required here and that required against assaults upon one's physical security is quite striking. Thus, the difference between protecting negative rights and positive rights, as supposed by libertarians and others, is debatable.

With this point settled, Shue comes to the conclusion that the distinction that ought to be made is between duties rather than rights. There are, he says, no one-to-one pairings between kinds of duties and kinds of rights; invariably, the fulfillment of the latter involves the performance of multiple kinds of duties. All of the duties must be performed (not necessarily by the same individuals or institutions) for the basic right to be fully honored. The following are the duties he outlines:

I. To avoid depriving.
II. To protect from deprivation
   1. By enforcing duty (I) and
   2. By designing institutions that avoid the creation of strong incentives to violate duty (I).
III. To aid the deprived
   1. Who are one's special responsibility,
   2. Who are victims of social failures in the performance of duties (I), (II-1), (II-2), and
   3. Who are victims of natural disasters.[76]

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 60.

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By showing that everyone has certain basic rights to which are attached certain duties, Shue is able to build a strong case for foreign aid. He goes on to consider some of the challenges that have been levied against subsistence rights. The objections and response he gives to them are quite similar to the ones we have already examined. I shall, therefore, refer to them only briefly. The first one he looks at is the objection that fulfilling subsistence rights now will lead to a "global population explosion" which would hurt the future poor. He says there are two senses in which this objection may be construed—a narrow and a broader sense. The narrower charge is that any attempt at fulfilling subsistence rights today would frustrate any hopes of fulfilling them in the future. Like the objection considered earlier, it is being argued here that provision of subsistence rights now would preserve thousands of lives which would make the population much greater in the future and all the more difficult to fulfill subsistence rights then. With the narrower population objection, the rights that would be frustrated in the future will be subsistence rights. For the broader version of this objection, the enjoyment of some rights in the future, but not necessarily subsistence, will be frustrated if we fulfill everyone's rights to subsistence now.

In response to the narrower objection, Shue asks the question "whether its implied cure [i.e., allowing some to die now by not protecting their subsistence rights] would be acceptable, even if its diagnosis were correct."[77] Quoting Thomas Nagel, Shue argues that it would be wrong for us to refuse to avoid a certain disaster now (i.e., allowing thousands to die of starvation) if this was not the only way we could avert a "greater and

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[77] Ibid., 97.

equally certain disaster in the future."[78] Shue believes that famine now is not the only way we can avoid famine later. There are other ways in which poor countries can control population growth that are compatible with protection of subsistence rights. Like the options Singer proposes, Shue also suggests that an improvement in living standards combined with programs of birth control can substantially slow down the growth of population. With these options available, the opponent of fulfilling subsistence rights who puts forward the narrower objection will be hard-pressed to show that no less horrible method than starvation now would be effective in reducing the rate of population growth.

Regarding the broader objection, the general idea, says Shue, is that there are so many poor people that the cost of assisting them all till they attain self-sufficiency is somewhat of an unfair burden to impose on the rich—the burden of providing for the poor may impoverish the rich. He dismisses this fear of impoverishing the affluent on two grounds: (a). The limits upon the absorptive capacity of recipient countries and individuals. Even if donor countries were willing and able to make unlimited transfers, the recipient nations would only be able to handle or accept (due to both physical and economic constraints) a limited number of transfers. (b). Attempts at aiding the poor also face obstacles from the governing elite in developing countries. Frequently, they are hostile or indifferent to the fulfillment of the basic rights of their citizens. I can attest to the truth of the point being made here by Shue. It is common knowledge amongst citizens of developing countries that, if the assistance that is being offered runs against the political or economic interests of the ruling elite in developing countries, the aid package is often rejected or

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[78] Ibid., 100.

disregarded. For example, it is known that in some African countries educational and other types of aid have been rejected because the ruling elite is unable (possibly because of the conditions imposed) to use it to their benefit—that is, securing it for their relatives or constituents only. Thus, many transfers that ought to be made are not in fact made. Based on these two points, it is clear, argues Shue, that the physical, economic and political constraints, as described above, impose limits on the size and rate of the transfers that could be made. Even if the transfers needed were enormous, the transfers that are actually made would not come close to engendering a significant sacrifice for the affluent of developed countries.

Moving now to the second objection, Shue says that it is argued that the provision of subsistence rights would likely impose "inordinate, if not unlimited" burdens on the wealthy. His response to the previous objection partly answers this one—fulfilling subsistence rights would not necessarily require extensive transfers from the wealthy to the poor, so much so that it reduces them to a level marginally better than subsistence. Instead of pursuing this issue further, he goes on, after establishing that the allocation of duties to avoid deprivation of subsistence is universal, to examine the extent of sacrifice we can reasonably expect from one person for the sake of another. The issue being discussed here is quite similar to Singer's principle of obligation and the line that Rachels draws between that which is trivial and that, which is important. According to Shue, "One is required to sacrifice, as necessary, anything but one's basic rights in order to honor the basic rights of others."[79] Using a grid he tries to show those actions which are permissible and those which are prohibited. Sacrificing one's basic rights for the

satisfaction of another person's preferences is an example of a prohibited action. In describing his position Shue says that:

> ...it is most unlikely that anyone would need to sacrifice anything other than preferences, to which one has no right of satisfaction and which are of no cultural value, in order to honor everyone's basic rights, provided everyone with the duty to make some sacrifice of preferences does so. But I believe too that in principle one could be required to sacrifice the enjoyment of cultural enrichments and even non-basic rights if, after everyone who ought to sacrifice preferences had done so, people still remained deprived of basic rights. No evidence suggests, however, that anything even approximating the sacrifice of all preferences is actually needed in order to aid all who are deprived of basic rights.[80]

With this description of his position completed, Shue offers a fundamental principle for the assignment of responsibility for the performance of duties that he calls the principle of priority:

> 1. the fulfillment of basic rights takes priority over all other activity, including the fulfillment of one's own non-basic rights.
> 2. the fulfillment of non-basic rights takes priority over all other activity except the fulfillment of basic rights, including the enrichment of culture and the satisfaction of one's own preferences; and
> 3. the enrichment of culture takes priority over the satisfaction of preferences in ways that do not enrich culture.[81]

Like Singer and Rachels, Shue limits the level of sacrifice. No one should sacrifice beyond his/her basic rights to help others. He, however, goes one step further to recommend, for the sake of fairness, that the performance of the duty to assist be made a legal obligation—this way, we would avoid some making more of a sacrifice than others. Though everyone has an obligation not to deprive others of subsistence, he suggests, as Singer and Rachels would agree, that the wealthy have a primary duty to assist the poor/deprived.

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[79] Ibid., 114.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., 118.

According to Paul Thompson, a rights theory that is applicable to policy making must fulfill two requirements:

> First, it must include an account of what human rights are and how conflicts among legitimate rights claims are to be adjudicated. Second, it must include an account of why this set of rights and rules for adjudication is morally authoritative.[82]

He reports that Mark Blitz and Rogers Smith are willing to accept that Shue's theory, by giving structure to decision making, does meet the first requirement. However, they find Shue's theory to be wanting as far as meeting the second requirement is concerned. In their opinion, Shue fails to "justify his philosophically sophisticated application of rights theory to food policy."[83] Shue, says Thompson, brings this criticism upon himself by claiming that a right is the rational basis for a justified demand and by admitting that he does not "know how to characterize in general and in abstract what counts as a rational basis or a rational justification."[84] In Shue's defense, however, Thompson argues that this criticism of Shue by Blitz and Smith is unfair. Contra Blitz and Smith, Thompson tries to show that Shue's theory is justified by applying a constructivist strategy to ethics and political philosophy.[85] Recognizing that we are within a historical situation in which rights claims are very important in our understanding of duty, entitlement and obligation; Thompson says that we see that such words (duty, entitlement etc.) become meaningful only when "one accepts or adopts a comprehensive view or account of normative

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[82] Paul Thompson, *The Ethics of Aid and Trade*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 134.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., 135.
[85] Before doing this Thompson describes how philosophical constructivism justifies the use of abstract terms, like 2+2=4, that appear to have no natural referent. The process described here is somewhat akin to the coherence theory of truth.

phenomena in which these concepts are mutually supporting."[86] If this is the case, a "particular structure of rights claims (the lexical ordering of Shue's pyramid) is justified when one shows its capacity (1) to guide action and (2) to achieve a coherent statement of the scope and force of morality."[87] It is clear from the outline Shue gives of our duties and obligations to one another as well as the limits to the claims we can make of one another that his theory is, based on the above criteria, justified.

Other Views Against Aid.

So far, all the pro-aid theorists examined have presented a formidable case for aid to the poor. We shall now take a look at other views. All the theorists we examined wrote on the morality of aid—whether we have an obligation to assist on not. The theorists I want to take a look at now question the existing aid program itself. I feel it is important to examine these views because, if one is going to argue for an aid program, one must be aware of the successes or failures of the international aid program offered to date. If the aid program has so far been nothing but a failure, one would need to re-think advocating an aid program or try to discover what has caused the aid program to be a failure and try correct the past mistakes.

Karl Borgin and Kathleen Corbett in their book, *The Destruction of a Continent: Africa and International Aid*[88], criticize the direction the aid program has taken. Instead of being a temporary measure meant to assist the undeveloped world during a period of

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[86] Thompson, 136.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Karl Borgin and Kathleen Corbett, *The Destruction of a Continent: Africa and International Aid*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1982).

transition, it has become, they say, "a permanent institution and an everlasting system."[89]

This intention, they say, was clearly spelled out by a 1980 report from the Independent Commission on Development Issues. Referring to the advocates of aid as the "aid fanatics of the west and the greedy countries of the third world," they claim that both groups have come together to formulate another concept—the new international economic order (NIEO). As a result of this concept, "millions of people in the industrialized West will forever work in order to transfer huge sums of money, large amounts of goods, and other forms of resources without any form of compensation or repayment to the developing countries."[90] Borgin and Corbett accuse the developing countries of using retaliatory measures—from cutting of exports of raw materials to restricting imports—to blackmail the West to comply with their demands. They argue that there are neither moral nor practical reasons for continuing the transfer of large sums of money indefinitely. Any attempt, they argue, to justify this transfer of resources by pointing to the fact that the world's resources are not evenly distributed and that redistribution is required, is unfounded. Such claims fail to recognize that the wealthy nations of the West did not come to have these large national resources as a result of luck (in the natural lottery), but rather due to "hard work, intelligent planning, and a sound political and economic system."[91] They see no justification then for "the transfer of resources to countries where hard work is unknown, where all the planning is in chaos, and where the political and economic systems prevent development, as is true of most countries in Africa."[92]

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[89] Ibid., 57.
[90] Ibid., 50.
[91] Ibid., 54.
[92] Ibid.

Borgin and Corbett point out that we must first understand why some countries are more developed and wealthier than others before we can figure out a way for the "backward and poor" countries to be led on the road to development and a reasonable amount of wealth. Because, as mentioned earlier, nature did not endow the advanced countries of the North with resources that are freely available, the hard work and planning that they had to embark on to attain their wealth must also be carried out by the poor countries of the South. Without the protection of a similar political climate that prevailed in the advanced nations during their growth and development, Borgin and Corbett ask the following question of poor countries: "How can one expect a rapid development in Africa when the existing political and economic systems are characterized by inefficiency, chaos, incompetence, corruption, instability, power struggle, upheavals, revolutions, and suppression of millions of people?"[93] In transferring technology and agriculture to African nations, Borgin and Corbett believe that aid advocates failed to take into consideration the significance of the human factor. As a result of this, they claim that both past and current efforts by aid organizations to make such transfers were, and are futile. It is apparent from their argument that the futility of these efforts will continue because (1), African and other poor nations have yet to prove that they also have the power of accomplishment that made the North what it is today; (2), the international bureaucracy, in spite of the evidence that the present aid program(s) do not work, would still maintain the "aid syndrome" for no other reason than to "retain the jobs of tens of thousands of bureaucrats holding positions paid for by international taxes."[94]

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[93] Ibid., 58.
[94] Ibid., 66.

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The above pessimistic picture of the foreign aid program painted by Borgin and Corbett does not help my pro-aid position at all. If the prevailing conditions in Africa do not, as they say, augur well for the industrialization and development of the continent, common sense would dictate that no nation should "waste" its resources on aid programs in Africa when they could be put to better use helping the poor citizens of donor nations. Doing this, they might argue, would be much like parents who, instead of feeding their hungry children at home, waste their money supporting drug addicts and alcoholics who they know will not put the money to good use. Such an action would not only be wrong but also immoral. As a citizen of a developing nation, my first inclination would be to hurl the following accusations at Borgin and Corbett: bias, ethnocentrism, prejudice, racism, cruelty and lack of objectivity. However, as an objective and disinterested thinker, I would want to concede to some truth to their argument. A number of African nations are guilty of abuse and misuse of aid resources. The corruption and mismanagement prevalent in some of these countries is indisputable. Be that as it may, this does not mean that we should give up on the innocent citizens of these nations. In many cases, they have no say or control over their government and its choices. I can hear either Corbett or Borgin objecting that a people deserve the government that they chose. It is true, one must admit, that, by allowing their politicians to get away with their dishonest deeds, citizens of poor countries are partners in the deterioration and destruction of their continent. However, if the required conditions—an educated and informed citizenry—are not prevalent, one should not fault the citizens of a nation for making the wrong political choices as far as their representatives are concerned.

Though Corbett and Borgin argue that the advanced nations have not attained their wealth as a result of luck in the natural lottery, they fail to take into consideration the social lottery. As they themselves acknowledge, the human factor necessary to facilitate growth and development in Africa is absent. They fail to recognize that for Africa to produce the great minds that would generate this growth, the environment must be conducive. The environment does impact the productivity or potential of a child who is born with the gift of intelligence. If he or she is born in an environment that does not nurture this gift, the child may not grow up to be the genius he/she might have been if born in a better environment. Thus, though Corbett and Borgin do not recognize this, the social lottery does negatively impact poor countries. Not as many children born in poor countries, where educational and other facilities are almost non-existent (as opposed to wealthy nations), grow up to be great minds that make a considerable contribution to their economy. Further, due to the poor conditions under which they live, the average citizen, if he/she actually has the opportunity to cast a vote, will vote for the candidate who fulfills his/her *present* basic needs—food, clothing, shelter. (Here I am referring to the bribes and gifts that political leaders are commonly known to hand out to their constituents in order to secure their votes.) What the candidate is likely to do in the future is not necessarily a primary concern. Their existing needs (i.e., of citizens born in poor countries) are, for the most part, more important; tomorrow will take care of itself. At the same time too, one must recognize that the donor countries are also not totally blameless in this equation. Donor countries have been known to transfer huge sums of money without adequate monitoring to help finance a project in developing countries. In

the instances when this was done, the project for which the money was transferred, on many occasions, was not embarked on or was partially completed because most of the funds were misappropriated. As the saying goes in my country, "one should never entrust cheese to the care of a rat." In this context, this means that if someone is dishonest or has been guilty of dishonest actions in the past, you do not put in his/her custody items or resources that he/she would steal/misuse. This is why, together with Singer, I call for the revision of the current practice or way the aid program is conducted. Conditions that require the recipient country to reform its practices and institutions, as is done today, are a step in the right direction, but this alone will not suffice. More needs to be done. Besides, the changes that are required should not be made solely on the part of the recipient country; donor countries also need to change their approach and conduct of foreign aid programs. Abandoning the aid program now, as Borgin and Corbett seem to suggest, without attempts at reform, is, I believe, premature.

Aside from the criticisms levied against the direction and futility of the aid program, the program has also been criticized for the pernicious effect it has had on Africa. George B.N. Ayittey, in the eighth chapter of his book, *Africa in Chaos*, criticizes the impact the foreign aid program has had on Africa.[95] The criticism he offers may be used to mount a strong argument against western aid to Africa. He starts his argument with a quotation from David Karanja, a former Kenya Member of Parliament:

> Foreign aid has done more harm to Africa than we care to admit. It has led to a situation where Africa has failed to set its own pace and direction of development free of external interference. Today, Africa's development plans are drawn thousands of miles away in the corridors of the IMF and World Bank. What is sad is that the IMF and World Bank

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[95] George B.N. Ayittey, *Africa in Chaos*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

"experts" who draw these development plans are people completely out of touch with the local African reality.[96]

He argues that it is indisputable that Western aid to Africa has been ineffective. Not only has much of the investment between 1960 and 1980 disappeared without a trace, but also the African countries that received the most aid—Somalia, Liberia, and Zaire—have delved into virtual anarchy. Quoting representatives Benjamin Gilman and Lee Hamilton, Ayittey cites Zaire under Mobutu as one of the most outrageous examples of the waste and misuse of U.S. assistance resources. The nearly $1.5 billion in aid assistance that the U.S. gave to Mobutu, helped him in becoming one of the world's richest individuals, while his people became pauperized. Though, after the Cold War, attempts were made to overhaul Western foreign policy objectives by placing greater emphasis on the "promotion of democracy, respect for human rights, better governance, transparency, and accountability," Ayittey argues that not much changed. "It was business as usual."[97] All the attempts at economic reform that promised to restore foreign capital investment have, so far, only increased Africa's dependency on foreign aid. He complains that in spite of all the praises Western governments sang about the virtues of democracy, most of them did nothing to aid and establish it in Africa. With a sense of resolution Ayittey points out that Western governments, still "wedded to old colonial paradigms," are yet to grasp the full import of current events in Africa. This changes the dynamics of the struggle in Africa:

> The struggle being waged now is for the second liberation of Africa. The "enemies" this time around are primarily "internal": black neocolonialists, crocodile liberators, military coconutheads, Swiss bank socialists, grasping kleptocrats, vampire elites, gaping sycophants, and intellectual prostitutes. In short, scoundrels, whose ruling ethic is self-aggrandizement and self-

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[96] Ibid., 275.
[97] Ibid., 277.

perpetuation in power. They care not an iota about their people or their country, only about themselves.[98]

The most annoying thing about this situation in Africa, he argues, is that the donor agencies are aware of these leaders' motivations and activities; yet they consider these same African politicians and governments as partners in development. As a result, they continue to support these governments financially, and this "infusion of cash strengthens corrupt ruling classes and encourages the continuation of disastrous socialist policies. Thus, the World Bank [and other donor agencies] becomes, in effect, the partner of corrupt, repressive, oppressive, often brutal regimes."[99] Ayittey is of the opinion that a good part of the repression, corruption, and destruction of African economies that occurred could have been avoided, or at least tempered, if western donor organizations, like the World Bank, had taken a stand and insisted on signing agreements with only democratic countries and those at peace. He compares the relationship between Western donors and African governments to that of a battered spouse. "She cannot make up her mind whether to leave or stay with the marriage. She might stay, hoping that she can change the abusive husband, which is to no avail. Western governments naively assume that diplomatic talk or gestures can influence African despots."[100]

On the first reading, the analogy that Ayittey uses here seems to conflict with the argument he is trying to present. If the relationship between Western donors and African governments is truly as he describes; one would draw from this analogy that the Western

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[98] Ibid., 278.
[99] Ibid., 279.
[100] Ibid., 280.

donors have, in spite of the abuse, been supportive of African governments and trying to bring about a change in them. The picture we draw from his words here seem to be quite different from his earlier claim that "they [Western governments] did little to aid and establish it [i.e., democracy] in Africa."[101] However, after a closer look, it is clear that he is not criticizing Western countries for not giving any kind of support; what he questions is how and to whom they gave support. Western governments have bailed out both corrupt and despotic governments alike. By so doing, they did nothing to help the move towards democracy in African nations. It is his view that if they (i.e., Western governments) are not going to help pro-democracy groups, "they should at least be fair, neutral, and consistent."[102] Instead of applying one standard (zero tolerance for repressive and undemocratic nations) to all African nations, official Western approach to democratization, says Ayittey, "has been marked by blatant inconsistencies and doublespeak."[103] As an example he cites Britain's condemnation of military governments and its objection to getting involved with any. Yet, a 1994 report from the British high commission in Sierra Leone recorded that the people of Sierra Leone had been informed by a senior British diplomat, David MacLennan, that the British government was prepared to offer a military adviser to assist the then military government of Sierra Leone in its war against the country's rebels.

As disheartening as the points made by Ayittey are, anyone familiar with the situation in many African countries cannot but agree with him. The problems of African governments that he cites have haunted me for many years. The easy way out for many

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[101] See p. 75.
[102] Ayittey, 281.

theorists writing on Africa is to blame Western powers. This, I believe, would not resolve our problems in Africa. I am not saying here that the Western nations are blameless; however, I have no doubt that even if they were fair and consistent, as Ayittey recommends, the problems we face in the continent will persist. Nothing short of a revolution in the minds of Africans and our leaders can lead us on the road to recovery. Bribery and corruption has become a way of life for most people in many African nations. Those with an ounce of integrity face the constant challenge of having to compromise their principles. A concerted effort to work together for the good of our nation (or continent as a whole), together with a change in the organization of the aid program, is the only way to halt the present downward spiral to destruction.

Conclusion

We have, in this essay examined several views on the international aid program. At this point, it is safe for one to admit that while the aid program in itself is a good thing, many changes are required. Based on our analysis, it is clear that the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted at the beginning of this chapter ring true today as they did back in the sixties. His call to action that the "time has come for an all-out world war against poverty" is long overdue.[104] The eradication of preventable poverty is still one of the grave moral imperatives of our time. "The rich nations must use their vast resources of wealth to develop the underdeveloped, school the unschooled and feed the unfed."[105] Though attempts have been made to answer his call, they have, due to unequal playing fields, fallen short of the required standard. An international aid program that would

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[103] Ibid.
[104] M.L. King, 178.

result in the mutual benefit of both parties with the *interest* of the recipient country being primary is required. I emphasize interest because the type of relationship/program required *must* have a good outcome for the disadvantaged or recipient country. It is obvious that the donor countries do reap a lot of benefit from the international aid program; otherwise it would not have been created or exist today. According to Chiaka, the benefit to donor countries goes beyond the thousands of personnel that are hired by aid organizations. He quotes the words of a former United States Aid official:

> The biggest single misconception about aid programs is that we send money abroad. We don't. Aid consists of American equipment, raw materials, expert services and food—all provided for specific development projects which we ourselves review and approve. Ninety three percent of AID funds are spent directly in the United States to pay for these things.[106]

A similar admission he reports was also made by a former British Minister of overseas Development: "About two-thirds of our aid is spent on goods and services from Britain... trade follows aid. We equip a factory overseas and later on we get orders for spare parts and replacements.... Aid is in [our] long-term interests."[107] The importance of aid to developing countries needs no mention. If the aid program can be to the benefit of both parties, we need to come up with ways to make this a reality and not just a possibility.

Based on the above analysis, it may be safe to conclude that the aid program has, thus far, *truly* been to the benefit of just one party—probably just the donor countries. At the same time too, it is arguable that one should not expect the donor countries to aid poor countries without expecting anything in return. However, one must expect that the poor countries are not to be made any worse by their supposed assistance. African nations

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Chiaka, 102.

need to come to a realization that the American saying that there is no such thing as a free lunch is very true. Instead, of misusing the assistance offered and then blame someone else, we should seize the opportunity to better our countries. It is true that, in the past, donor countries have primarily had in mind their own political, economic or military interests when offering assistance. As a result, the transfers have been made in ways that do not benefit the African nations per se—for example offering aid to despots who end up squandering the money with nothing to show for it. However, the culprits here were Africans; Africans who cared not about their country or people, but only about themselves. Change then, needs to come from both fronts, the donor and recipient. With the latter, the onus is on "the talented tenth" to educate the masses and set the course to recovery.[108] So far, many of them have been part of the problem and not the solution. It is quite common to hear of highly educated individuals committing atrocious acts against the economy and their kinsmen. With regard to the former, it is clear that Western governments must be more consistent and forthright in their dealings with Africa. It has been argued by some theorists that it is the intention of Western countries to keep recipient nations dependent for a long time. This is why, it is alleged, the aid program is not designed to help African nations attain self-sufficiency. According to Ahmad Abubakar, the aim of donors is to "promote market economies and dependence so that LDCs [less developed countries] will remain, at least for a long time, suppliers of raw materials and markets for manufactures of the industrial world; and through military and

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[107] Ibid., 103.

[108] Here I borrow a term used by W.E.B. Dubois in *The Souls of Black Folk*, (Signet Classic, 1969) to refer to the few educated Negros in the 19th century. This term is in keeping with his belief that "Progress in human affairs is more often a pull than a push, a surging forward of the exceptional man, and the lifting of his duller brethren slowly and painfully to his vantage-ground."

political aid to create dependence, with recipients of necessity becoming subservient."[109]

Even if this is true, African nations must take whatever is beneficial in the international aid program and utilize it to their advantage. In our criticism of the international aid program, we must be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water. Aid must not be totally rejected.

Abubakar offers three value-revealing analogies for the purpose of aid. He compares aid to that of a child, a sick person and a very old person. A description of the first example would suffice. When a child is born it is incapable of sitting, walking and feeding itself. The latter activity is absolutely necessary for its survival. However, as it grows and time goes by, the baby is taught by its parent or guardian how to perform these activities and also how to speak and learn. Eventually, the child grows up to be a self-reliant man or woman, which would not have been possible without the aid of his/her parents or guardians. Similarly, countries that are in the developing stage do need assistance till they become self-reliant. In light of this, he also feels that aid should be accepted provided we carefully control such things as the conditions (or strings), type or limits. These are controls that I, for the most part, endorse. Granting that aid is hardly offered without strings attached, he recommends that aid "should be accepted with very minimal commercial strings but not at all with military or political strings."[110] It is essential, he says, that LDCs avoid military and political strings because, unlike the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, they do not have a sufficiently strong industrial capacity that affords them the political clout to resist the political hegemony of the United States and

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[109] Ahmad Abubakar, *Africa and the Challenge of Development: Acquiescence and Dependency VS. Freedom and Development* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1989).

the Soviet Union. Abubakar's recommendation that LDCs avoid political conditions is the point on which I disagree with him. I disagree because a position such as his needs to be qualified. I say yes, to his position, but only under favorable conditions. I do believe that, under circumstances of human rights abuse, political conditions are necessary, even to the point where sovereignty is almost compromised. By conditions, I am referring to those imposed by donor countries that force the recipient country to make domestic changes. For example, an aid recipient may be granted aid on the condition that the next election be free and fair and fought on a democratic platform. Many of our leaders have not demonstrated that they can responsibly and successfully embark on economic or other projects. I therefore feel that it is necessary that the donor country monitors and oversees any projects that it finances. The days when African leaders could be trusted are long gone. I am not suggesting any form of paternalism here—in the sense that the donor tells the recipient what is good for her. A body of professional Africans and other knowledgeable individuals can be set up to conduct feasibility studies before any project is embarked on. This way only projects that are specific to and are designed for the African condition would, hopefully, be launched. In addition, a closely monitored checks and balance system must be established to avert any misappropriation of funds. Secondly, the type of aid project, says Abubakar, must be carefully selected. This should be limited to "technical assistance in training for technicians in various fields, in research, science, technology, and mathematics. In sum, the training should be in areas that will build or enhance the productive capacities of the recipients."[111] He cautions that recipient countries will, in light of the paucity in appropriate technical knowledge, face problems

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[110] Ibid., 102.
[111] Ibid.

of maintenance, if aid is given to finance projects other than training. Third, limits should be set for aid. It must not go on indefinitely nor for too long. This is because a prolonged aid program will be (1) "enervating and transform the recipient into a subservient country"; and (2), this in turn would be counterproductive in attaining its objective—the recipient attaining self-reliance.[112]

It is clear then, that the aid program need not be abandoned. It only means that some adjustments or changes are required from both the recipient and donor. The onus, though, for the success of both the aid program and the development and industrialization of the African continent is on the African. No one but the African can achieve this. "Just as no person would develop his neighbor's home unless he could lay claim to it, so also no country will develop another one unless it will have substantial, if not absolute, control over it."[113] It is never too late to embark on the road to recovery; and the first step in that direction is by mustering a strong leadership that is committed to change and development and putting together a competent administration. Most African nations have individuals who are not lacking in these qualities, if only some of those who have been corrupted can change their ways.

With our evaluation of the international aid program and its justification complete, it is appropriate that we take a detailed look at the effect it has had on a particular country. The next chapter will be dedicated to a case study.

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., 102-103.

CHAPTER THREE

A CASE STUDY:

SOMALIA

Like most people in the United States and Western
Europe, I've heard the pleas of aid organizations and
boasts of their accomplishments in the Third World, but
the Africa I know today is in much worse shape than it
was when I first arrived. The futures of Africa's children
are less hopeful than ever before. The countries that
received the most aid—Somalia, Liberia, and Zaire—have
slid into virtual anarchy. Another large recipient, Kenya,
inflicts unspeakable abuses of human rights on their own
citizens while aid pays the bills.[1]

After an ethical evaluation of the foreign aid program or the need to assist, it is

instructive that we examine the impact or effect of aid in an African country. My choice

of country is Somalia. Somalia, I believe, is paradigmatic because, amongst Sub-Saharan

African countries, it has received probably the most aid—humanitarian, developmental as

well as military aid. Though the ravaging effects of aid are more apparent in Somalia, it

is not alone when the topic of aid and its impact on third world countries is raised. For

many African societies and economies the impact of aid has also been quite corrosive.

As the above quote from a former USAID official demonstrates, many African countries,

especially those that received the most aid, have had to contend with the negative effects

of aid. However, as mentioned in Chapter Two, I must emphasize that the idea of an aid

program in itself is not bad, it is the execution and management of the program that has

made it a contributing factor to the decay of some African countries. The fact that there

have been some successes, as in Botswana, is witness to this point. As the case study

unfolds, the conclusions of Chapter Two—that the aid program needs to be revised and

that the burden of responsibility and blame is shared by both donor and recipient—will be

reinforced. Though my analysis focuses primarily on Somalia, some of the conclusions

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[1] Michael Maren, *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*, (New

drawn here—for example, that the aid program, *as it is*, for the most part, does more harm than good by fostering corruption and the break down of indigenous systems of food production and coping with food shortages—ring true for many other African countries. Somalia is just a slightly more extreme case of how aid works elsewhere in Africa. Though not all of them have been devastated by civil war, many other big recipients of aid in Africa have fared no better than Somalia.

Ever since the first shipments of aid (specifically food aid) to Somalia, we have witnessed the gradual decay of Somalian society and the destruction of its indigenous methods of coping with food shortages. It is, no doubt, safe to presume that such methods of coping with shortages were already prevalent before the first shipments of aid to Africa. This is because droughts and famines, as we know, are not new to the continent. It is therefore obvious that to ensure the preservation of their society some kind of system must have been developed by Africans to deal with the food shortages resulting from them, i.e., droughts and famines. According to Michael Maren, who wrote an insightful and highly critical book—*The Road to Hell*—on the foreign aid program, most African countries, up to twenty-five years ago, had developed such a system.[2] Somalia in particular, he claims, had a well-established mutual insurance system for dealing with its regular cycles of drought and famine. In times of good harvests, farmers in the river valley stored their grain in secure underground vaults. When drought threatened the nomads, they exchanged the animals that were likely to die for this grain. He states that though the nomads did not have a very high opinion of the sedentary

York: The Free Press, 1997), 11.
[2] Ibid., 21.

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farmers, they encouraged the barter system with their generosity because they knew their lives might one day depend on the farmers and their relationship with them.[3] Thus, before the first aid shipment, there was some kind of mutual insurance system that worked. All this was destroyed when tons of economic and disaster relief aid were dumped into Somalia and the people of this nation became dependent on aid, thus transforming Somalia into "the Graveyard of aid."[4] Does this mean that the donor countries should have stood by and done nothing to alleviate the suffering of the Somalis? If giving aid is going to do more harm than good, common sense dictates (and utilitarians would also attest to this) that it should not be given. However, I would not jump to such a conclusion till we look more closely at the facts and the events as they occurred in Somalia. By the end of this case study I hope to show that the provision of aid was not necessarily bad; rather it was the international community's (here I am primarily referring to those countries and organizations that were active in Somalia from the seventies to the early nineties) failure to see that timing was of the essence in Somalia and that aid is not given in a vacuum—the political situation must always be considered before any type of aid (whether disaster, humanitarian or economic) is given. If need be, political considerations must first be addressed before any aid is provided.

At this point, it is fitting that I give a very brief historical background to Somalia. The people of Somalia, hardly regarded as a large nation, number between four to five million. They occupy a territory of "almost 400,000 square miles in the north-east

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[3] Ibid.
[4] George B.N. Ayittey, *Africa in Chaos*, (New York: St Martins Press, 1998), 284.

corner, or 'Horn', of the continent [Africa] facing Arabia."[5] Somalia lies in the area between southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya, surrounded in the eastern and northern parts of the country by the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Eden, respectively. The Somali population is made up of clan-families, which, in turn, are divided into lineages and dia groups. "The dia is the smallest, most unified, viable and stable unit" to which the individual has his primary loyalty and obligations.[6] The Somalis are divided into six clan families: the Darod, Dir, Isaak, Hawiye, Digil, and Rahaniin.[7] According to Samuel Makinda, Somalia is the only sub-Saharan African country comprised of one ethnic group—the Hamitic ethnic group.[8] This, I believe, makes the devastation of the early nineties, when clans and lineages turned against each other, all the more shocking. Eighty percent of the population is nomadic and depends for its livelihood on camels, sheep and goats.

Nine years after the people of Somalia gained independence from both Britain and Italy (under the tutelage of the UN) in 1960, Major-General Mohammed Siyad Barre usurped power from the government of Prime Minister Ibrahim Egal. Under Barre's twenty-one year rule, corruption became rampant and public institutions were abused and weakened. According to Makinda, the roots of anarchy in Somalia lay in Barre's (repressive and exploitative) policies of the 1970s and 1980s. "He maintained power often by suppressing critics, detaining opponents, and playing on clan interests and rivalries, and

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[5] I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1988), 1.
[6] *Africa Today*, 1338
[7] Ibid.
[8] Samuel M. Makinda, *Seeking Peace from Chaos: Humanitarian Intervention in Somalia*, (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 11.

occasionally by buying out opposition groups with cash."[9] In the last years of Barre's regime near anarchic conditions existed side by side with a dictatorship. His final defeat and expulsion on January 1991 only served to accelerate the devastation and disintegration of Somalia.

Prior to, but especially during Barre's regime, several nations and organizations gave aid to Somalia. However, three countries had a major impact on Somalia—The United States, Italy and the Soviet Union. The United Nations also offered several tons of disaster relief aid to Somalia. However, it acted mostly under the auspices of the United States, so I will discuss the UN together with the U.S. Since Soviet assistance was mostly military, I shall discuss it first and very briefly. Soviet assistance and influence in Somalia was primarily a product of the Cold War. One can safely assume that if it were not for superpower rivalry in Africa in general and the Horn in particular the Soviets may not have had any impact or influence in this region. Be that as it may, Soviet assistance, though limited (in the sense that it was primarily military), had a lasting impact on Somalia. Without the arms supplied and the support given by the Soviet Union (SU), Siad Barre may have been unsuccessful in the twenty-two year oppression of his own people that plunged this African nation into a convulsive civil war after his ouster. Thus, Soviet assistance played a cardinal role in engendering the devastation that took place in Somalia.

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[9] Ibid., 17.

Section I – Soviet Union

It is a fact that the overriding interest of the superpowers in Somalia was not primarily to help the people of Somalia, but to pursue their own global and regional agendas. (Somalia was of strategic importance to the superpowers—it was located near the oil-rich Middle East.) During the Cold War, the rivalry between the U.S. and the SU gave the government of Somalia some leverage, through which it obtained a considerable amount of economic and military assistance.[10] The unfortunate thing is that the Barre government did not put this assistance to good use; instead, Barre and his benefactors, possibly out of greed or their personal political agenda, used it to destroy his people and country. According to Samuel Makinda, the assistance first came from the Soviet Union and later from the United States.[11] The former, he says, "established a foothold in the Horn in the early 1970's, when it built a sophisticated naval base at the port of Berbera in Somalia."[12] This Soviet installation included "a dry dock, missile handling and storage facilities, a communications station, a large fuel storage facility, and a 15,000-foot runway capable of accommodating large Soviet aircraft."[13] The Soviets also provided military experts and helped build and train the Somali army. Within a decade, the army grew by 175 percent, which also increased the cost of maintaining it by over 600 percent.[14] At the height of the Soviet-Somali friendship, Makinda reports that Somalia had the best equipped armed forces in Sub-Saharan Africa. By the mid 1970s the Somali

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[10] Ibid., 51.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., 52.
[14] Ahmed Qassim Ali, "The Foreign Factor In the Somali Tragedy," in *Mending Rips in the Sky: Options for Somali Communities in the 21st Century*, ed. Hussein M. Adam and Richard Ford (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, Inc. 1997), 540.

army was estimated to have "more than 250 tanks, more than 300 armored personnel carriers, and over 52 fighter planes."[15]

For a developing country such as Somalia, one would question the wisdom of such assistance provided by the Soviets. In what way, one may ask, would arms and instruments of destruction help a developing country? It is obvious that the Barre government and the Soviets were only concerned about their own interest, not those of Somalia and its people. The relationship here was one of mutual benefit—the Soviets got their naval base, which enhanced their presence and influence in the Horn, whereas Siad Barre got the instruments he needed to control and oppress his people. Surely, not for a moment, in considering and pursuing their goals and objectives, did the parties involved stop and think about the impact and moral implications of their actions. Though the Soviets were aware that they were giving economic and military assistance to a "government at war with its own people" they continued to do so in spite of the atrocities committed by Siyad Barre's supporters. The appalling thing is that the Soviets withdrew from Somalia, not because they realized that what they were doing was wrong, but because they had an opportunity to move to "greener pastures" across the border, Ethiopia. (Actually, the decision to switch alliances was not totally up to the Soviets—in his attempt to forge closer relations with the United States, Siyad Barre expelled them.)

As a parenthetical remark, this is one of the reasons why realists have argued that morality has no place in international relations/politics. In international politics, they argue, a nation's primary concern is and should be its national interest. In defense of the

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[15] Makinda, 57.

Soviets, one may argue that that is exactly what they were doing in Somalia—safeguarding their national interest. Contra the realists, one may also argue that if it is wrong for person (A) to give a gun to a person (B) who person (A) knows is going to use it to terrorize innocent people, then it was also wrong for the Soviets to supply Siyad Barre with arms when they knew he was using them to oppress his people. Considering this latter fact, i.e., that the Soviets were aware that Barre used the arms they supplied him to oppress his people, one may contend that the Soviets failed in their (moral) deliberation to consider the interests of Somalia and its people. Presuming that the Soviets did engage in moral deliberation about their actions/activity in Somalia, their continued support of Siyad Barre, in spite of the atrocities he committed, reveals that they (i.e., the Soviets) did not consider the Somalis to be members of the moral community whose interests ought to be taken into account in moral decision-making.

On the economic front also, Soviet assistance had catastrophic consequences for Somalia. Ahmed Qassim Ali reports that Soviet experts from *Gosplan* (i.e., State Planning) took over the planning institutions of Somalia and produced an economic disaster.[16] They tried to institute "an economy based on state farms, state factories, nationalization of trade, banks and businesses which contributed to further debt in the country."[17] By the time the Soviets crossed the border, says Ali, "Somalia was left with an external debt equal to more than half of its GNP, which at that time was around $1.2 billion."[18] Soviet activity and influence in Somalia may not have directly caused the destruction and decay of Somalia but it, at least, provided the fuel for the fire. The abundance of armaments in

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[16] Ahmed Qassim Ali, 540.
[17] Ibid.

anarchic Somalia, made possible by the Soviets, played a major role because the arms transformed the magnitude, direction, and intensity of the civil war. Admittedly, one may point out that the abundance of arms in Somalia was a legacy of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry in the Horn. The Soviets had no way of knowing that the future would lead to such devastation and the arms they gave to Barre would play a major role. This, however, does not absolve them of blame. I believe that the Soviets, aware of the role their assistance to Barre was playing in the crisis, should have acted responsibly and taken the initiative to prevent or, at least, stop the destruction of Somalia. Though the U.S. also vied for influence in the Horn and also supplied the Barre regime with arms, the difference between the two superpower rivals is that the U.S. at least tried, in 1972, to clean up the mess it left behind.

Section II - Italy

Turning now to Italy, we see that unlike the US and the Soviet Union, Italy was a former colonial power in Somalia. It remained an unwavering and devoted ally of Siyad Barre through out his dictatorial regime and even when other Western countries turned their backs on him. Italy therefore played a unique and influential role in the political, economic and military support of Barre's dictatorial regime. Qassim Ali recalls that, as a colonial power, Italy occupied Somalia up until 1941 and then returned again when it was sent by the UN to prepare Somalia for its independence as a UN trusteeship.[19] Following its independence, particularly after 1963 when the Republic severed diplomatic ties with the UK, Italy was dominant and very influential in the political life of Somalia. Though

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 542.

the Italian-Somali relationship became secondary after the Soviets moved in, Ali continues, it persisted throughout the Soviet period and remained to regain a primary role after the SU switched alliances.[20] With the dawn of the 80's the Italian-Somali relationship became more significant when the Italians increased aid to third world countries in an attempt to extend their foreign market. It is during this period that we witness the destruction and breakdown of the fabric of the Somali economy and society, especially its economic system. The Italian-Somali connection is notorious for the corruption and nepotism that was fostered during the 1980s. As Wolfgang Achtner, a reporter for *The Washington Post* puts it:

> The agony of Somalia has its roots in the endemic political corruption of Italy. Throughout the 1980s, Italian politicians and businessmen used the country... as a playground for huge construction projects that either did little to help the local population or actually disrupted and damaged Somalian society.[21]

According to Achtner, the corruption that went on was so bad that Francesco Rutelli, a congressman for the environmentalist Green Party, went so far as to blame Italy for the tribal warfare and genocide in Somalia. Qassim Ali states that most of the funds for the projects in Somalia were channeled through FAI (Fondo Aiuti Italiano; Fund for Aid). He refers to the projects embarked on by FAI as "cathedrals in the desert".[22] This, he remonstrates, is because they were based neither on the real needs of Somalia nor on "sound economic and technical feasibility studies."[23] This fund was established in 1985 and was authorized to spend the record amount of two trillion lira in eighteen months.[24] With this last point it comes as no surprise that the projects embarked on in Somalia were

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Wolfgang Achtner, "The Italian Connection: How Rome Helped Ruin Somalia," *The Washington Post*, 24 January 1993, C 3: 1. (The number after the colon represents the number of the column.)
[22] Ahmed Qassim Ali, 543.
[23] Ibid.

not beneficial to the people of Somalia. The custodians of such funds would obviously not take the time to do the necessary research and studies to find out what will be the effects of the projects on the local population. Their primary concern would be making sure they use the money to enrich themselves and give contracts to their benefactors. This is exactly what happened. As Achtner states, the construction and engineering firms in Italy that were awarded lucrative contracts for the projects provided kickbacks to the political class in Rome as well as the local politicians. Describing the extent of corruption in Italy, he says that the list of beneficiaries reads like "a who's who of major construction, engineering and communication farms."[25] All this was done at the Italian taxpayer's expense. However, the price paid by the Italian taxpayer pales in comparison to that paid by the people of Somalia. The words of Piero Ugolini, a Florentine agronomist who worked for the technical cooperation unit of the Italian Embassy in Mogadishu, adequately describes the price paid by the Somalians: "The Italian aid program was used to exploit the pastoral populations and to support a regime that did nothing to promote internal development and was responsible for the death of many of its own people."[26]

The truth of Ugolini's words is revealed in the projects embarked on by the Italian aid program. One project that has been criticized by both Ali and Achtner is the Garoe-Bosaso road. This was a 450-kilometer road that runs across barren desert with a price tag of up to $250 million. According to Achtner, this road is only crossed by nomads on

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[24] Ibid., 542.
[25] Achtner, C 3: 4.
[26] Ibid., C 3: 1.

foot.[27] Also, against the protests of the Ministry of Planning, the Italian authorities sponsored and pushed for the construction of a fertilizer factory which cost $75 million, of which one million dollars was reportedly given to Siyad Barre.[28] Ali says that due to a lack of power and other reasons this factory never became operational. Another example of a useless project is Gizoma. This, Ali explains, was an animal fattening facility which was initially to be financed by a commercial loan, but was later taken over by FAI. In his estimation, Gizoma not only partly duplicated a USAID-financed facility, but also it was conceived solely for the benefit of an Italian company.[29] There are, however, two projects that were embarked on that I believe would have been useful if they had been designed to the needs of the Somali people. The first was a brand new hospital built in Corioley, south of Mogadishu, which Achtner says cost $40 million.[30] This hospital, he says, was furnished with sophisticated machinery and operating rooms, but because the Somalis were unable to run it, the hospital fell to pieces. The second project was the establishment of a University of Somalia. Despite the fact that 98 percent of the population is illiterate, the Italians, complains Achtner, still went ahead with the project and paid the Italian professors salaries ranging between $16,000 and $20,000 per month.[31] If the cost of these two projects had been scaled down and the excess funds used to build community/village health centers and elementary schools, they would have been more useful to the people of Somalia.

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ahmed Qassim Ali, 543.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Achtner, C 3: 1.
[31] Ibid.

As one would expect, corruption and nepotism was also rampant on the Somali side. According to Achtner, Barre's eldest son, 48-year old colonel Hassan Mohammed Siyad, allegedly controlled all the money. Barre's son is reported to have had an apartment in the Hotel Raphael in Rome, which is the same hotel that houses Bettino Craxi's (the leader of the Italian Socialist Party who later became Prime Minister) permanent address in the Italian capital. Achtner also writes that members of the Barre family acquired property and bank accounts in Switzerland.[32] Friends, relatives and supporters of Siyad Barre were all rewarded with a share of the proceeds from the ill-gotten gains of corruption that thrived in the 1980's. They all lived lavish lifestyles, while the average Somalis suffered under a repressive government. The most disgusting and disheartening thing that shows the supporters of Barre (whether in Somalia or in Italy) to be devoid of a moral conscience is the events that took place in 1988. During this year, (when the corruption and the Somali-Italian partnership was at its peak) the Barre regime savagely leveled three major towns in the north, causing deaths estimated at up to 50,000 and producing about half a million refugees. "Detailed reports of tortures and atrocities committed by the Barre government, released by Amnesty International, had no effect on the Italian government."[33] Amidst protests and complaints from opposition politicians, "Rome [still] maintained cordial relations with Siyad Barre [even] after the assassination of the Bishop of Mogadishu, Salvatore Colombo, in July 1989...."[34] All demands to end cooperation with Somalia were rebuffed. In response to all the protests, one Socialist Foreign Minister, Gianni De Michelis, is quoted by Achtner as saying: "If we were to abandon all those states run by dictators in Africa there would be no one left to cooperate

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[32] Ibid., C 3: 4.
[33] Ibid.

with."[35] Such cold words coming from a person who is supposed to represent the moral and political authority of a supposedly industrialized, "civilized," and religious nation, ought to make anyone with a sense of morality shudder. Undoubtedly, he is lending credence to the saying "a person is known by the company he/she keeps". If I remain friends with a person who I know is a cold-blooded murderer, what does that say about me? Also, if I not only remain a friend with that person, but I also do not try to stop him/her or condemn his/her actions am I not validating his/her actions by my silence and inaction?

Any objection that the Italian government should not be held accountable for what went on in Somalia must be and is easily dismissed. Though the projects I outline above did not directly cause the massacres that occurred in 1988, it is known that the Italian-Somali partnership was not just based on corruption. According to Ali, in 1985 when the Somali National Movement (SNM) launched its strikes against the regime, "Italy sent a special military mission called DIATMA (Delegazione Italiano Tecnico Militare Aeronautica-Italian Military and Air Force Technical Mission) consisting of more than fifty military experts in Somalia to militarily support the regime."[36] Further, from 1979-1985 Italy provided Siyad Barre with armaments the value of which surpassed $550 million "including M47 tanks, Fiat APCs and M113, airplanes, helicopters, heavy military trucks, ammunition, etc."[37] All this occurred during a period when the Italian leadership was fully aware that Siyad Barre was engaged in a full-fledged war against his own people.

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ahmed Qassim Ali, 543.
[37] Ibid.

How then can one say that these leaders are not responsible, not even partially, for the destruction of Somalia and its people? As I argued above, during my discussion of the Soviet Union, if I provide a person (A) with a gun who I know is going to use it to kill person (B), I am not blameless because I did not pull the trigger of the gun that killed (B). Without (A) having the gun that I provided, (B) may not have been killed. So, by knowingly providing the means of B's death, I am culpable. One may, on the other hand, object that I am not culpable because A could have found other means to kill B. This is true, but as long as I was aware of A's intention and I did nothing to prevent A from killing B, then I am culpable. The same applies to the relationship between Italy and Somalia. The Italian government was aware of the atrocities and brutality that Barre was inflicting on his people, but it still went ahead and equipped him with not only the knowledge but also the means to destroy them. Thus, the Italian government is partially, if not fully, responsible for the devastation that occurred in Somalia and ought to have done something to prevent or put a stop to it. As reported by Achtner, Rutelli shares a similar view:

> The tragedy of Italian involvement in Somalia, according to Rutelli and others, is that Italy was in a position throughout the 1980s to put enormous pressure on Siad Barre and force him to change his ways. But every time he and the Greens called on the government to link the concession of Italian aid in Somalia to human rights and reforms, they were rebuffed by the powerful interests around Craxi.[38]

In the international context, the word "aid" means food or money sent to a country to help it. By this definition of aid, we cannot literally call what the Italian government gave Somalia in the 1980s aid. Based on the above discussion, one may, without

hesitation, conclude that most of the supposed aid given to Somalia during the eighties did not help Somalia and the program was not designed with the interests of Somalia being primary. The principal interests being served back then were the interests of Italy's corrupt politicians and their benefactors. The problematic issue in international ethics and foreign aid of good intentions gone bad, in my opinion, does not apply here. (A better example of this may be seen in the next section when we discuss humanitarian aid.) I am convinced that the politicians on both sides of the Somali-Italian partnership were not truly concerned about the impact their actions would have on Somalia. The corrupt politicians in Italy were obviously motivated by greed. For the politicians in Somalia, though it is easy to explain what motivated them, it is however harder to explain why they would *allow* and be partners in the destruction of *their own* country and economy. The obvious explanation of what motivated the Somali politicians is, blinded by ambition and greed, they were not smart enough (or probably just did not care) to see that the projects being implemented would do no good for Somalia.

Section III – United States and United Nations.

Like the Soviet Union, the United States provided large quantities of assistance to Somalia during the Cold War. As mentioned earlier, the presence of these two super powers and their patronage in the Horn of Africa, was an attempt by each superpower to stave off the other's ambitions and compete for access to military facilities in this region. According to Makinda, U.S. presence in the Horn goes way back to the 1950s when it built a military communications base at Kagnew (now part of Eritrea) in Ethiopia.[39]

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[38] Achtner, C 3: 4.
[39] Makinda, 53.

During U.S. occupation of the Kagnew base, it maintained cordial relations with Somalia until 1969 when the installation of the military regime strained relations. After this, the U.S.-Somali relationship deteriorated to the point of the mere formal presence of diplomatic missions in each country. The military regime, "dizzied by Soviet generosity in arms and military advisors," fully participated in the Cold War by adopting anti-American sentiment wherever it had access.[40] With the enhancement of satellite technology during this period (early 1970s), the military communications base in Kagnew became redundant and the U.S. began to lose interest in Ethiopia. It eventually pulled out of Ethiopia in 1977. This is when the U.S. government started sending conflicting signals which, says Makinda, may have encouraged Barre to sever relations with the Soviet Union.[41] Initially, Barre did not respond to the overtures made by the U.S. However, later that year (1977), when Barre was planning his war with Ethiopia, he became willing to play the "East-West card." Quoting Paul B Heinze, Qassim Ali writes that between 1977 and 1980 the U.S., under President Carter, "was ready to *turn a blind eye on internal conditions in Somalia.*"[42](emphasis mine) On the Reagan administration's attitude to Somalia, he quotes David A. Horn as saying, "[Reagan] came to office persuaded that its predecessor had failed to stand up for its friends and make itself respected by its adversaries. Here was an opportunity to show Somalia that the United States could be counted on and to demonstrate to Ethiopia that the United States' restraint in arming Somalia was not to be construed as a sign of weakness or as a license for Ethiopia to work its will with its southern neighbor."[43] These quotes, if they accurately

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[40] Ahmed Qassim Ali, 544.
[41] Makinda, 54.
[42] Ahmed Qassim Ali, 545.
[43] Ibid.

report the attitude of the Carter and Reagan administrations to Somalia, say much about why events took place as they did in Somalia and why the U.S. and the international community allowed the situation to escalate to the level it did. Knowing that he had the support of the U.S. and that he could get away with armed aggression against Ethiopia, it is no surprise that, faced with opposition at home, Barre turned his aggression against his own people. Clearly, Barre must have been confident that neither the U.S. nor the international community would do anything about it. Korn points out that, in contrast with the Reagan attitude towards Somalia, the Carter attitude was a bit more cautious. President Carter was not willing to supply Somalia with arms to the extent that it "could resume the pursuit of its irredentist ambitions".[44] Though this may be true, the fact that the Carter administration was willing to supply arms to some extent may have been sufficient for Barre to convince himself that he had the support of the U.S.

The warming of relations between the U.S. and Somalia led to the signing of an agreement in August 1980 for the use of Somalia's naval and air facilities. In return, the U.S. agreed to give Somalia $65 million in military assistance at a rate of $20 million per year. A visit to Washington in 1981 by Siyad Barre also led to the Reagan administration airlifting two shipments of arms and ammunition (the first valued at $5.5 million and the second $10 million) to Mogadishu. These shipments included "APCs, tanks, TOW missiles and ammunition."[45] Following these shipments, states Qassim Ali, came the provision, by the Reagan administration, of military training for Somali officers and the authorization for Italy, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates to transfer more

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

military paraphernalia to the Barre regime. "Siyad used US arms and ammunition to repress and kill Somali citizens with great embarrassment to the Reagan administration in 1988."[46] American arms, says Qassim Ali, such as the jeep-mounted recoilless 106-mm cannon, continued to be used and played a major role in the devastation of Somalia even after Barre's ouster. Military assistance was a small fraction of the assistance given to Somalia. Shortly after the opening up of relations, "USAID restarted its economic assistance to Somalia, funding projects in agriculture, livestock and other sectors. During the decade 1980-1989, US aid totaled roughly $500 million."[47] Thus, for ten years prior to the famine of 1992, "Somalia was the largest recipient of aid in sub-Saharan Africa, and in some years the third largest in the world behind perennial leaders Egypt and Israel. But most of Somalia's 6 million people never saw a penny. Much of what wasn't filtered out to pay the expenses of the relief agency was lost in the corrupt maze of the Somali government's nepotistic bureaucracy."[48]

The Civil War & Famine 1991 – 1993.

Following Barre's ouster on January 26, 1991, pandemonium set in. Considering the "number of lives lost in a relatively small geographic area in a relatively short period of time;" the chaos that ensued, after Barre's removal, turned out, in Andrew Natsios' words, to be the "worst humanitarian tragedy since the Ethiopia famine of 1984-1985."[49] The destruction of Somalia and its people in the early nineties is all the more tragic when one considers that it could have been prevented. Both the civil war and the famine of

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[46] Ibid., 546.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Maren, 24.

1992 that unleashed untold suffering on the people of Somalia were, arguably, caused by the actions of heartless human beings. The first catastrophic event, the civil war, was brought on by a failure of any single clan or alliance of clans to form a government after Siyad Barre fled the country. The rivalry that ensued between the two leaders of the United Somali Congress (USC), Ali Mahdi Mohamed and General Mohamed Farah Aydiid, was a key factor in preventing an end to the devastation. This rivalry between the two leaders became manifested on January 29, 1991 when Aydiid opposed Ali Mahdi's declaration, by the USC, as interim president. Inability of the two leaders to come to an amicable agreement resulted in the break up the country on the 18th of May 1991, when the northern towns of the country, controlled by the Somali National Movement (SNM), seceded. The SNM declared the independence of the Republic of Somaliland at a conference in the town of Burao. The other tragic but preventable event of the early nineties was the famine that occurred in 1992 in the southern part of Somalia. Though droughts are natural catastrophes, the consequences of them—starvation and death—can be curtailed or prevented. Many lives that were lost in the drought could have been saved if the chaos caused by the war had not made it impossible, on many occasions, for food to be delivered to the starving. Compounding this was the quite frequent use of food as a weapon—food deliveries were often looted or hijacked—by opposing factions and the destruction of farmlands perpetrated by the different factions. Blinded by their own personal ambitions, the architects of this war were willing to sacrifice thousands of lives to attain their political goals. No justification, then, can be given for this war. Not even a utilitarian argument (which does sometimes sanction

[49] Andrew S. Natsios, "Humanitarian Relief Intervention in Somalia: The Economics of Chaos", in *Learning from Somalia: The Lessons of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, ed. Walter Clarke and Jeffrey

horrendous actions if they would result in the greater good) can be made to justify the actions of the warlords. No good resulted—the people of Somalia are still suffering—from this war, nor is it likely that any unanticipated future good will result. The following record of events would demonstrate that the civil war was not only preventable and unnecessary but also unjustified.

Instead of finding a way to work out their differences, Aydiid's faction of the USC changed its name to the Somali National Alliance (SNA) on the 5th of July 1991 and declared him as leader. With two factions now existing the inevitable occurred—conflict. On the 17th of November began four months of fighting in Mogadishu between Aydiid's and Ali Mahdi's forces. The clashes between the two forces resulted in the leveling of the city. It must also be noted that Siyad Barre's forces did not just give up after his removal in January—they tried to stage a comeback later in September. They were able to seize the town of Baidoa, where they inflicted more suffering on the people and destruction of the land. His troops looted grain from storage bins and destroyed farms. Barre's seizure of Baidoa led to counter attacks from Aydiid's forces that led to further destruction of farms and the means of livelihood. It is reported that both Aydiid's and Barre's forces pursued "a scorched-earth policy" in the agricultural region of Somalia which led to the famine. The intermittent clashes between these two forces continued till April 1992 when Aydiid drove Barre's forces out of Somalia and across the border to Kenya. From the above, we see that the people of Somalia had to suffer the atrocities of different factions, whose leaders were unrelenting in their pursuit of political power.

Herbst, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 77.

The U.S. & UN Intervention of Somalia and Final Withdrawal:

As the clashes between the different forces in Somalia continued, the State Department had, as early as February 1991, begun extending extraordinary assistance to Somalia. However, it was not till March 25 of that same year that a formal recognition of the disastrous situation in Somalia was made by Assistant Secretary Herman Cohen. According to James L. Woods, the State Department and AID, in an attempt to contain and correct the Somalia disaster, undertook a number of emergency response measures with money and food flowing to several PVOs (private voluntary organizations) and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) like Save the Children Fund, Medecins Sans Frontieres, CARE and ICRC.[50] The UN and its specialized agencies, he reports, were, unfortunately, not involved at this early stage. It was not till the brutal four-month clash between the forces of Aydiid and Ali Mahdi and thousands of Somalis had died that the international community paid attention. One of the first things that Boutros Boutros-Ghali did, after his installation as the new secretary-general on January 1, 1992, was to receive a report from Undersecretary James Jonah who had just returned from a fact finding mission in Somalia. Prompted by James Jonah's report, Boutros-Ghali, amidst stiff resistance from members of the Security Council, urged a more proactive UN policy in Somalia. The costs and complications of deeper involvement as well as the lack of priority accorded Somalia (as opposed to Bosnia) were some of the reasons why member nations like the U.S. and Russia opposed deeper involvement. However, on January 23 1992 the UN Security Council took heed and unanimously passed Resolution 733.

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[50] James L. Woods, "U.S. Government Decisionmaking Processes During Humanitarian Operations in Somalia", in *Learning from Somalia: The Lessons of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, ed. Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 152.

"[T]he council urged an increase in humanitarian aid to Somalia and recommended appointment of a 'special coordinator' to oversee delivery."[51] Steps were also taken to ensure that the appropriate organizations worked with the battling factions to facilitate the delivery of food. The UN's diplomatic efforts met with some success and on March 3, after a conference at UN headquarters in New York, Aydiid and Ali Mahdi agreed to and signed a cease-fire agreement. Despite this cease-fire agreement, other factions continued to battle in the south and the situation "inside Mogadishu remained tense, and outside the capital armed bands roamed freely, often preying on food convoys and distribution points."[52]

At this time, the U.S. government had begun to place more emphasis on the crisis in Somalia. Its efforts, points out Woods, were, however, limited to enhancing diplomatic and humanitarian measures. Within these parameters, the U.S. signed "an agreement with the ICRC to provide 24,270 metric tons of food aid to Somalia; in April, the United States announced a pledge of 20,00 metric tons of sorghum to the World Food Program for Somalia.... [T]he United States had become and would remain by far the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Somalia."[53] Though all this food poured into Somalia, the situation worsened. Looting of aid convoys, banditry and clashes between different factions were still the order of the day. This goes to show that the problem was political, not just a problem of shortage of food. It was political because there was no central government to enforce the law and keep the political system running. In the absence of a central government came the breakdown of Somalia's political system and

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[51] Ibid., 153.
[52] Ibid.

institutions and mayhem set in. By just pouring food into Somalia, the international community, in essence, was treating the symptoms and not the disease itself, i.e., the political crisis. Instead of becoming a solution to Somalia's problems, food aid was becoming part of the problem. In the words of James Woods, "...the relief effort had begun to generate its own pernicious dynamic; food had become the main item of commerce, to be commandeered at the point of a gun without regard to the effects on the general populace. Aid workers were harassed and in some cases killed as security deteriorated."[54] Here we see a good example of the problematic issue in international ethics and foreign aid of good intentions going bad. The intention of donors was supposedly to alleviate the suffering of the Somalis, but their aid was instead bringing about more harm than good.

Recognizing that something must be done to improve the security situation, the UN negotiated an agreement with the Aydiid and Ali Mahdi factions to deploy fifty unarmed military observers along the "green line" which separated the areas held by the two factions.[55] This culminated in the endorsement, by the UN Security Council, of resolution 751 on April 24, 1992. Not only did it establish the UN operation in Somalia (UNOSOM or UNOSOM I as it was later called), but resolution 751 also called for the introduction of 500 armed security personnel in addition to the cease-fire monitors. An experienced UN diplomat, Mohamed Sahnoun, was designated head of UNOSOM.[56] This feeble attempt at improving the security situation was, from its inception, futile—things moved

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 154.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

too slowly and the situation had worsened way beyond any conciliatory breakthroughs that could be made by UNOSOM. First it took three months (July 23, 1992) for the team of fifty monitors to arrive and Aydiid and Ali Mahdi did not come to an agreement about the deployment of the 500-man peacekeeping force till August 12. According to Woods, though a fragile cease-fire held in the cities, banditry in the countryside was rampant.[57] Food deliveries and international assistance were slow in arriving and an estimated 1.5 million Somalis were at risk of starvation. It was only after a lengthy and bleak report about the urgency of the situation in Somalia by Sahnoun to the Secretary-General that things started to move faster and efforts were made to mount an airlift of food supplies. At the end of July 1992 the U.S. authorized another 24,000 tons of emergency food to the World Food Program.[58] Meanwhile, states Woods, reports of the failing UN mission and pressure for a more proactive stance toward the Somali crisis had begun to have an impact on the White House and it was made known that President Bush had taken a personal interest in it.[59] Consequently, in August the president announced that several decisions had been made which would require that the U.S. play a more active role and be substantially involved in direct engagement. Some of the decisions were that the U.S. would assist in the transportation of the UN security forces; that the Department of Defense (DOD) would immediately begin to airlift emergency food to Somalia and surrounding refugee camps; and that an additional 145,000 tons of food would be made available.[60] With this objective, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) formed, on the 18th of August 1992, a Joint Task Force Operation Provide Relief to implement the

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., 155.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

airlifts. Woods writes that from its inception till its termination in February 1993, "Provide Relief aircraft flew some 2,500 missions, carrying 28,000 tons of relief supplies to airfields in some of Somalia's hardest-hit areas (Baidoa, Bardera, Belet Weyn, Oddur)."[61]

Responding to a recommendation made by the secretary-general, the attempt made by the Security Council on the 28th of August to increase the UN security force in Somalia from 500 to 3,500 resulted in a serious backlash from Aydiid and conflict within the UN itself. Aydiid who had reluctantly agreed to the 500 security personnel was strongly opposed to this proposal. As a result, he later moved his forces from Bardera into Mogadishu. This proposal, it was later learned, spawned a number of actions which had serious repercussions for the peace effort and dashed any hopes of bringing about an amicable resolution to the conflict. For instance, Barre's forces took the movement of Aydiid's forces into Mogadishu as an opportunity to capture Bardera again, leading to an increase in famine deaths. Aydiid, on the other hand, became angered and felt he had been deceived into agreeing to the deployment of the 500-man security force. This, reports Woods, poisoned Aydiid's future relationship with UNOSOM. He subsequently did everything in his power to sabotage its efforts; for example, he prevented the security forces from leaving the airport. It is believed that this proposal also contributed to Mohammed Sahnoun's resignation. The decision to increase the force was made without consulting him. Sahnoun is reputed to be an astute diplomat, and many believe that the situation would not have escalated as much if the UN leadership had allowed him to continue his diplomatic efforts at reconciliation. As the man at the scene, it is reported

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[61] Ibid., 156.

that he felt he should have been consulted before such a proposal to increase the security force was made. It would seem then that the UN was working against its agents instead of working with them to bring about a peaceful resolution. It has thus been argued that the UN and the international community in general did not handle the Somali crisis with the seriousness that it deserved. One of its own, Mohammed Sahnoun, also questions the way the UN responded to the crisis. He says: "It is my belief that if the international community had intervened earlier and more effectively in Somalia, much of the catastrophe that has unfolded could have been avoided."[62]

Thus, because the UN efforts were clearly failing, interagency efforts were made in the fall of 1992 to devise a more effective strategy to resolve the Somali crisis. All concerned agencies (for example, CENTCOM, National Security Council (NSC), and the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs) met frequently and came up with a number of conclusions and proposals of options which they presented to the president during Thanksgiving week of 1992.[63] President Bush, says Woods, decided to take the maximalist course of action, and on December 4 he announced to the people of the United States his decision to send in the U.S. armed forces. Subsequently, on December 9 UNITAF (United Task Force) forces landed on the beaches of Mogadishu. According to Woods, the goals of UNITAF were clear and limited:

> Seize Mogadishu port, airfield, and environs and prepare them for a major logistical throughput; seize airfields and place coalition security elements at a number of regional hubs in the hunger zone; open the roads for truck transport; and provide adequate security throughout the operational area

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[62] Mohammed Sahnoun, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities*, (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994) xiii.
[63] Woods, 156-157.

for the safe conduct of humanitarian operations, including the transport of humanitarian supplies.[64]

Though some have praised the UNITAF phase of the Somali operations as a success because it, within its limited mandate, achieved its goals;[65] others have characterized UNITAF and the whole UN intervention as a failure precisely because of its limited objective. Makinda reports that the limited objectives of UNITAF brought the commander of this force into disagreement with the UN secretary-general within a week of their arrival in Mogadishu.[66] The disagreement was over the disarming of Somali gunmen. The U.S. commander of UNITAF asserted that disarming the Somalis (which was, in itself, a very risky venture) was not part of their mission. The Secretary-General, on the other hand, states Makinda, argued that he had an understanding with the White House that the gunmen were to be disarmed by UNITAF; and besides, the creation of 'a secure environment' presupposed disarming the gunmen. In the end, besides the haphazard seizure of a few weapons, UNITAF failed to disarm the Somali factions and gunmen, and Makinda intimates that this is to blame for the clashes in early June 1993 between UNOSOM II forces and Somalis in Mogadishu.[67] The Somali gunmen and warlords were obviously aware that the U.S. was not prepared to go the extra mile and put its forces in jeopardy by trying to disarm them. As one would expect, knowledge of this made the warlords and gunmen cautious and, in effect, they tried to avoid conflict with UNITAF forces. Allegedly, some of them even hid their weapons to be used at a

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[64] Ibid., 159.
[65] Ibid., 166.
[66] Makinda, 71.
[67] Ibid., 72.

later time.[68] Thus, until UNITAF'S withdrawal in May 1993 only sporadic clashes or shootings occurred between UNITAF and the Somali gunmen.

In anticipation of UNITAF's withdrawal, the Security Council on March 3 1993 requested a UN force with an expanded mandate to take over the responsibilities of UNITAF. This force, known as UNOSOM II, was authorized on March 26 and represented the second phase of the UN's operation in Somalia. Its main function was to "maintain the ceasefire, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian supplies, and create conditions conducive to a political settlement."[69] According to Makinda, UNOSOM II was a two-tier operation. It operated in a traditional peacekeeping mode where the use of force was not required and also operated as a peace enforcement unit when the use of force became necessary for them to carry out their mission.[70] As we later learned, UNOSOM II, ill-prepared for this task, was left by UNITAF in a country littered with weapons and controlled by warlords who were unbroken and recalcitrant. The failure of this mission was already determined when UNITAF refused to take on expanded tasks, like disarming the gunmen, which would have made UNOSOM's task more manageable. Woods uses an apt analogy to describe the inevitable failure of the transfer of responsibility to UNOSOM. He says:

> In terms of the UN's existing institutional capabilities and available
> personnel resources, the effect was on a par with turning over the helm of
> a ship in boiling waters to a five-year old with an admonishment to sail
> safely. The ensuing shipwreck was both inevitable and predictable.[71]

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[68] Ibid., 75.
[69] Ibid., 76.
[70] Ibid., 77.
[71] Woods, 170.

The warlords were aware of UNOSOM's vulnerability and were therefore willing to challenge its forces, something they hesitated doing during the UNITAF phase of the operation. This fact, compounded with the expanded mandate of UNOSOM, was bound to result in a confrontation between UNOSOM and the Somali factions. The fragile situation erupted in fierce fighting between Aydiid's militia and supporters and the UN Pakistani force on June 5, 1993. This fighting was triggered after the Pakistanis went to inspect an arms depot belonging to General Aydiid's Somali National Alliance. By the end of the fighting it is reported that up to 24 UNOSOM soldiers had been killed and several others wounded. The UN's miscalculated response of going after Aydiid only resulted in more deaths of both innocent civilians and Aydiid's followers and served to derail the peace process. The focus of the mission was now taken away from promising initiatives that were already under way to trying to capture Aydiid. Therefore, this confrontation further jeopardized the success of the UN mission and increased Aydiid's popularity amongst his people. The situation worsened as UN facilities and patrols became the subject of mockery and the latter were sometimes harassed and even ambushed by the Somalis. With no relief in sight, a desperate attempt was made to put the mission back on track by bringing in a special U.S. force, later described as Rangers, to hunt down and capture Aydiid. This only resulted in further disaster and disillusionment when eighteen of the Rangers were killed and several others wounded in October of 1993. Public and congressional criticism of the mission ensued, and the Clinton administration began looking for ways to minimize further casualties "while seeking a formula for early U.S. withdrawal under circumstances other than humiliation."[72] Orders were immediately sent to the troops to desist in the hunt for

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[72] Ibid., 165.

Aydiid. Gradually, violence returned to the countryside and by March 1994 when the U.S. forces finally departed from Somalia all hopes of a UN resolution to the crisis were dashed. Attacks on both peacekeepers and the NGO community increased and looting of aid convoys became a way of life for armed bandits. The situation, for all intents and purposes, had regressed to the way things were before the intervention. By March 1995 when the final withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping troops took place, critics of the mission had labeled the Somalia intervention a failure. As the peacekeepers departed, guarded by heavily armed U.S. forces, the "Somali looters closed in on the heels of the evacuees, carrying off the abandoned debris of the once-ambitious operation."[73] Clearly, after thousands of tons of relief food and thousands of deaths, there was no end in sight to the Somalia crisis.

Evaluation of the Military and Humanitarian Intervention:

Military:

Once again, the Somalia crisis was a tragedy not only because of the number of lives lost, but also because it could have been prevented. The international community was sluggish in intervening in Somalia and thus missed several opportunities to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Though willing to spend millions of dollars in Somalia to further their own (national) interest, members of the international community (specifically the U.S., S.U. and Italy) were unwilling to help when the citizens of Somalia really needed help. This is why I find the slow reaction of the U.S. and the international community in general to be subject to moral censure. The U.S. has always claimed to be a country with high moral standards. The same can be said of the UN, whose

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[73] Ibid., 166.

responsibility it is to enforce international law, embody and uphold the moral principles of the world community. The U.S. and UN, as the self-claimed moral capital of the world and the embodiment of international law and morality respectively, ought to endeavor to do what is right. Instead, both stood by and watched the Somalis destroy each other. Though an attempt was made by the U.S. and the UN to put an end to the destruction, it was too little, too late. The following analogy underscores this point. If an adult (who presumably is stronger and has a better sense of what is right and wrong) witnesses a fight between two young boys (and the adult can possibly easily put an end to the fight at very little risk to him/herself and the boys), the right thing to do would be to stop the fight before it escalates and the boys end up hurting/killing each other.[74] The adult cannot expect moral approbation if he/she does not intervene until the boys destroy or almost destroy each other. This calls to mind the principle of obligation put forward by Peter Singer which we discussed in chapter two: "If it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance, we ought to do it."[75] The response/reaction of the U.S. and the international community to the Somali crisis would be found wanting if we were to judge it (i.e., their response to the crisis) on the basis of this principle. As Lyons and Samatar point out, "the international community missed a series of clear opportunities to encourage and pressure Siad Barre to step down and begin the transition to a new order before violence and internecine bloodletting led to the complete destruction of state

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[74] I am aware of the possible difficulties associated with my use of this analogy—it has paternalistic implications. In an attempt to avert this, I must point out here that the analogy should not be interpreted literally. In no way must it be construed as an implication that the U.N. and US should treat Africans as children who need to be told how to behave and what is the right thing to do. The point of the analogy is to demonstrate the extent to which (with the benefits of early intervention) it was within the power of the international community to control or put an end to the crisis in Somalia.

[75] Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 229.

institutions."[76] Instead, the U.S. and most of the international community, despite their involvement in Somali affairs in the late 1970s and 1980s, chose to stand by and watch "the violent endgame and the unraveling of Siad Barre's regime without forming even the beginnings of a coordinated strategy to promote a peaceful transition."[77]

A defense that in a sovereign nation such as Somalia, the U.S. and the international community could not do much to ensure a peaceful resolution is easily dismissed with the help of an argument made by Lyons and Samatar. According to them, the international community, "most notably the United States and Italy, maintained sufficient leverage over the regime in Mogadishu in 1988 so that a well-coordinated diplomatic initiative might have facilitated a mediated end to the civil war before destruction spread further."[78] Given this, i.e., that the international community, especially the US and Italy, may have been able to curtail the civil-war in Somalia, we see that, based on Singer's principle of obligation, the international community was obligated to at least try to prevent the devastation in Somalia. First, as stated by Lyons and Samatar the international community had the power or means to prevent the devastation by putting pressure, in a timely manner, on Siyad Barre to step down. Secondly, though the international community's intervention would not have guaranteed that the devastation would not have ensued, there was still the possibility that it could have either been prevented or curtailed. As Singer would argue, pursuing a course of action that would possibly prevent something very bad from happening is to be preferred over an action or non-action that

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[76] Terence Lyons and Ahmed Samatar, *Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention and Strategies for Political Reconstruction*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 26.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 27.

results in preventable suffering and death. Thus, because it was in the international community's power to possibly prevent something very bad from happening without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance, it ought to have intervened in Somalia. Unfortunately, it chose not to do it, at least, not till it was too late. The international community is therefore, according to Singer's principle, morally culpable and ought to be held accountable for allowing the terrible crisis to take place in Somalia.

One may object that the above is too harsh a criticism of the U.S. and the international community. After all, the U.S. and the UN did try to intervene and bring an end to the conflict in Somalia. They could only do so much and nothing short of a miracle would have prevented the devastation if the people of Somalia were bent on destroying each other. I must admit there is some truth to this objection. Coming from a country (Sierra Leone) which is also on the verge of annihilation, I can understand why it will be difficult for one to fathom how a people of *one* nation (not two different nations) could destroy each other. However, what I take issue with is the timing and level of the intervention, not the question whether the international community intervened or not. As the analogy I use on page 130 reveals, there is, for most conflict situations, a point at which intervention will bring about positive results. After that point, intervention ceases to have an impact and will most likely not prevent something bad from happening. As in the case of Somalia, the intervention of the U.S. and UN did not prevent the carnage. Intervention was too late. Lyons and Samatar hold a similar view. They state that the "international community acted late, proposing talks on power sharing...when the opposition was on

the verge of victory and no longer interested in compromise."[79] It is unfortunate that we witnessed the same sluggish response of the international community in other countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia. Earlier intervention in these countries may also have curtailed the carnage that ensued.

In admonishing the international community's sluggish response to the Somalia crisis, I would be remiss if I fail to acknowledge that there are those who would have been opposed to the Somalia intervention and would reject my argument. Likely opposition would come from those who object to my position based on their fears of a return to colonial interventionism or neo-colonialism. Such fears, I would admit, are not unfounded, considering the tendency for intervention to lead down a slippery slope. However, as I argue in chapter four, certain conditions must prevail before the intervention that I call for is justified. The prevalence of flagrant and persistent violation of human rights coupled with the existence of untold and preventable suffering and death, are the criteria or conditions that I believe distinguish justified intervention from imperialist or colonial meddling in the internal affairs of African nations. The conditions in Somalia during the time of the intervention did meet these criteria. I am quite sure that if one were to ask the average citizen (here I am referring to the vulnerable citizens who did not benefit in any way from the war) of Somalia, he or she would not have opposed a timely and committed intervention to resolve the crisis. The leaders of sovereign nations, I state in chapter four, lose the right to their sovereignty and the respect that ought to be accorded to them by the international community if they consistently abuse and dehumanize their citizens or citizens of other nations.

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[79] Ibid., 29.

If the case made in chapter one for a universal ethics stands up to scrutiny, we do have further justification for intervention necessitated by violations of human rights. If it is wrong for citizens to be unjustly imprisoned, tortured and even killed in one nation, it ought to be wrong in all other nations also. Thus, any objections made by leaders (of African nations), who consistently violate the rights of their citizens, that the international community is interfering in domestic affairs, must be rebuffed. Only if the international community maintains a strong position against violations/abuses, with a willingness to take action against leaders who permit or inflict them on their citizens, shall we see a reduction in the incidence of human rights violations.

Also, as mentioned earlier, intervention was too little. It (i.e., the level of intervention) was too little because the intervening parties (especially the U.S.) were not prepared to go the extra mile (for example, disarming the warlords) to ensure a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Extending the analogy used above a little further, say the two boys fighting are armed with knives or guns and the adult intercedes but fails to take their weapons. It is obvious that as soon as the adult leaves, the two boys would resort to fighting; especially if the cause of the conflict is not resolved. Further, the level of intervention was insufficient because the focus of the Somalia intervention was primarily humanitarian. As I mentioned earlier, pouring food into Somalia was not an adequate solution to the problem. The true problem facing Somalia at that time was political, and the horrific impact of the famine facing them was partly a product of political problems. I am not saying here that food should not have been provided. My point is if the international

community really intended to resolve the crisis and do it peacefully, steps should have been taken to resolve the political problem and to rebuilding the political institutions in Somalia. And to do this the international community must have been prepared to stay the course, because bringing about a political resolution to a conflict takes a long time. Andrew Natsios seems to hold a different view as far as staying the course and accomplishing a political resolution is concerned. He is skeptical about the capability of the U.S. to bring about political settlements. These require lengthy stays, which he does not believe the U.S. can sustain militarily, politically, or financially. He does, however, admit that military intervention is sometimes necessary to facilitate humanitarian objectives. He therefore argues that we must de-link military and humanitarian objectives (both of which he says can be achieved within a year or two in most emergencies) from political objectives (which, as I concede, do take longer to accomplish).[80] The validity of Natsios' last point may be admitted with some qualification. I question the wisdom in de-linking humanitarian from political objectives in complex situations, such as Somalia, where the political situation fuels the humanitarian crisis. Frankly, I see no point in attending to the humanitarian crisis and neglecting the political crisis. To me, doing this is somewhat like trying to save money by putting it in a pocket with a hole. The humanitarian crisis will persist as long as the political problem is not resolved. The donor country will then be faced with a situation in which it has to continuously provide humanitarian relief to no avail. In cases where the political situation has no impact on the humanitarian crisis, I would agree with him that de-linking is advisable.

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[80] Natsios, 94.

It is easy, one might say, for me to hold such a view if it is not my country and countrymen that will bear the cost of such a protracted venture. Other concerns or questions need to be addressed before one could expect a nation to embark on such a venture. For instance, one might ask: (1.) What level of sacrifice—lives, money etc.— should the intervening nation be willing or expected to tolerate? How would such a protracted venture impact internal politics? These are valid questions, but I believe that if one sets out to do something, one must try to do it properly or don't bother. Partial commitment, oftentimes, as we saw in the case of Somalia, only makes matters worse. Besides, my argument above is in no way intended to imply that I recommend full-scale intervention (that is, military, humanitarian and political) as an option in all cases. If there is the option of early and diplomatic intervention, full-sale intervention should be only a last resort. This is especially important not only because of the above possible concerns but also because of the following: The soldiers and support personnel serving in the crisis situation are citizens of other nations who have left loved ones at home. The sacrifice required for such a venture to succeed is, indeed, quite a burden to expect a nation and its people to bear for people they do not know or with whom they have no real political interest. This point and the above questions are truly matters of concern, and any attempt to object that an intervening nation ought not to be expected to make such a sacrifice leads to other difficult questions or objections: Are the lives of citizens of Western nations more valuable than the thousands of Africans dying? How many African lives are equivalent to or justify the death of one citizen of a western nation? Such objections have even been expressed regarding the slow response of the international community to the Sierra Leone crisis. For instance, they were expressed by

listeners who submitted letters to the British Broadcasting Corporation's news program, "Network Africa." To avoid these objections and the unnecessary loss of life, early intervention is necessary. At the same time too, Natsios must admit that if one waits until it is too late to repair a situation then one must be prepared to pay the price—even if it requires a lengthy stay. As the saying goes, "a stitch in time saves nine." Though I disagree with him on this issue of de-linking humanitarian and political objectives, he does however make a point that sheds light on the perspective we ought to hold about humanitarian objectives, that is, each humanitarian crisis must be evaluated on a case by case basis. He states:

> The reality is that complex humanitarian emergencies vary so much that no one strategy will work in each case: Each humanitarian effort must have its own plan that is carefully fashioned according to the unique circumstances of the emergency. In some instances where the humanitarian crisis is entirely political (Sudan, Bosnia, Rwanda) and will not end until there is a political settlement, delinking would be inadvisable, but in some instances the humanitarian and military efforts can be separated from the political and still make sense. Countries can survive and even prosper without national government.[81]

Basically, the difference between Natsios and myself is one of opinion: whether the Somalian crisis was entirely political or humanitarian or a mix of both and whether humanitarian objectives should be de-linked from political objectives in situations where the crisis is both political and humanitarian. He seems to believe that the Somalia crisis was not entirely political and therefore de-linking was appropriate. Admittedly, because of the drought, the crisis in Somalia was not entirely political. Notwithstanding this fact, I believe that, because of its complexity—i.e., the political problem fueled the humanitarian—de-linking was not appropriate. In my estimation, the political situation was a major part of the problem and if the international community really intended to

resolve the crisis, it ought to have done the right thing by attending to both the political and humanitarian aspects of the crisis. As was noted earlier, a lot of the deaths resulting from starvation were caused by warlords who used food as a weapon—they hijacked or raided food being transported to regions held by rival factions. This fact, in itself, demonstrates that the problem the Somalis faced was very much political. Without the political issues to contend with, aid organizations would have been able to transport food to areas hit by the drought and consequently save lives. Granting then that the humanitarian crisis in Somalia was politically driven, it is clear that the time and money that may have been spent to bring about a complete resolution (both humanitarian and political) would have been worth it if it had saved half of the lives that were lost. Moreover, the de-linking of military and humanitarian objectives from political objectives that Natsios argues for does not necessarily arise if the argument I made above is tenable. That is, an earlier intervention (on the diplomatic and political level) would have excluded the need, if not for a humanitarian intervention, at least for a military intervention.

Humanitarian:

So far, we have evaluated the U.S. and international community's response to the Somalia crisis. It has been revealed that the Somalia intervention was less than adequate as far as resolving the political situation was concerned. The humanitarian effort in Somalia has also been criticized. Theorists like Michael Maren, who wrote a very insightful polemic against the international aid program in Somalia and other third world countries, have argued that the aid program may very well have worsened the condition

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[81] Ibid.

of the Somalis.[82] Instead of alleviating their suffering, it worsened the condition of the Somalis by offering the warlords a means to finance their war of terror and made the people of Somalia aid dependent. The situation Maren describes during these chaotic years in Somalia is quite unfortunate. The disheartening thing is that the situation he describes is endemic to most of Africa. The aid program, at its inception, was designed to provide hope and respite for the less fortunate in the world's poor countries. Unfortunately, the people who benefited and continue to benefit from the international aid program in Somalia and Africa in general are not the poor and less fortunate, but the educated, Westernized, and politically connected, who live lives far removed from most of the poor people[83]. These people, Maren says, "knew how to manipulate the system that ran on foreign aid. They knew how to get a piece of every contract or public project in the area."[84]

Disappointingly, the Somalis were not the only ones abusing the aid program. The foreigners were also getting a fair share of the "aid pie." Aid organizations had young and inexperienced individuals working as expatriates who approved and supervised projects in which they had no expertise. As long as there were projects to execute, everyone was happy. "Aid distribution," says Maren, "is just another big, private business that relies on government contracts. Groups like CRS [Catholic Relief Services] are paid by the U.S. government to give away surplus food produced by subsidized U.S. farmers. The more food CRS gave away, the more money they [i.e., CRS] received from

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[82] Michael Maren, *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*, (New York: The Free Press, 1997).
[83] Ibid., 6.
[84] Ibid.

the government to administer handouts. Since the securing of grant money is the primary goal, aid organizations rarely meet a development project they don't like."[85] This revelation, I believe, is a key factor in deciphering the failure of the aid program in many African countries. The utility of projects to the local population was not a major concern and, very often, projects that would result in the breakdown of indigenous systems and institutions were still embarked on. Better regulation of the aid program by the organizations in charge and the countries that funded the aid program would have prevented the waste and redundancy that went on in Somalia. The sad thing is that most of the expatriates admitted amongst themselves how useless their projects were to the local population, but nothing was done about it. Maren describes the dilemma of two Oxfam agriculturists who were teaching refugees to grow onions, cabbages and peppers in the refugee camps. The idea of their project was to help make the refugees self-sufficient. This posed a dilemma for the agriculturists, because they knew that the skills they were teaching them would be useless if the refugees returned to their nomadic way of life. Moreover, there was no incentive for them to learn because, while in the camp, they could eat well and make extra cash from selling the surplus rations that they were given.[86] Maren also recalls a time when the obvious futility of a project was ignored by CRS in an attempt to take advantage of the famine in northwestern Kenya, Turkana. He states that though most of the people in Turkana were too weak to embark on a food-for-work project, his supervisor insisted on using the famine as an opportunity to expand their regular program.[87] For his supervisor and CRS, "famine was a growth opportunity. Whatever the original intentions, aid programs had become an end in themselves.

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[85] Ibid., 8.
[86] Ibid., 98.

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Hungry people were potential clients to be preyed upon in the same way hair replacement companies seek out bald people."[88] Countries like Somalia and Kenya therefore attracted thousands of aid organizations. The latter country, he says, was a wonderful place to live and work, so Kenya was littered with aid organizations competing with each other for grant money and projects. The politicians in Kenya loved this situation because they could give aid projects as gifts to their supporters. They therefore kept silent and did not ask tough questions nor demand long-term environmental impact statements.[89] No one, remonstrates Maren, "questioned the idea of aid. It was as if the good intentions alone were sufficient to redeem even the most horrific of aid-generated disasters."[90]

Somalia, on the other hand, was a haven for aid organizations and NGO's because there was plenty of money available from donors.[91] Despite the dangerous conditions, aid organizations and NGO's came to Somalia because of this abundance of money. According to Maren, young white people in their mid-twenties with no recognizable skills had an opportunity to drive around in Land Cruisers and live in nice houses that their organizations paid thousands of dollars a month in rent—rent money that went to the biggest criminals in Somalia.[92] This made the government of Somalia very happy. Most of the landlords in Mogadishu were related to the president or other high government officials. So the more NGOs and aid organizations they had, the more houses they could rent to them at exorbitant rates. And more NGOs meant more

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[87] Ibid., 8 – 9.
[88] Ibid., 9.
[89] Ibid., 11.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., 94.
[92] Ibid., 24.

headquarters in Mogadishu.[93] Thus a silent partnership in mutual benefit existed between the governments of these two nations (and the same holds for many other African countries) and the aid organizations. Both parties reaped benefits from the aid program at the expense of the needy and society's systems and institutions. This is why, as quoted on the first page of this chapter, Maren argues that Africa, especially countries like Somalia, Liberia, and Zaire that received the most aid, is in much worse condition than it was when he and the first aid organizations arrived.

In articulating the havoc caused by aid, Maren recalls his conversations with a public servant Abdirahman Osman Raghe.[94] During such conversations Raghe would express his objection to refugee camps. He objected to them because they were a resource to warlords who used refugee camps as recruitment centers. According to Maren, he and Raghe would "talk about how food aid destroyed [Somalia's] systems. For many years," Raghe would say, Somalis "weren't dependent on food aid. We had droughts before, but in the past there was a credit system; the nomads were coming to the urban areas and taking loans that they would pay back when times were good. There was a system among the nomads of sharing resources. People worked together."[95] With the advent of the food aid program, all such systems were destroyed. Food donations, continues Raghe, was not the only destroyer of Somalia's society. Maren relates that Raghe also complained of how drug donations destroyed Somalia's developing health system. "We once" Raghe would complain, "had so many pharmacies here. Pharmacists knew their jobs. Now there are people handing out drugs who are not trained, because of the

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[93] Ibid., 94.
[94] Ibid., 164.

donated drugs from the international community that are so cheap. Any kind of drug is in the market from all countries."[96] He also complained about donors pouring aid into Somalia without any regulation or conditions. "...aid" he says "must have some sort of conditions."[97] It was obvious, states Raghe, that donors did not care what happened to the aid because it was divided, in their presence, amongst officials and the children of bosses and nothing was done to stop them.

For a better understanding of the food aid program, Maren describes the different types of food aid. The most visible American food in Africa, he says, is relief food donated in "Gift of the People of the United States of America" bags.[98] Though this is the most visible type of aid, it is actually the smallest part of the American food-aid program. The majority of food aid, he states, arrives under other auspices. All food from the U.S. arrives under Public Law-480, which has three mechanisms for delivering food to poor countries: (i.) Emergency food, which we see being fed to starving children on television, is Title II. (ii.) Food for development is Title III. These are commodities sold in developing countries and the proceeds used to fund development projects. (iii.) Title I is the largest part of PL-480. This, he says, is food sold to merchants at "bargain-basement prices," with rates so low that they often do not pay the cost of freight. Most governments, says Maren, require that merchants have permission or a license of some sort to purchase foreign commodities.[99] "The buyer pool is entirely controlled by the man at the top. Permission to benefit from the foreign aid flow is bestowed as a favor

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., 166.
[97] Ibid., 165.
[98] Ibid., 167.

upon close kin and loyal political allies. In Somalia, Siyaad's permission to buy Title I food was a license to print money."[100] Drawing from Maren's conversation with Raghe, it appears that this latter type of aid is the one that fosters corruption and helps to destroy the economic systems of poor countries. To demonstrate the malfeasance brought on by food aid in Somalia, Raghe states that the minister of agriculture was one of the people profiting from selling imported food. This was a pathetic situation, because those who were supposed to promote agriculture and increase production were, instead, selling practically free imported food. The personal economic interests of most ministers, especially the minister of agriculture, fell into direct conflict with their jobs. Maren describes this pathetic situation:

> The minister, who was supposed to help farmers produce food, was now working to keep production low and prices high. And since many of the farmers were from the despised and powerless Rahanwiin clan, there was little fallout from suppressing food production. And not only did donors under cut farmers, they undercut legitimate Somali importers. An entire segment of the business community vanished as high-quality American and European cereals were sold at 50 to 60 percent less than they could have been purchased for. Food aid, Raghe emphasized again, had turned Somalia from a self-sufficient exporter of food to an aid-dependent "Kleptocracy".[101]

The graph on the next page depicts the level of food production as compared to the level of food aid from 1983 to 1991.[102] From 1983 to 1991 we see that food production surpasses food aid but from 1992 food aid surpasses food production. Seeing that it was after 1991 that donors increased their level of food aid deliveries to Somalia, one may deduce from this that the consequence was the lowering of food production as shown by

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[99] Ibid., 168.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., 169.

Food Production and Food Aid in Somalia:
A Ten Year Review

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Legend:
- Food* Production
- Food Aid

*cereal
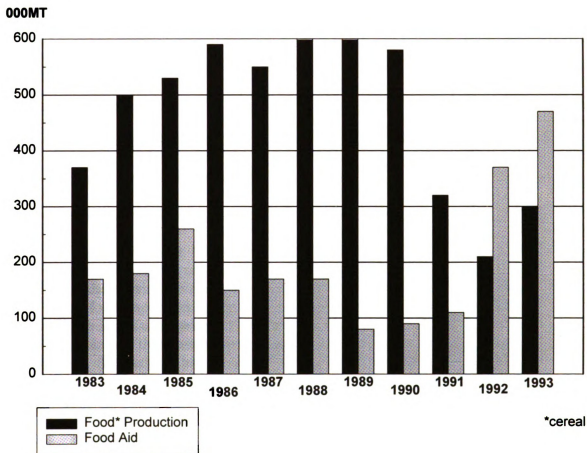
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service

Figure 1

the graph. It is this lower level of food production which creates the dependency and the break-down of Somalia's system of food production that Raghe is complaining about.

The above debilitating effects of aid have sparked a lot of controversy and criticism of the foreign aid program. Presumably, donor countries must have been aware of the havoc their so-called assistance was causing in Somalia. If they were truly concerned about the plight of the Somalis and the intention of the donor countries was to make things better, why did they not revise or ensure proper monitoring of the aid program? Because of this contradiction between their intentions and what went on or was allowed to go on, it has been argued that the donors did not really care what their aid was doing. According to Maren, a World Bank study ascertained that donors were only concerned about their domestic agricultural situation:

> [D]onors' food aid budgets are primarily influenced by prospects for commercial exports of their food surpluses rather than being determined in accordance with the needs and objectives of recipient countries to reduce their food import dependency. Accordingly, donors usually reduce their food budgets when prospects for commercial exports of surpluses are good and increase them when those prospects are poor. As a result, significant price fluctuations are likely to occur in the domestic food market, particularly when the former decision of donors happens to coincide with a poor harvest in the recipient country and the latter with a good one.[103]

Granting the above to be true, one's first inclination is to express disapproval. The ethics of the donor's so-called acts of kindness becomes questionable. One cannot claim to be doing the morally right thing by helping those in need, if the provision and level of assistance given is determined by its propensity to serve one's own interests. I hesitate,

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[102] This graph is a modified version from the USAID in Africa Website.
[103] Ibid., 170.

though, to pass judgement on donor countries. After all, no one forced the Somalis to take up arms against each other and, though donors are morally obligated to assist, there is no law compelling them to assist poor or war-torn nations. They could easily have (if willing and able to endure the criticism) refused to give any assistance. As unethical as the motives of donors may be, some good (though very little when compared to the death and destruction that ensued) did result in Somalia from their assistance—thousands of lives were saved. That aside, if one wants to be honest, it is a fact that, for most of us, our decision to give to charity and the amount is determined by our financial interests or constraints. In response to this, one may concede that we do make such decisions based on our economic interests, but the point being made here is that it should not be at the expense of the recipient. Donor countries must not dump their excess food production in poor countries when they know that doing so would adversely affect the local market. Thus, one could refrain from blaming donors for the crisis in Somalia, and, at the same time, make the point that one does not add fuel to the fire if one wants to help someone whose house is on fire. Donors may then be guilty of worsening the situation instead of alleviating it.

This last point is underlined by the pernicious effects of the relief effort that Natsios describes. He states that by hiring large armies to protect their convoys and distribution sites, relief agencies like the UN, the ICRC and NGOs, increased the market for weapons and ammunition in Somalia. Natsios reports that at the height of the crisis, the ICRC was believed to have 15,000 to 20,000 armed guards on its staff.[104] Considering the security and political climate at that time, no one faults relief agencies for trying to protect

themselves. They had no other option seeing that the U.S. was not prepared to disarm the Somali gunmen. However, it is "ironic that the very humanitarian organizations demanding so vocally that U.S. and later UN peacekeeping forces disarm Somalia inadvertently fuelled a good deal of the Somali appetite for weapons both by hiring guards and by agreeing to the warlords' diversion of food resources in order to gain their protection and purchase more weapons."[105] Clearly, without a dramatic change in the political and security situation, dumping more food into a society of displaced persons that was plagued by drought, massive unemployment, and violence "would do more harm than good.... It would reinforce the power of the warlords by giving them more wealth with which to keep their followers loyal, purchase more weapons and capture the loyalty of other unallied clans."[106]

This situation of humanitarian efforts fueling the war has occurred in other African countries also. As Jane Perlez—a New York Times correspondent—reports, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) discovered that the Sudanese government "had sold large stocks of pre-drought grain abroad."[107] Most of the proceeds from the sale of grain are believed to have been used to purchase arms from China, in the government's attempt to continue the civil war against the southern part of Sudan. With all the Sudanese government's reserve food stocks now sold, says Perlez, donor countries now find themselves hard-pressed to deliver thousands of tons of grain to stave off starvation

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[104] Natsios, 84.
[105] Ibid., 84 – 85.
[106] Ibid., 85.
[107] Jane Perlez, "African Dilemma: Food Aid May Prolong War and Famine", *New York Times*, May 12, 1991

among the Sudanese.[108] Situations such as this pose a dilemma for donor countries that now realize that:

> [h]umanitarian policies of donating millions of tons of food to warring governments and rebels have helped prop up combatants who care little for the civilians they purport to represent. With the food needs of the starving entirely taken care of by outsiders, the warring parties sometimes partake of the donated food themselves or find themselves left with more resources than they might other wise have [which, very often is used to buy arms].[109]

Because of this, says Perlez, sympathy in the West for African people constantly at war is wearing thin. She quotes Bernard Kouchner, the French Minister for Humanitarian Action, who states that "[t]he international community is tired of the mix of war, politics and drought."[110] The suggestion was, therefore, made among officials in the international community that a more tough-minded policy toward food deliveries must be adopted. Perlez describes that this would involve, among other things, more monitoring of where relief food goes. Tremendous effort must be made to ensure that "food designated for civilians does not end up in the hands of either government or rebel armies."[111] Any question why donors did not adopt such a policy from the beginning may, I believe, be explained in the following way: First, donors probably gave African leaders too much credit, thinking they would put the lives and interests of their people first. Secondly, an attempt to control or monitor food supplies may have sparked accusations of racism and paternalism at home and abroad.

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[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

It is clear from the above that the current aid program engenders numerous complications and contradictions for Africa and donor countries respectively. This has resulted in a tension between the desire of donor countries to help and the obvious political and social problems that arise from providing aid. As we saw above, Perlez would attest to this. She says that:

> Western nations...find themselves caught between their humanitarian obligation to feed the hungry and their growing conviction that donated food, far from solving the problem, may in some cases be aggravating rather than alleviating the hunger. In case after case, ... officials believe food from the outside helps to subsidize the habits of war.[112]

If no aid is given thousands of innocent people will starve to death. On the other hand, if aid is provided the political and social situation in the recipient country is often times worsened. This poses a dilemma for ethicists (who advocate the need to give assistance) and for *concerned* politicians of donor countries. My own resolution of this dilemma only requires an iteration of a point I made earlier. These difficulties are in most cases raised when the international community is only prepared to attend to one of the problems (humanitarian) at the expense of the other (political). If the political situation is allowed to remain as is, any attempt at resolving the humanitarian crisis will be practically futile. Those in power would use the benefits of the aid program to their own advantage while those who really need the assistance continue to suffer. In many cases, it is the political situation that engenders the humanitarian or economic crisis, and pouring food/assistance into the same chaotic/corrupt political situation would be somewhat like the biblical fable of putting new wine into old wine skins.[113] I therefore

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Mathew 9:17. Jesus, talking to John's disciples says that you do not "put new wine into old wine skins; if you do, the skins burst, and then the wine runs out and the skins are spoilt. No, you put new wine into fresh skins; then both are preseved."

suggest that in cases where the political situation in a country is causing or fueling the humanitarian or economic crisis, steps must be taken to repair the political situation first (if time permits) or hand in hand with attending to the humanitarian or economic crisis. Failure to do so would be an exercise in futility.

A Brief Look at Zaire and Liberia.

As far as the ravaging impact of aid is concerned, Somalia is not unique. As hinted earlier, several citizens from other African nations suffered under the unintended consequences of the aid program. Two striking examples are Zaire and Liberia. Citizens of the first nation, Zaire, suffered under the repressive government of President Mobutu Sese Seko. Mobutu, the king of all kleptocrats in Africa, is reported to have received hundreds of millions of dollars from the United States and amassed a personal fortune estimated at $2.5 billion since coming to power in 1965.[114] Mobutu, with the help of funds from Western donors, was able to maintain and hold on to a repressive dictatorship for 25 years. During his rule, corruption was rampant and several violations of human rights were committed. Allegations were also made that he massacred at least 12 students at the University of Lubumbashi in April of 1990.[115] Amidst protest and opposition from some members of congress, the Bush administration continued to support and offer arguments in support of Mobutu. According to Kraus, "[a]dministration officials do not dispute contentions that the Zairean president is corrupt and tough on dissidents, but they see him as a protector of stability in his mineral-rich

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[114] Clifford Kraus, "U.S. Cuts Aid to Zaire, Setting Off a Policy Debate," *The New York Times*, November 4, 1990.
[115] Ibid.

country and as a linchpin for *American interests throughout the continent.*"[116](emphasis mine) I emphasize to reveal the key interest here. The concern here is for American interests not the people of Zaire. It is obvious that Mobutu would have been long gone if he did not find favor in the sight of the U.S. government. The support—both financial and political—he received from the U.S. (which he needed to preserve power) would have been taken away. Admittedly, Mobutu did provide stability in Zaire by calming tribal tensions and he did perform military and diplomatic services—for example, he provided military assistance to Chad to fight off Libyan aggression[117]—but was this a fair price to pay for the suffering of his people? It is indisputable that without the assistance from donors, Mobutu would not have been able to hold on to power for so long. It is also unfortunate that the U.S. and other Western nations did not *fully* use the influence they had on Mobutu to pressure him to implement reform. True, pressure did come from the U.S., but it was too late. As Kraus reports, pressure was put on Mobutu, but only after a reduction of tensions in the US-Soviet relationship, and his relevance or importance had substantially diminished.[118]

Liberia also received a considerable amount of aid/assistance from the U.S. This war-ravaged West African nation of 2.3 million people received, according to Kenneth Noble, "nearly $500 million in aid and loans, making Liberia the largest per-capita recipient of American aid in sub-Saharan Africa."[119] One would not expect that a nation such as Liberia, which received so much aid, would collapse into anarchy. This goes to show

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[116] Clifford Kraus, "House Democrats Challenge Bush By Seeking to Reduce Aid to Zaire," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1990.
[117] Kraus, "U.S. Cuts Aid to Zaire...."
[118] Kraus, "House Democrats...."

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that the acquiescence and support given by Western nations gives African leaders a false sense of security. Without much objection from their donors and supporters, these leaders continue to abuse human rights and implement repressive polices, which eventually plummets the nation into war and anarchy. Sadly, when war breaks out, the erstwhile generous donors seldom come to the timely aid of the suffering population. This is exactly what happened in Liberia. Michael Massing, a journalist who visited Liberia in 1985 and 1986, wrote that the indifference of the outside world to the starvation and killing (which nearly reached genocidal proportions) in Liberia was distressing.[120] It was especially distressing for the United States, which provided Liberia during Mr. Doe's rule with about half a billion dollars. Though the U.S. provided such vast amounts of money, nothing was done to prevent the looming devastation. "In 1985, when Mr. Doe blatantly stole an election, the U.S. government gave its stamp of approval, then kept quiet as his abuses mounted. Today with Liberians murdering one another, we remain silent still."[121]

Once again, one is bound to wonder why the U.S. and most of the West were willing to pour millions of dollars into these nations but were unwilling and unable to assist when the citizens of these nations needed their help. David Karanja has an explanation for this indifference.[122] He states that the West used foreign aid as a tool to control African leaders and indirectly rule Africa. After Africans forcefully rejected colonialism, the West had to come up with new tricks to control Africa. This it did by presenting itself as

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[119] Kenneth B. Noble, "Liberian President Criticizes U.S. on Aid," The *New York Times*, June 16, 1990.
[120] Michael Massing, "Mr. Bush, Liberia Needs Your Help," *The New York Times*, October 24, 1990.
[121] Ibid.
[122] David Karanja, "What Price Foreign Aid" in *New African*, June 1992, 20.

a true friend. The West, he says, used our own African leaders as agents, who propagated its policies, "ruled by decree and tormented our own people in the interests of their masters in the West."[123] In compensation for their loyalty, the West, states Karanja, "showered millions of dollars in the name of foreign aid on its agents ruling Africa."[124] What he says after this reveals why African leaders resisted reform and had a false sense of security. "African leaders," explains Karanja, "could often count on the West to come to their rescue whenever their people took to the streets to demonstrate against the intolerable conditions at home. The West provided the machine guns and the bullets to crush the people to submission."[125] A very good example of this is France, which has for a longtime played the role of peacekeeper in its former colonies. For instance, in May 1990, it sent in reinforcement troops to help quell anti-government riots in Gabon.[126] With the end of Communism and the West finally winning the war, the Western tap, says Karanja, that poured free dollars into Africa has finally run dry. Western nations, one may conjecture, no longer have the deep interest in Africa that prevailed during the days of Communism and the cold war. Intervening in the domestic conflicts of African nations is no longer in their national interests. Therefore, as Karanja states, the lavish expenditure on Africa has come to an end and the West is now calling for respect of human rights, democracy and sound economic policies before any aid is received. This, one might say, seems a bit contrived. It is only now, now that the importance of Africa and its stooges has diminished, that the West is calling for a respect of human rights. When the West needed Africa and its leaders, it was willing to turn a blind eye to all the

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[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Alan Riding, "French Debate Armed Role in Africa," *The New York Times*, June 17, 1990.

abuse of human rights. It is good that the West is now trying to link conditions to their aid, but one cannot help but question the motives behind the sudden change of tune. Unfortunately, this change in policy comes too late. According to Karanja, foreign aid has led to a culture of dependency in Africa, from which it would take a long time to recover. Africa[127], he points out, grew accustomed to the deception that none of its problems were of its own making. This bred complacency and Africa did not build the necessary infrastructure to fight the problems. "But for the free dollars, Africans would have been forced by the rule of necessity to devise ways and means of solving their problems."[128] As outlandish as some of his views may be, I cannot but agree with this last point and the recommendations Karanja makes. He says that:

> If Africans are serious about breaking the shackles of dominion by the West, they must re-think their economic priorities and know what is best for the continent without being dictated to by the West. One major prerequisite is to move away from the dependency syndrome. We should stop being shameless beggars and instead redouble our efforts to achieve prosperity with minimum help from above.... This means we must pull up our socks and face the new challenge of fending for our selves.... This is the only hope for progress.[129]

Efforts at Reform:

In the light of these problems caused by foreign aid programs, Western nations, as revealed above, have begun to reform them. Apart from insisting on democratic reform as a condition for aid, Western nations have begun to forgive the debts owed by many African nations. Even France, with its traditional policy of providing unconditional

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[127] I want to acknowledge here that Karanja's above use of the term(s) Africa(ns) may pose some confusion for my readers, because there is no such intentional entity as Africa that can "grow accustomed" to something. The continent of Africa is by no means homogeneous and referring to it in the way he does may be perplexing to some readers. However I do suspect that he is referring to Africa in the same way that one would refer to "the West." The latter is also not homogeneous.
[128] Karanja, 20.
[129] Ibid.

economic, political and military support to many of its former African colonies[130], has implemented a change in its foreign aid policy. On June 21, 1990 President Francois Mitterrand made a commitment that not only would France stand by Africa throughout its economic woes, it would also ensure that "French aid would in the future flow 'more enthusiastically' to those countries that take steps toward democracy."[131] This was a positive turn for advocates of foreign aid reform in Africa because the French had, for a while, been deaf to criticism. Critics of both past and present French policy had accused the French government "of sustaining a host of unsavory dictators and one-party states and with condoning large-scale embezzlement of development aid by officials in some countries."[132] The U.S. has also taken significant steps to ease the burden and problems caused by its foreign aid program. For instance, the U.S. has also imposed conditions on its aid and instituted proper monitoring of food deliveries. Further, as reported by Jane Perlez, the U.S., as part of an effort to give economic relief to Africa, agreed, in January 1990, to forgive all economic assistance loans to Kenya and twelve other countries.[133] The debt-relief effort is aimed at rewarding African nations for fiscal responsibility. Recently, there has also been a call for Africa's debt burden to be reduced. It is all well and good that Western nations have begun to take steps to reduce Africa's economic woes and dependence. However, I am concerned about what the repercussions would be from the cancellation of debts and whether there is any wisdom in canceling Africa's debt without the human problem being resolved first. Cancellation of debts may breed complacency while abuse and most of Africa is still ruled by the same greedy and corrupt

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[130] Alan Riding, "France Ties Africa Aid to Democracy," *The New York Times*, June 22, 1990, 3(A).
[131] Ibid.
[132] Alan Riding, "French Debate…."
[133] Jane Perlez, "U.S. Forgives Portion Of Kenya's Loan Debt," *The New York Times*, January 10, 1990.

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politicians. The extra resources they may find at their disposal may either be squandered on extravagant projects like President Arap Moi's plan to build a 60 story $200 million office tower or find its way into the personal bank accounts of corrupt officials. With this in mind, I must say that the efforts at reform made by some Western nations are commendable, but there is still more to be done. Two changes in the international community's response to Africa are yet to be seen: First, Western governments ought to be proactive instead of reactive in tackling problems or crises in Africa. This would help prevent crises like the ones that took place in Somalia and Sierra Leone from happening today. Secondly, in war torn areas, the international community should take steps to repair the political situation at the same time as they are attending to the humanitarian crisis.

Botswana: A Success of the Foreign Aid Program.

Thus far, the case study has revealed quite a gloomy picture of the foreign aid program. In the interest of accuracy, one must admit that there are, though very few, success stories. Botswana is a case in point. According to Gervase Maipose et al, Botswana, at independence in 1966, was one of the poorest countries in the world that relied on grants-in-aid from Britain.[134] Today, they say, Botswana has "sustained one of the world's highest economic growth rates, and is now a middle-income country with a GDP per capita of over USD 2000."[135] One must not presume that Botswana's success was due to the fact that the challenges it faced since independence were qualitatively different from

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[134] Gervase Maipose, Gloria Somolekae, and Timothy Johnston, "Effective Aid Management: The Case of Botswana," in *Foreign Aid in Africa: Learning from country experiences*, ed. Jerker Carlsson, Gloria Somolekae and Nicolas van de Walle (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, i997), 18.
[135] Ibid.

those faced by other African countries. Botswana's success, they point out, resulted from the different approach it had to development. In part, good fortune but mostly good management is the key to Botswana's success. The latter, I must say, is the main ingredient for progress and development that was and still is missing in many African countries. Unlike other countries, the government of Botswana effectively utilized its resources, resulting in growth which was used to create additional resources to invest in human and physical infrastructure. This strong growth, they say, made it easier for the people of Botswana to maintain a multiparty democratic system that has been stable since independence. The political and economic prosperity that ensued thus attracted skilled personnel, and Botswana did not suffer from the brain drain that plagues other African countries.

Unlike the situation in many other African countries, write Maipose et al, the government of Botswana, since independence, made achieving financial viability a fundamental government priority. Political leaders therefore endeavored to reduce their dependence on aid by emphasizing "fiscal discipline, the expansion of the revenue base, and securing value for money. A strong planning system was considered essential to achieving these goals."[136] Planning then, for the government of Botswana, was not an academic exercise with little operational value in many other nations. Botswana, they continue, relies on a six-year planning cycle that is subject to mid-term reviews to ensure compatibility with changes in the economic and policy context. To recall, it was stated that, in Somalia (and the same holds for many other African nations), projects were embarked on whether or not they were in the interest of the local population. In Botswana, the situation was quite

different—project approval was not indiscriminate. Maipose et al state that the national development plans of Botswana (which represent its national goals and priorities) were "constructed around a 'shopping list' of projects for which external finance was sought." This shopping list of projects then "gave donors the flexibility to choose projects, but ensured that projects addressed government priorities."[137] Gradually, as the economy grew, the government began to fund its own development projects. Unlike other African countries that became aid dependent; in Botswana, aid, before 1980 to 1992 when donors began to pull out, served only to complement government resources.[138]

To secure coherence between planning and budgeting, the government of Botswana incorporated all financial and development responsibilities within the planning of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP).[139] By so doing, it (i.e., the government of Botswana) has "been able to plan for all public expenditure, not just public investment. No investment projects—either donor or government funded—are approved unless the government can finance recurrent as well as investment costs."[140] This helped curb the waste and the incidence of incomplete projects (due to a lack of funding) that is common in some African nations. From the above we see that good planning and management has been the key to Botswana's success. This gave the government of Botswana leverage, which enabled it to have a choice in the type of aid and conditions of aid it accepted. As far as tied aid was concerned, Maipose et al report that the government only accepted tied aid for grant assistance, but not for loans. And

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[136] Ibid., 18-21.
[137] Ibid., 21.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

before accepting tied aid, the MFDP would make sure the tying requirements did not unduly diminish project effectiveness and sustainability. Botswana then, is in a class by itself. As Maipose and others state:

> Botswana appears to be one of the few African countries that has been consistently willing to refuse aid for development (as opposed to ideological) reasons. The planning and aid management system seems again to be the key. The rules are clear: if a project is not consistent with plan, it will not be approved. Perhaps equally importantly, however, the planning system has led to a high-level of awareness among officials both in MFDP and line ministries that even grant aid carries with it considerable costs—as several high-level officials put it, "aid is not free." Not only must the government provide counterpart personnel and funds for a good project, but a poorly conceived project can be damaging and disruptive. Yet in many African countries, aid is still treated as a free resource, with the result that donor projects—even bad ones—are rarely refused.[141]

Thus, there are lessons to be learned from Botswana. Though the path to success taken by Botswana cannot be exactly followed by other nations, one thing for sure is good government and good planning and management is the goal other African nations should strive for. A precondition for attaining this is honest, forthright and patriotic government officials. This, as mentioned earlier, is the human factor. Based on Botswana's success, we can safely assume that she was not burdened by the human problem that other nations in Africa face. Progress and development will not come to these other African nations as long so the same corrupt, self-aggrandizing officials remain in power.

Conclusion:

In sum, the debilitating effects of the foreign aid program highlighted in chapter 2 are substantiated in this case study. It reveals that, for many African nations, the aid program

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[140] Ibid., 22.
[141] Ibid., 32.

has created a culture of dependency, brought about the destruction or break down of traditional institutions and systems and has fostered corruption. In Somalia, the pouring in of aid without attending to the political situation and the unwillingness of the U.S. to stay the course only served to worsen the situation. The Somalia intervention, we discovered, was doomed to failure by the sluggish response of the international community to the crisis. It was also shown, as mentioned in chapter 2, that Western nations cannot, in today's global climate, afford to ignore the problems of Africa and, for that matter, the rest of the world. Apart from the moral obligation to assist, it is in the interest of Western nations to intervene in African conflicts and in a timely fashion to preclude the need for long and costly military interventions. Also, any indifference on the part of Western nations to Africa's problems would result in the citizens of these nations moving to the shores of the West to seek peace and safety. So, in a sense, promoting democracy in Africa indirectly preserves their economies and democratic societies and ensures that they are not burdened by the influx of refugees and immigrants.

I am quite sure that some of my readers would think that I expect a lot from the international community by the recommendations I make—for example, attending to the political as well as the humanitarian crisis. This is true, but desperate situations call for desperate measures. In no way must the expectations I have of the international community be construed as an attempt to take away responsibility from the citizens of African nations. The onus of change and reconstruction first and foremost lies on Africans themselves. Africans must take the lessons learned from Somalia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda etc (that war only leads to devastation) and from Botswana (that only good

government and management leads to progress) and build upon them. By now we have enough examples of the former, i.e., civil war, to know that it leads nowhere. Western nations, in turn, must also learn from the sad consequences of their failures or inaction in these war-torn nations. It is now clear that dumping food aid in a country at war does not necessarily resolve that nation's problems. Third world crises do not have a one size fits all solution. A case by case evaluation of the crisis is required. In addition, attaining a successful foreign aid program demands a complete reform of the current program and a revolution in the attitude of African leaders that aid is a free resource to be used and abused without any consequences. In the following chapter we shall examine the principal causes of the demise of many African nations, their future and the international aid program.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUTURE OF AFRICA
AND THE
FOREIGN AID PROGRAM

Prelude

During our examination of the foreign aid program, we found that a key factor in the failure of this program was the political situation in the recipient country. It is fitting, then, that we take a look at some of the contributing factors to the political demise of some African nations which, in turn, led to their economic collapse.

We have witnessed since the 1960's, the decade of independence in Africa, the gradual but steady decay and destruction of many African countries. Instead of the economic prosperity that was supposed to be associated with the acquisition of political liberation independence brought, for many African nations and peoples, a return to not only repressive and authoritarian government, but also economic decline and hardship. Is there an end to this? What can be done to halt the decay and destruction of our lovely continent, Africa? What does the future hold for Africa? Various proposals have been made to resolve Africa's problems that range from the ridiculous to the outlandish. Some have suggested (in the case of Sierra Leone for example) recolonization,[1] while others recommend the adoption of a Western liberal multi-party system of democracy. Though ridiculous, the former proposal depicts the desperation of the citizens of many African countries. I refer to the latter proposal as far-fetched because the debate on the democratization of Africa is still on going. Scholars specializing on Africa are yet to agree on what type of democracy is suitable for Africa. The question which system of government—a democratic one-party system of government or a democratic multi-party system of government—is more amendable to the African political and cultural context is

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[1] Here I am referring to some of the suggestions made during monthly informal discussion meetings (held by a group of Sierra Leoneans in New Jersey) on the crisis in Sierra Leone.

still not yet resolved. I want to make the case that arguments for a democratic multi-party system that mimics Western liberal democracy are misguided. The answer to what system of government is suitable for Africa, I would argue, resides in its past.

The finger of blame has also been pointed at the international (primarily the Western or Developed nations) community. Advocates of this view, point to the fact that African nations have not been treated fairly or justly by the developed world as the source of Africa's demise. In an attempt to resolve the problems of Africa, proponents of this view call on the international community or the former colonial powers to intervene and provide greater support and economic assistance. As revealed by our case study, intervention under the prevailing aid program is not a viable option. Besides, Africans and their leaders cannot continue to blame Western nations for their demise and rely on them to solve their problems. There are too many considerations to bear in mind with this option. One that I feel is very important is the attendant risk of compromising the sovereignty of African nations that comes with intervention and reliance on external assistance. It is hightime the leaders of Africa and advocates of this view learn that there is always a trade off when a country has to rely on another for survival. At best, the recipient loses the right to determine how the aid/assistance is used and, at worst, it loses its sovereignty. The move from the former to the latter is easily made. It is a slippery slope and one should be very cautious when receiving assistance from another.

Other scholars have argued and proposed that African countries need to embark on a rigorous program of economic reform. Such arguments and proposals, I would admit, are

good, but I believe they are premature. They are premature because without political reform any attempts at economic reform will be futile. To make any headway, the people of Africa must first find a way to resolve their political quandary before any attempts at economic reform will be successful. As scholars knowledgeable about Africa's political and economic past would attest, most of Africa has not been lacking in the means or access to funds/resources (as our case study already confirmed) or proposals for economic reform. In spite of this, most of the continent has, unfortunately, plunged into an endless spiral of decay and stagnation. This then confirms what became evident from our analysis of the foreign aid program: the domestic political and human situation in many African countries needs to be fixed before any economic reform proposals are implemented or any outside assistance can become a resource instead of being part of the problem.

It is on the latter situation—the human situation—that another set of proposals has been made. Scholars who make proposals on this issue are right in arguing that a major part of Africa's problems has been caused by the corruption that has been allowed to thrive in many African countries. For the nations of Africa to make political and economic progress, solutions to the human problem that engender the corruption must be addressed. Tackling and halting corruption must and should be a major priority of the governments of Africa. Scholars must find a way to create, so to speak, a revolution in the minds of most Africans to arrest the greed, apathy and unpatriotic "I don't careism" that plagues the minds of most Africans. To do so, Africa needs the leadership to spearhead this revolution by ruling by example. As is common knowledge, the leadership set the

precedent for corruption in most African countries. The monumental task before us cannot be overstated and the limitations of this chapter cannot begin to address, with the depth of analysis required, the issues or questions raised by the problems facing many African countries. I shall however attempt, in this chapter, to lay out and briefly discuss three major issues/questions facing Africa—(a) the question of what type of democracy is appropriate; (b) corruption; and (c) the issue of compromising sovereignty by allowing intervention—and ruminate on its future. Though I shall occasionally refer to other theorists, my aim is to adumbrate my own thoughts on the issues.

Is Western Liberal Democracy Suitable for Africa?

As noted above, the period after independence was, for many African nations, the advent of years of political and economic turmoil. The absence of democratic systems in Africa, as mentioned earlier, has been cited as one of the causes (if not the cause) of Africa's political and economic demise. In an effort to address the problems of Africa and push for its democratization a plethora of articles have been written on the feasibility of democracy in Africa and what kind of democracy is suitable for Africa— Western liberal democracy or some other kind? Theorists like M. Bratton[2], N. van de Walle[3], O. Nwolise[4], C. Ake[5], Lual A. Deng[6] and J. Wiseman[7] have all written on the prospects or feasibility of democracy in Africa. I found, in my literature review, that though most

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[2] Bratton, M and van de Walle. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[3] Ibid.
[4] Nwolise, Osisiomo. *Africa's Problems With Democratization*, (Ibadan: Bookcraft Ltd. 1992).
[5] Ake Claude. *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, (CREDU, Nigeria, 1992).
[6] Lual A. Deng, *Rethinking African Development: Toward A Framework For Social Integration and Ecological Harmony*,(Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 1998).
[7] Wiseman, John A. ed. *Democracy and Political Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (London: Routledge, 1995).

theorists agree that democracy is feasible in Africa; there does not seem to be a consensus on what kind of democracy is suitable or how democratic systems may be instituted. The contending democratic views are a democratic multi-party system or a democratic one-party system. Most proponents of a multi-party system have argued for multi-partyism fashioned after Western liberalism. As I hinted earlier, I believe that such attempts at importing a completely foreign model into Africa were, and still are, misguided. Importing such a model that was based on a completely different history and had inherent contradictions and incompatibility with African system(s) of thought would, inevitably, result in chaos and confusion. Consequently, the historical evidence is compelling—attempts to adopt a western form of democracy in Africa have been nothing but a failure.

In the words of Anver Versi, "[t]hirty years ago, [or shortly after independence] we blindly bought prescriptions from foreign experts who promised us 'instant development'. Today, surrounded by a multitude of 'quick-fix' bottles, we survey the wreckage of our dreams."[8] It was not long before the leaders of Africa realized that their so-called liberal democracy experiments spelled disaster for Africa. Across the continent, one civilian government after another was overthrown by the military, which promised to free the people from repression and economic hardship. Instead of bringing freedom and economic prosperity to the people, these military governments, in their desperate attempts to hold on to power, either became more repressive or made the same mistakes those from whom they usurped power had made. This was the mistake made by the leaders of Africa: in an effort to adopt a Western liberal-concept of democracy, the leaders of Africa failed to recognize that, despite their Western education and exposure,

they could not divest themselves off their culture, experiences and upbringing.[9] For Western liberal democracy to succeed in Africa, this—divesting oneself of his/her culture—is what is required of not only the rulers but also the people they ruled. Western liberal democracy succeeded in the Western nations because it was cultivated out of their history and designed for the western culture and context—which is individualistic and competitive. Africa and its peoples, on the other hand, come from a totally different culture and history. In traditional African society, the accumulation of wealth and individual gain were not highly valued. Rather, equality and community seemed to be some of their higher values. As I argued elsewhere, the coming together of these two different cultures and histories was destined to result in chaos and confusion.[10]

Here, one may turn to pragmatism to reinforce the importance of history and context in showing why the introduction of western liberal democracy in most of Africa resulted in a clash or chaos and subsequently failed. According to William James, the term "pragmatism" is derived from the Greek word meaning action, from which the words "practice" and "practical" originate.[11] It was, says James, first introduced into philosophy in 1878 by Charles Peirce. After being introduced by Peirce in his essay "How to make our ideas clear," it remained unnoticed until it was reintroduced and made popular by James in1898.[12] It was later picked up by several other philosophers like John Dewey, Richard Rorty, W.V.O. Quine and D. Davidson who are known as pragmatists because of

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[8] Anver Versi, "Democratic Debate," in *New African*, June 1991, 9-10.

[9] This calls to mind an objection levied against John Rawls' original position. That is, that one cannot truly separate oneself from his/her culture and experiences as is required for his thought experiment to work.

[10] I offered a similar argument in my MA Thesis: "Ethical Implications of Politics in English Speaking West African Countries: The Need for a Greater Ethical Concern." Submitted to the Department of Philosophy, Western Michigan University, 1991.

[11] William James, *Pragmatism*, ed. Bruce Kuklick, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 26.

the practical and contextual approach they have to life and philosophical inquiry. Most of them (that is pragmatists) agree in their general approach to philosophical matters, though there might be some disagreement amongst them concerning specific doctrines.

Generally, pragmatists believe that thought and reflection can be based on nothing external to experience; it is an empirical method. Inquiry is an on going process that is contingent upon the continued existence of the community of inquirers. As a result, distinctions are valid only when they make a practical difference, that is, for the community of inquirers. There is no external or metaphysical authority for them to appeal. It is no surprise, therefore, that the pragmatist distrusts and rejects metaphysical entities and beliefs—for instance, the metaphysical beliefs of the enlightenment that truth is, so to speak, "out there"—and insists that propositions be tested by consequences—by the difference they make. All man's projects, whether scientific, ethical, political or legal must conform to the needs of human beings, and are judged in accordance with the extent to which they conform to these needs, rather than by an objective or impersonal character.

As noted above, Rorty and other pragmatists believe that truth cannot be "out there" and cannot exist independently of the human mind. On this view, whatever purely metaphysical beliefs we may have about human nature, language, morality etc., must be rejected. There is no such thing as human nature or the essence of being human. Language is contingent—it is made rather than found. Given the contingency of experience, there are, according to Rorty and other pragmatists, no well-grounded

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[12] Ibid.

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algorithms for resolving questions of morality or moral dilemmas. Questions about the absolute or enduring truth of matters concerning human nature, language and morality should not arise, they are not important. Whatever foundational theories that were introduced during the Enlightenment to answer these questions are of no consequence now; they have outlived their usefulness.

I consider the pragmatist school of thought to be pertinent in this study because pragmatists have criticized and rejected the metaphysical and foundational status of the ideals and principles of Western Liberal democracy—e.g., justice, equal political rights, freedom of speech, etc. For several years, many believed (for instance, advocates for the implementation of Western democracy in Africa and thinkers of the enlightenment period) that the only way of implementing a democracy was to approximate these ideal principles. Contrary to this belief, pragmatists have recently criticized these principles because they see them as representing some antecedent and independent absolutes or ideals. In their view, attempts at grasping the absolute, or implementing so-called ideal principles would get us no where. Taking this criticism a step further, Dewey and Rorty have postulated and defended a pragmatic, non-foundationalist, and non-essentialist conception of liberal democracy. They recommend that we dispense with such metaphysical beliefs in human equality and gravitate towards a more pragmatic conception of liberal democracy. This pragmatic conception of liberal democracy postulated by Rorty is, as we shall later see, also pertinent because it is somewhat akin to the approach to attaining democracy in Africa that I argue for in this chapter. The pragmatic method is practical, dynamic and requires that one take the historical context

into consideration. As I argue in the ensuing paragraphs, this is precisely what African nations need to do in their search for and attempts to implement a system of democracy that is suitable and adapted to the African context.

The foundational beliefs and principles that pragmatists ask us to dispense with were part and parcel of the history of Western nations. Western liberal democracy may never have taken hold in these nations without this history of having such beliefs and principles. This fact further reinforces my view that African nations, in attempting to adopt a western system of democracy, were on the road to failure. For western liberal democracy to succeed in Africa, the history of African nations (i.e., their experiences and culture) must mirror that of the history of Western nations. This, we all know, is impossible. Consequently, past attempts to import a foreign system resulted in a clash or confusion. Though Rorty asks us to dispense with the foundational beliefs and principles of the enlightenment, a statement he makes in "The contingency of a liberal community" seems to acknowledge the importance of history (i.e., the past belief in foundational principles) to the development of liberal democracy in the West.[13] He says that although the vocabulary of enlightenment rationalism (which was foundationalist) "*was essential* to the beginnings of liberal democracy, [it] has become an impediment to the preservation and progress of democratic societies."[14](emphasis mine) This statement of Rorty's may be discouraging to those who have tried or are trying to implement in Africa a system of democracy that imitates that of the West. To me, however, Rorty's statement, if anything, conveys words of encouragement, because they inadvertently endorse my claim

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[13] Richard Rorty, "The contingency of a liberal community" in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (C.I.S.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

that African nations would not achieve democracy by mimicking the West. Prompted by Rorty's statement, one may ask the following question: If scholars in the West are now rejecting the Western system of democracy (with its foundational past), what sense does it make for African nations to adopt it? The pragmatist's rejection of the foundational beliefs and principles of Western liberal democracy ought to serve as a cue to African leaders that adopting these foundational principles is not necessarily the only way to attain democracy in Africa. If the contextual (pragmatic) approach that Rorty postulates is right, we see that the road to democracy can be as varied as there are different cultures and experiences. Thus, one may want to say that if developing countries also adopt a pragmatic approach to liberal democracy they should also be able to implement a non-foundationalist, non-essentialist conception of liberal democracy. The outcome, apparently, would not be the same as that of the West because pragmatism allows for the differences in context, (for example, cultural differences) to be taken into consideration. However, as I later argue, this does not mean that the nations of Africa should completely reject the influence that the West has had on them. Africans and their leaders must be mindful that the influence of the West is, unfortunately, now a part of our history that we cannot deny.

Later, after we take a brief look at Rorty's conception of liberal democracy, we shall see that it is precisely a pragmatic method and approach to democracy that is similar to the one he adopts that needs to be adopted by African nations. Such a method would allow African nations to tap into the wealth of traditional wisdom and political practices in order to formulate a system of democracy that is more compatible and useful to the

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[14] Ibid., 44.

African context. Without such an approach and its adaptability, African nations may not be able to overcome the confusion and chaos that resulted from their failed attempts at adopting a western system of democracy.

Torn between their desire to meet the ideals and expectations of a communal society—community, equality—and their desire to meet the ideals and expectations of a liberal democratic government—individualism, competition, inequality, honesty, and accountability—the leaders of Africa may have realized that something had to give. (I want to point out here that it must not be construed by my above omission of honesty and accountability as ideals in traditional African society that they were not valued. Unlike a western liberal democratic system in which these values were an integral part of the political system, the communal nature of traditional African society, I believe, precluded the need for emphasis to be placed on these values. This is because, in African communal societies, decisions, for the most part, are made on a consensus basis so individuals involved and impacted by them, i.e., the decisions, have knowledge and/or a say in the decision process. Thus, there is really no need to emphasize honesty and accountability to ensure fairness and transparency as is necessary in an individualistic society.) African leaders who were serious about upholding the ideals of a western liberal democracy inevitably felt pressured to compromise on some of these ideals if they wanted to be accepted in their community or remain a part of it. As a leader, family and friends expected one to be a pillar of support—both financially and socially. Very often, meeting the former (financial) expectation was almost impossible if one remained honest and relied on his/her salary. Declining solicitations from family and friends, often times,

was interpreted as a sign of selfishness and the common response was condemnation. This clash of two cultures, I conjecture, is part of the cause of corruption and the reason why it is so rampant in Africa.

To elaborate on the above point, I must point out that, because of the communal nature of most African societies, the success of an individual ultimately meant the success of his/her family. Everyone in this individual's family expects to share in or benefit from his/her success or glory. In the same way that one's family and friends would empathize with one's grief, they (i.e. one's family) also expect to share in one's joy and glory. If, after becoming successful, one tries to prevent family and friends from benefiting in one way or another from his/her success, that individual faces condemnation and even ostracism from his/her family. This sentiment is not just limited to family ties. If an individual from a particular ethnic group or village becomes successful, members of his/her ethnic group or village have similar feelings and expectations. In most cases those affiliated with a successful individual see his/her success as an opportunity to gain, if not financially, at least influentially. Thus we see that the above sentiments and expectations made things difficult for the leaders of Africa. Such an individual who, by the support of family and tribe, has been put in a position of power, now has to work in an environment, i.e., a liberal democratic government, that values honesty, accountability, competition, inequality, individual gain and also opposes nepotism. If this individual is serious about, at least, the first two values and lives up to them, it becomes very difficult, on the salary that leaders of Africa earn, for him/her to live up to the expectations of his/her people and friends. Meeting these expectations would be next

to impossible for an African leader if he/she did not resort to corrupt and illicit ways. As stated earlier, I believe the coming together of these two different cultures, especially without the requisite economic foundation, was the birth of corruption in Africa. I am not suggesting here that in traditional African societies there weren't some individuals who engaged in illicit practices; rather, such practices were not as common back then as they are today because the community worked together and attempts to accumulate individual wealth were shunned or rejected. Besides, embezzlement and self-aggrandizement was almost impossible because power was often decentralized, there was a system of checks and balances, and decisions were made communally. However, with the introduction of capitalism and individualism came the destruction of the traditional values of equality and community. The leaders of Africa then found it very difficult to uphold the ideals of a liberal democratic government—individualism, transparency, honesty, and accountability—and at the same time satisfy the expectations of family and friends without giving up on at least one democratic ideal. By giving up on one ideal (for e.g., honesty) it was inevitable that they (i.e., Africa's leaders) had to give up on the other ideals (for e.g., accountability and transparency) to cover up their corrupt deeds. When faced with opposition and the threat of exposure, they resorted to repression and authoritarianism to stay in power.

If my above argument is tenable at all, it is clear that the unexamined adoption of a foreign system of government in Africa created more problems than it solved. Instead of blindly imitating the Western system of government, African leaders ought to have turned to their history for guidance and knowledge about which system of government

was ideal for Africa. The concept of democracy, as will be revealed later, was not new to Africa. Many traditional African societies, for example, in Ghana and Sierra Leone, practiced a consensus form of democracy, which was more compatible with the African culture and context. Consensus democracy was more suitable because of the communal nature of many African nations. It was commonplace for people to get together in town or village meetings to discuss and decide on issues pertinent to the governing of their societies. A western liberal form of democracy with its individualistic and competitive nature would thus not have been compatible in a communal society which thrives on discourse, established relations, working together and equality. This is not to say that there was nothing of value in the Western form of democracy that could be adapted to the African situation. Nor does it mean that the traditional concept of democracy was flawless. There are obviously elements of value in both systems of democracy. However, the individualism that was typical of western liberal democracy was not suitable for the African communal culture. I therefore advise that a systematic and conscious appraisal of both systems be undertaken; the adoption of those elements that are of value and compatible would do well for Africa. After formulating the ideal democratic system suitable for the African culture and context, we would come up with principles or policies by which we should abide and then implement them. As time goes on we would revise those principles or policies that we find to be incompatible with practice and our judgements and expectations of the ideal democratic system for our culture and context. Sometimes we would find that we need to adjust practice (here I am referring to African culture and belief system) and even sometimes our judgements about what we consider to be an ideal or just system of government. We would go back and

forth, somewhat like the process of wide reflective equilibrium,[15] between policy, practice and our judgements and make adjustments as we see fit. Eventually we would, as the Western nations did, come up with our own suitable African democratic system of government.

As revealed above, a certain level of dynamism or contingency is required in formulating a democratic system of government that is suitable for African nations. This is why, as stated earlier, adopting the pragmatic method in Africa would be ideal. The need for contingency in formulating a useful and compatible system of democracy is iterated in Rorty's adumbration of his conception of a liberal democracy. In formulating his conception, Rorty, following Isaiah Berlin,[16] claims that the recognition of the contingency of one's convictions "is the chief virtue of the members of a liberal society, and that the culture of such a society should aim at curing us of our 'deep metaphysical need.'"[17] It is central to his idea of a liberal society that a certain degree of open-mindedness must prevail. And this open mindedness must be fostered not because of what the scripture teaches us about Truth, but for its own sake. "A liberal society is one which is content to call 'true' whatever the upshot of such encounters turn out to be."[18] It is for this reason that Rorty polemicizes against supplying the liberal society with 'philosophical foundations,' because such foundations presuppose a natural order of topics and arguments which is prior to, and overrides the results of the encounter at hand.

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[15] According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Robert Audi, ed., (Cambridge University Press) the process of reflective equilibrium was first described by Goodman who claimed that, in principle, all epistemological principles are subject to revision. John Rawls further articulated this process when he applied it to ethics. He acknowledged that the process of reflective equilibrium was too narrow and replaced it with wide reflective equilibrium.

[16] In chapter one (page 45), I quoted Isaiah Belin's view that the recognition of the relative validity of one's convictions is the hallmark of a civilized man.

[17] C.I.S., 46.

[18] Ibid., 52.

Rather, than a set of foundations, what liberal culture needs is an improved self-description.

The role of the poet and novelist also plays an integral part in Rorty's liberal society. As he says, "an ideally liberal polity would be one whose culture hero is Bloom's 'strong poet' rather than the warrior, the priest, the sage or the truth-seeking 'logical,' 'objective' scientist."[19] He seems to have very good reasons for emphasizing the role of the poet in a liberal polity. First, such a culture would do away with the vocabulary of the enlightenment and its various presuppositions. Secondly, such a culture will no longer be hounded by epithets such as "relativism" and "irrationalism". (Looked at from the background of the enlightenment, Berlin's view—the contingency of our convictions, which is important to Rorty's liberal society—has been described as relativistic. With the vocabulary of the enlightenment abandoned this accusation is no longer valid—there is no way of rising above language to scrutinize it.) Third, because the idea of foundations would be dropped by such a culture, it would no longer "assume that a form of cultural life is no stronger than its philosophical foundations."[20] (Because of the way African culture and customs permeate society, the importance accorded to culture here by Rorty would prove to be very instructive in the African context.) The justification of liberal society would be regarded simply as a matter of historical comparison with other attempts at social organization. Within the context of our discussion, we see that justification for traditional political systems is derived from comparing it with the current failure of attempts to implement a western system of democracy.

Without such foundations of liberalism, how would the ideals of the liberal society be fulfilled? To this Rorty says "A liberal society is one whose ideals can be fulfilled by

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[19] Ibid., 53.
[20] Ibid.

persuasion rather than force, by reform rather than revolution, by the free and open encounters of present linguistic and other practices with suggestions for new practices."[21] This, in other words, is to say that the "ideal liberal society is one which has no purpose except freedom, no goal except a willingness to see how such encounters go and to abide by the outcome."[22] By no means is this society what it is—a society whose hero is the strong poet—has the morality it has, or speaks the language it does, because of the fact that it approximates the will of God or the nature of man; rather, it is such a society because certain poets and revolutionaries of the past spoke as they did.

Recognition of the contingency of one's language, conscience, morality, and of one's highest hopes is, according to Rorty, "to adopt a self-identity which suits one for citizenship in such an ideally liberal state."[23] It is for this reason that an ideal liberal citizen is conceived to be one who thinks of the founders and preservers of her society as such poets instead of someone who had discovered or imagined the truth about the world or about humanity. (As I later discuss, the importance of poets in Rorty's liberal state can be compared to the traditional elders, leaders and story tellers in African nations, who may also be conceived as the founders and preservers of society.) Though the ideal citizen may or may not be a poet herself, Rorty grants her enough common sense to see the founders and transformers of society as people who happened to find words to fit their fantasies, and metaphors that by chance answered to the needs of the rest of society.[24]

In a nutshell, we can describe the citizens of Rorty's liberal utopia as:

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[21] Ibid., 60.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., 61.
[24] Ibid.

people who had a sense of contingency of their language of moral deliberation, and thus of their consciences, and thus of their community. They would be liberal ironists—people who met Schumpeter's criterion of civilization, people who combined commitment with a sense of the contingency of their own commitment.[25]

With such a conception of the ideal liberal state and liberal citizen, one may be curious to know what conception of justice Rorty has for this ideally liberal state. To explicate his conception of justice, Rorty, in the "Priority of Democracy To Philosophy," turns to Rawls who, "following up on Dewey, shows us how liberal democracy can get along without philosophical presuppositions."[26] In attributing a Deweyan view to Rawls, Rorty claims that we do not require any discipline such as "philosophical anthropology" to preface politics; all we need is sociology and history.[27] In effect, it is a misconception on one's part to think of Rawls' view, as Dworkin has done, as "rights based" as opposed to "goal based." The notion of a "basis" is not crucial to Rawls' view of politics. As Rorty says, "it is not that we know, on antecedent philosophical grounds, that it is of the essence of human beings to have rights and then proceed to ask how society might preserve and protect these rights."[28]

Thus, we see that Rawls "wants his conception of justice to 'avoid...claims about the essential nature and identity of persons.'"[29] We may presume, on this conception of justice, that "he [i.e., Rawls] wants questions about the point of human existence, or the meaning of human life, to be reserved for private life. A liberal democracy will not only exempt opinions on such matters from legal coercion, but also aim at disengaging discussions of such questions from the discussions of social policy."[30]

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 179.
[27] Ibid., 181.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 183.
[30] Ibid.

To sum up, Rawls's conception of justice (which I take to be Rorty's as well) may be outlined as follows:

> What justifies a conception of justice is not its being true to an order antecedent to and given to us, but its congruence with our deeper understanding of ourselves and our aspirations, and our realization that, *given our history and the traditions embedded in our public life*, it is the most reasonable doctrine *for us*.[31]

The above quotation more than confirms the need for the adoption of the pragmatic approach to democracy in Africa. The pragmatic approach, as revealed by the above quotation, seems to speak specifically to the African situation—that is, of being subject to a system of government that is, so to speak, "antecedent to and given to us." What is needed in Africa today is an approach to democracy that is justified by its "congruence with our deeper understanding of ourselves and our aspirations, and our realization that, *given our history and the traditions embedded in our public life*, it is the most reasonable [system of government] *for us*."

In particular, such an approach would be quite adapted to the African context because of the overall nature of African culture and system of beliefs. Most African societies, in their culture and system of beliefs, take a practical and situational approach to life. A good example of this is the abundance and frequent use of proverbs and folklore in African societies. The former, proverbs, are situational in content and are commonly assumed to contain the wisdom of the African. In point of fact, proverbs are statements about life, which go beyond the simple level of observation and experience and begin to reflect on the nature of things, the way they are and the purpose they serve. According to Aloysius M. Lugira, "a proverb in African tradition is not only a didactical saying, it is a store house of native wisdom and philosophy fraught with wit, rhetoric humour and poetic values.... African peoples record their great ideas and serious reflection in

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[31] Ibid., 185.

proverbs."[32] Adopting a pragmatic approach to democracy in Africa would thus be instrumental in tapping into this wealth of traditional wisdom and allow us to examine ourselves, our history—to see what worked for us in the past—examine our needs for today and the future, and formulate practical solutions to our problems and implement them. A political system like western liberal democracy that leads us to approximate ideals that are "out there" is clearly not what the nations of Africa need.

Traditional African Societies:

To buttress my above claim that traditional African societies offer a resource for ideas on developing a democratic system suitable for Africa, it is fitting that we take a brief look at what traditional African societies were like. Robert S. Jordan, in his description of pre-colonial constitutionalism, claims that the lives of traditional West African societies were guided by unwritten constitutions.[33] To provide the stability needed for a society's survival, these West African societies relied considerably on their customs and conventions. Since there was a very thin line between the religious and the secular, the actions and security of kings, chiefs and village headmen were guided by the dictates of these customs and conventions. There were two main types of political systems in these traditional societies: centralized kingdoms or chiefdoms and uncentralized communities. Unlike the former, the latter had no single principal focus of authority. Uncentralized communities had communal forms of government, that is, shared or participative government. They were not, according to Jordan, "governed by a hierarchical order of chiefs, but by egalitarian councils."[34] Since customs and conventions play such an

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[32] Aloysius M. Lugira, *African Christian Theology*, Vol. 8, 1979, 50ff.
[33] Robert S. Jordan, *Government and Power in West Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1969), 64.
[34] Ibid., 65.

important part in West African political systems, an examination of them in more detail would be very useful.

It was a custom in pre-colonial political systems to practice a consensus form of democracy. Whenever a major policy was to be adopted, the representatives of the people had to receive the consent of the people before any decisions were made. Tribal life was, in a sense, classless. Since leaders were only representatives of lineages, villages or clans, it was quite unlikely for them to be alienated from those who put them in positions of authority. Social divisions in traditional society were therefore not determined by differences in economic interests. Also, pre-colonial constitutionalism was based on a system of checks and balances which ensured that those in positions of power did not misuse their authority. The fact that all the inhabitants of the chiefdom would hear about this misconduct also acted as a check. This helped promote an egalitarian society. According to Jordan, even in centralized governments where the king was the "source of authority, authority was decentralized and delegated to fief-holders whose political relations with the king also gave them power."[35] Endorsing this point, Pearl T. Robinson states that, "although kingship signified centralized political authority, constitutional checks and dual-sex authority arrangements guarded against unlimited power."[36]

Another way centralized kingdoms put a check on authoritarianism was by giving the people power to remove a chief. For example, among the Akan, chiefs were often times

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[35] Ibid., 66.

destooled. That is, power was taken from the chiefs. All these features in African pre-colonial constitutionalism arose out of one common element which R. Jordan calls "the 'all-inclusive harmony' of tribal life."[37] These societies were dedicated to communal harmony.

A democracy is commonly defined as a government by the people and for the people. The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines a democracy as a "system of government by the whole people of a country, especially through representatives whom they elect." The key elements in a democracy are the acknowledgement of rights, freedom—e.g., speech, religion etc.—and the "treatment of each other by citizens as equals, without social class divisions." Based on this definition of democracy and the above delineation of traditional African societies, it is plausible to contend that pre-colonial societies, in their efforts to maintain an egalitarian system of government, were democratic to an extent. They were democratic because, as mentioned in our historical background, the customs and conventions of society guided the leaders of Africa. Many African societies emphasized (and some still do) brotherhood and the preservation of life. These values that were emphasized guarded against traditional leaders alienating themselves from the people or allowing them to take the lives of those who opposed or challenged them. If we could implement, in modern Africa, a political system that directs leaders to embrace and be guided by some of these values that guided traditional leaders, a lot of the despotism and unnecessary killing may be prevented. The traditional values of communalism, brotherhood, accountability to the people and the preservation of life

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[36] Pearl T. Robinson, "New Conflicts", in *The Africans*, ed. Ali A. Mazrui and Toby Kleban Levine, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), 137.

are some of the values that, if inculcated, will do well for modern Africa. By so doing, it would not be easy for leaders, who consider themselves and their subjects to be part of one big family, to singularly make decisions to imprison or kill those who oppose them. To do so, one would be required, as in traditional society, to solicit the consent of the people, which, most likely, will not be given. Hopefully, with a pragmatic approach to democracy, the right sort of system that recognizes and builds upon these values will be implemented—a system that works for the people.

Substantiating my claim that Traditional African societies were democratic is the following quotation from Jordan's book. He states:

> People in pre-colonial Africa were acquainted with the pure type of democracy. As an observer said, "The African is fully entitled to insist that his method of 'palaver', by which unanimous opinion is arrived at after a long and patient discussion is just as democratic as, if not more democratic than, the counting of heads and making the decision depend on a majority opinion."[38]

Africa, at this time, did not have nation states, but only kingdoms and various tribal/ethnic groups. Historians report that whether the society was centralized or uncentralized the people, in many parts of Africa, still had say in important decisions. Centralized kingdoms had a hierarchy system with a supreme king or chief at the top. Under the king were several paramount chiefs who joined him in making decisions. Input from the people to the paramount chiefs came from the village chiefs who, in turn, convened with the people on a regular basis. Villages were noted for their market place meetings. Describing one of these meetings Baffour Ankomah says that, "[a]t such meetings, every mentally-sound male adult was eligible to speak or vote against the

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[37] Jordan, 68.

motion(s) on the table. Freedom of speech, therefore, was a cardinal principle. Nobody arrested anybody for expressing a contrary opinion, though if one unduly insulted the chief or elders or behaved unbecomingly towards them, he was rebuked and fined. If this is not democracy at work, nothing is!"[39] Admittedly, such a gender exclusive town meeting would be unacceptable today, but, unfortunately, this much cannot be said for most of the governments of Africa today. This method of discussing issues until consensus is arrived at was, one would affirm, very time consuming; and, as Ankomah himself points out, one cannot plausibly summon all eligible citizens of an African nation to the market square to discuss issues such as taking an IMF or World Bank loan. As revealed above, this must be done by *elected* representatives as was done by traditional African societies when communities became too large for everyone to share in all governmental decisions. Unfortunately, the essence of the traditional system of governing got lost along the way. (The discussion in the following paragraph will point to a possible time when the perversion of the traditional political system in Africa began.) Though we do have representative government today, the representatives are not always the choice of the people and the respect for contrary opinions that prevailed in the past is, for the most part today, no longer cherished but rather silenced. As Ankomah rightly points out, "[t]he trouble Africa has today is how to refine this system of traditional democratic governance and elevate it to the national level." Hopefully, the process I describe above (i.e., formulating policies and then subjecting them to the process of wide reflective equilibrium) is one step in the right direction of capturing and refining the essence of the traditional system of democratic governance.

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[38] Ibid., 44.
[39] Baffour Ankomah, "Why Africa Needs Democracy" in *New African*, (June 1991), 11.

Coming back to my earlier point that the introduction of western culture and democracy into Africa played a role in the demise of most of the continent, we see that things started to go wrong from the time the first missionaries set foot in Africa. With the advent of missionaries and colonialism, this traditional communal system fell into complete disarray. The religion of the missionaries stressed individual salvation, which obviously clashed with the traditional African's complete identification with his/her community. Education, being a requirement for advancement in the colonial service, was based on competition and individual initiative instead of traditional ties. Also, with colonialism came a more developed commercial system, in addition to a money economy. "Western trade" in Jordan's opinion, "brought with it the profit motive, which is the basic feature of individualism, and the idea that competition could lead to a more prosperous life."[40] Robinson captures the nature of this cultural clash that occurred after the introduction of colonialism in these words:

> Christianity and colonial rule brought new conflicts to African society. Although earlier times were far from idyllic, in the past Africans traditionally had had numerous means of dealing with sociopolitical conflict. Because the changing realities of power have blurred the lines of authority, today we find that struggles over who is in charge and what ought to be done can erupt in communal violence or provoke a national crisis.... [A good example of this is the dwindling power and respect of the Somali elders and leaders. Consequently, they were unable to command the people's respect and control the gunmen.] Most present day conflicts, however, stem from the difficulty of state building, a process which is complicated by the competing claims of authority and new forms of stratification introduced under European hegemony.[41]

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[40] Jordan, 71.
[41] Robinson, 133.

With the above historical background it comes as no surprise that many African states tumbled on to a regressive path destined for self-destruction. Blinded by their desire to become like their colonial masters and unable to truly relinquish their African culture; Africans, metaphorically, came to a fork on the road to political and economic development. With no timely, systematic, and conscious appraisal of this quandary coming from Africa's leaders and "talented tenth",[42] stagnation and decay set in. Probably, such an appraisal would have resulted in a hypothesis determining whether Africans ought to amalgamate both cultures or completely relinquish one and embrace the other. Relinquishing their African culture would, obviously, be impossible, so the other options would have been to totally reject Western culture and its political system and completely embrace African culture and traditions or find a way to unite the two that would be progressive. Some Africanists have tried the former and failed. They failed, probably because western influence in Africa was considerable and the world is too interdependent to either halt or truly reject its influence. The likely option then is, as suggested previously, for the leaders and scholars of various African nations to analyze both cultures and political systems and come up with a political system suitable for the African society or nation in question.

I must concede that going back to our roots is not going to be a very easy task, but this is where I see the utility of Rorty's conception of the poet or novelist as the cultural hero of an ideally liberal polity. I would like to compare Rorty's poet to the elders of African societies who told stories of the past and how things were. This is how the culture and traditions were handed down from generation to generation. The main vehicles for

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[42] As a reminder, I used and explained this term, that I borrow from W.E.B. Dubois, in chapter II, page 96.

conveying African heritage were proverbs, myths, and folk stories; hence their importance in African society. Embracing these folk stories, proverbs etc. and teaching them to the children would facilitate the dissemination of what we consider to be of value in traditional African society. (For instance, there are some proverbs, amongst an ethnic group in Sierra Leone, that emphasize the difficulty and necessity of discipline. For example, "it is difficult to find a black goat at night." There are also some that stress tolerance and compassion, for example, "we cannot throw away our troublesome children—we have to put up with them because, good or bad, they are ours." There is also a proverb that recognizes our affinity but at the same time acknowledges the possibility of disagreement. For example, "due to the proximity of the teeth to the tongue, getting in each other's way is inevitable."[43] Teaching these proverbs to the children, who are the future leaders, will help inculcate the values of discipline, tolerance and comradeship.) The beauty of this is that, combined with pragmatism, it would be dynamic. We would be able to drop or pick up those stories/proverbs that we consider or find to be detrimental or facilitating to produce the kind of society we want. In other words, as society develops into what we would like it to be, the stories would be changed to facilitate this process. Or, on the other hand, we would adjust society (or the rules that guide society) so that the values emphasized or embodied in these proverbs/stories are reinforced. Thus, the stagnation characteristic of the foundationalist conception would be averted. This dynamism, I am sure others would agree, is what is needed in Africa.

At this juncture, I want to reiterate that I do not, by the above analysis, want to be construed as casting blame on Western nations as some other writers have done. My

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[43] Unavoidably, some of the meaning and value of these proverbs is lost in translation.

reason for discussing the role played by Western nations is purely in the interest of analysis. As we know, the first step to resolving a problem is to acknowledge and understand it. In understanding the problem one must know the causes or factors leading to the problem. Therefore, for us to find a way to resolve the problems of Africa we need to know the contributing elements to its (Africa's) demise. As demonstrated above the introduction of Western culture, religion and political systems is one such cause.

Single-party or Multi-partyism?

Now that one reason for Africa's failed attempts at democratization has been determined, we can turn to the question of what type of democracy—as in single or multi-party system—will augur well for Africa. Determining this is very important if we want our move towards democratization to be successful. My first inclination is to say that, if we want to adopt a more consensual type of democracy, the one party system will be more suitable considering Africa's communal nature. I shall expand on my reasons for saying so later. The popular position in Africa today is multi-partyism. After a long period of repressive one-party governments, Africans are today calling for a turn to multi-partyism. Across the continent, this attitude has produced the crumbling of repressive civilian and military regimes and a move towards multi-partyism in countries like Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana and Kenya. In some cases like, Kenya, this was an exercise in futility because the so-called free and fair elections failed to remove the "klepto-despots." of Africa. Be that as it may, many citizens of African nations are still calling for multi-party elections; and recently we had a triumph of multi-party democratization in Senegal. I will, however, counsel caution in a hasty dismissal of the one-party system. Are Africans rejecting

single partyism because it is not good for Africa and has and will continue to fail, or are they rejecting it because they have come to associate it with repressive and authoritarian governments? Admittedly, the history of the one-party system in Africa has not been one of happy memories, but we must not allow the crimes of the past regimes to cloud our judgement. Advocates of multi-partyism must recognize that democratization does not equal multi-partyism, and the latter does not necessarily constitute a recipe for instant salvation.

In analyzing this issue we must first take a look at the primary characteristic of both types of democracy. Multi-partyism is, in its nature, divisive, whereas single-partyism is more cohesive. If this is true, a divisive political system is clearly not what Africa needs now. The disruptive and counter-productive effects of tribalism have, for many years, plagued most nations in Africa. A political system that thrives on divisions and competition in this setting would clearly be fuel to the fire. Unfortunately, this is not just conjecture on my part. It is a fact. As history would attest, Africa's experiments with multi-partyism very often resulted in the polarization of each political party around a tribe. As one would expect from the competitive nature of multi-partyism, this resulted in tribal rivalry and conflicts and, in some cases, subsequently civil war. Instances of this are numerous—Zaire, Rwanda, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia. Perhaps a more cohesive political system like single-partyism may have been practical in the African setting. With a one-party system of democracy, all ethnic groups may have come to see themselves as under one umbrella which might have averted the ethnic rivalry that devastated parts of Africa.

One may want to object to this on two counts. One, it can be argued that multi-partyism does not necessarily encourage tribal rivalry. Tribal conflicts ensued in Africa because the leaders encouraged and exploited tribal differences and conflicts to further their own political agenda or selfish interests. Two, if multi-partyism does really promote ethnic rivalry, why did we not see the same in Europe where multi-partyism is the dominant type of democracy? I concede to some truth in the first objection. However, multi-partyism made it easier for African leaders to exploit tribal divisions. Due to the competitive element in multi-partyism, portraying other parties and tribes as the opposition that must be violently defeated was made very easy for African leaders. In response to the second objection, a quote from Anver Versi citing one of the differences between Western nations and African nations would suffice. He says: "African nations are composed of distinct, often hostile tribes arbitrarily brought together; Western nations have no tribal problems because their tribes have, over hundreds of years, merged into large tribes such as the English and the French. When new 'tribes' were introduced into their society, there was an immediate reaction which is called racism."[44] Thus, because of a completely different ethnic make up, Western nations were not susceptible to the ethnic rivalry and the polarization of parties around tribes, as was the case in most of Africa.

Replying to this counter objection, it can be pointed out that though one may concede the above difference between Western nations and African nations, it still does not prove the validity of my claim that a one-party democracy is suitable for Africa. The ethnic rivalry

that I claim multi-partyism fosters could very well still occur under a single-party system. If the conditions already prevail for ethnic rivalry, no matter whether we have multi-partyism or single-partyism, if there is animosity between the ethnic groups there will still be conflicts. Granting this, it is better, as Ankomah quotes Wiseman as saying, to have a "competitive party system [that] is more natural in that it reflects the plural nature of all African states."[45] I am willing to accept the validity of the first part of this objection—that is, if animosity between the different tribes already exists, ethnic conflict and rivalry will persist regardless of what party system we have. However, knowledge of this fact offers more of a reason for us to have a party system that would bring us together instead of divide us further. The second part of the objection, though, seems to rest on the assumption that a one-party system cannot be pluralistic. This, however, is not true, because we could still have the interests of each group represented and heard under a one-party system. Attaining this is, I believe, easier when we have a consensus type of democracy, which I claim the one-party system is more compatible with. As suggested earlier, the great thing about a consensus form of democracy is that it allows the views of each group to be heard. Each group, through the process of discourse or "palaver", is allowed to voice its opinion. Even though they may not agree on all issues, they (i.e. those engaged in discourse) are able to come to a decision, by giving and taking, which all parties can live with. By no means am I implying here that there will be uniformity of objectives or total agreement. My contention that the one party system can also be pluralistic, in itself, negates the possibility of consistent uniformity of objectives or total agreement. As the term pluralism implies, there would be differences in opinion or

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[44] Versi, 9
[45] Ankomah, 11.

objectives between groups and representatives of groups. It is mainly by recognizing and respecting each other's opinions and/or objectives (which is a value of the consensus type of democracy) and being willing to give or take when necessary that consensus/agreement can be achieved.

An article by Martin Benjamin, "The Value of Consensus" sheds some light on the various forms of agreement or ways in which agreement may be achieved amongst individuals/groups.[46] Though writing on an unrelated subject—agreement amongst members of bioethics committees—Benjamin, in this article, captures the ways in which I envisage agreement may be achieved in a consensus type of democracy. He outlines four ways in which agreement may be achieved. The first is complete consensus. Though rare, this type of agreement is manifested when there is "a collective unanimous opinion" among individuals or groups. Consensus in this case, says Benjamin, is "predeliberatively complete" when "members of... [a group] immediately agree on a recommendation and its supporting values or principles."[47] The second form of agreement is by overlapping consensus—a term Benjamin borrows from political philosopher John Rawls. Here individuals with diverse and sometimes conflicting moral, religious and philosophical outlooks come to agree on a particular position, policy or principle. In explaining this form of agreement, Benjamin states that Rawls contends that in the same way different premises may lead to the same conclusion, individuals with differing comprehensive outlooks may support the same conception of social justice. In

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[46] Martin Benjamin, "The Value of Consensus" in *Society's Choices: Social and Ethical Decision Making in Medicine*, eds. Ruth Ellen Bulger, Elizabeth Meyer Bobby and Harvey V. Fineberg, (Washington, D.C: National Academy [of Sciences] Press, 1995), pp. 241-60.

[47] Ibid., 242.

this event, there is "overlap among those parts of different individual's comprehensive, moral, religious, and their philosophical views that include a particular conception of social justice, but not among their moral, religious, and philosophical views as a whole."[48] Thus, for example, a representative of a group may support a policy requiring that schools teach African traditional religions because of his/her group's religious beliefs, and another representative may support the same policy because of his/her group's beliefs about the educational value of traditional religions. Though there is agreement about the implementation of this policy, it is, however, based on different reasons. Benjamin notes that consensus in societies that acknowledge the diversity in their comprehensive moral outlooks will often be overlapping. The third form of agreement (which is quite similar to what I mean by giving and taking above) described by Benjamin is compromise. "Central to compromise," he says, "is the idea of mutual concession for mutual gain."[49] In this regard, though involved parties may hold personal moral views that are not necessarily shared by the others, they, for the sake of agreement, decide to speak with one voice in the recommendations that the group makes. Further:

> Each party to the compromise makes concessions for the sake of agreement on a single recommendation that seems to have some independent validity and to capture as much of one polar position as it does the other. The matter is not, however, fully settled; there is no closure, no final harmony, no complete or overlapping consensus. Moral compromise is not, strictly speaking, resolution. It makes the best of what contending parties regard as a bad situation. Individual... members [or representatives of groups] may subsequently try to persuade those with whom they disagree of the superiority of their initial position with an aim to its eventually being reconsidered and endorsed by the group as a whole.[50]

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[48] Ibid., 243.
[49] Ibid., 244.
[50] Ibid., 245.

The final form of agreement Benjamin describes is one that I would endorse only as a last resort because it utilizes an element of the competitive party system—the majority rule—that I reject. What makes it acceptable is the fairness requirement that he imposes on it. According to him, though attempts at complete or overlapping consensus or reaching an acceptable compromise may have failed, members may still believe that making one of two recommendations on the issue at hand is better than making no recommendation at all. With this objective, members, in the interest of attaining consensus, resort to taking a vote on the alternatives, then endorsing, as a group, the recommendation with the most votes. What makes this form of agreement that Benjamin recommends distinctive and at the same time acceptable is the fact that it includes elements of both consensus and compromise. He says that there is, first, "consensus on the procedure to be followed in determining the group's substantive position—what we might call procedural—as opposed to substantive consensus. Second, agreeing to abide by the outcome of this procedure is a type of compromise."[51] Employment of majority rule under these circumstances, says Benjamin, introduces an element of fairness that makes it acceptable to all concerned. "What would be unfair, however, is resorting to vote-taking without the consent of all committee members and then attributing the results to the committee as a whole. A majority position, under such conditions, is attributable only to those who voted for that position, and not to those who were opposed to settling the matter by vote-taking."[52]

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[51] Ibid., 246.
[52] Ibid., 246.

By coming to a decision only after consensus is reached in any of the above ways demonstrates that it (i.e., consensus democracy) allows for recognition and respect to be shown for each view. In other words, parties to the decision are allowed an opportunity to give their consent—whether it's with regard to the decision being made or the procedure to be used in coming to a decision. Anger and frustration, often times, results when an individual feels due respect and recognition for his/her opinion has not been shown. A competitive multi-party system, on the other hand, does not necessarily allow for recognition, respect, and voicing of each view. With multi-partyism, it is invariably the party that represents the most people that gets the most votes. If parties are divided along tribal lines, the largest tribe will have the largest party, which, in turn, means that it is this tribe and party that will have the largest number of votes. Thus, the interests of minority tribes and parties will inevitably become marginalized and will, as Versi states, forever be consigned to the opposition.[53] The animosity that results from such marginalization is what breeds the rivalry and conflict between tribes/ethnic groups. With a one-party system under which each group sees itself as under the same umbrella as other groups, each group sees itself as a *part* (that represents a particular interest) of a whole; not as one *against* the other as is peculiar of multi-partyism. It is this distinguishing feature of multi-partyism (i.e., it is divisive and competitive) that I believe excludes it from being compatible with a consensus form of democracy. Nor does it really offer the appropriate or conducive platform or environment for one to achieve consensus—whether complete, overlapping or compromise. As I noted in the historical background, a consensus type of democracy is, in nature, cohesive and consequently

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[53] Versi, 10.

more adaptable to a communal society. A divisive and competitive multi-party system will therefore be incompatible with a consensus democracy.

In referring to groups under one umbrella, I am aware that a dissenter could make the case that these groups could also be separated along tribal lines. What then, he/she might ask, would prevent the rivalry and conflict that I am claiming occurs under multi-partyism? Moreover, my argument is based on a dubious premise—I seem to be making an assumption that, with multi-partyism, the different parties will always represent different ethnic groups. It is very possible for each party to be representative of all ethnic groups, not just one. The first objection I will say is quite possible (especially, if we try to implement one-partyism after there is already animosity between the different groups). However, what the dissenter fails to realize is that I am not calling for a single party system in isolation, but in conjunction with a consensus type of democracy. With the two together we shall, hopefully, be able to heal old wounds and possibly avert any further rifts or dissension. This is because the discursive and cohesive nature of a consensus democracy and one-party system will help the different ethnic groups to understand each other and feel that their views are being heard and respected. This is what prevents the rivalry and conflict that I claim is fostered by multi-partyism. To the second objection I only have history to show that my premise is true. Political parties in Africa have, for the most part, been separated along tribal lines. Futile attempts have been made to make political parties more inclusive, but such attempts have come too late after the damage is already done. Any animosity or rivalry that already prevails prevents political parties from becoming fully integrated. Furthermore, it is natural for people to want to associate

with their own kind or people they can relate to. With this, in mind we must be careful not to have a political system that will promote or encourage this nature in a way that results in conflict, but one that will bring us together as one.

As much as I may want to succumb to the popular view and endorse multi-partyism, the evidence on the ground, history, and the ethnic relations in Africa convince me otherwise. Quoting Versi, I am "convinced that a multi-party system of government will fragment African countries, lead to greater violence, encourage more graft and corruption, destroy the already shaky economies and set us back at least [another] 50 years."[54] For now, considering the current political situation in most of Africa, the above assertion will hold true. Just as, in 1796, George Washington, in his farewell address, cautioned against political parties especially when founded on geographical discriminations, I caution against political parties founded on tribal divisions or any other criteria. Probably, several years later we would be able to adopt a multi-party system, but for now, I am convinced that in our search for a suitable democracy it is expedient and easier to get it right with a one-party system first. In hindsight, we can now say that Washington was wrong to oppose the party system because it later led America to become one of the greatest democracies. Similarly, history may later prove me wrong, but, for now, I am convinced that a one-party system is the direction we should go.

Corruption in Africa

Another contributing factor to Africa's political and economic devastation is corruption.

Kempe Ronald Hope, Sr. in an article, "Corruption and Development in Africa" offers

the following definition of corruption:

> The term corruption comes from a special form of the Latin verb to break, *rumpere-* which implies that something is badly broken (Tanzi, 1994). This something might be a moral or ethical code or, more often, an administrative rule or a law. The person who breaks it derives therefrom some recognizable benefit for him/herself, family, tribe, party, or some other relevant group.[55]

For the subject matter of his article, he sees corruption first and foremost as the

"...utilization of official positions or titles for personal or private gain, either on an

individual or collective basis, at the expense of the public good, in violation of

established rules and ethical considerations, and through the direct or indirect

participation of one or more public officials whether they be politicians or bureaucrats."[56]

As pointed out in the previous chapter, corruption in Africa has been a major stumbling

block for the success of the foreign aid program in that region. Most of all, it has been a

major inhibitor of political and economic development in Africa. He thus rightly refers

to corruption in Africa as the "AIDS of Democracy." Most people think of corruption's

impact only in terms of the economy and do not realize the political impact it has on our

continent. Its political impact is manifested when unqualified individuals, as a result of

bribery or nepotism, are put in positions of authority. This results in policies detrimental

to the nation being implemented. Corruption in many parts of Africa has become a way

of life and perpetrators feel no shame in their actions. I do recall that there was a period

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[54] Versi, 9.

[55] Kempe Ronald Hope, Sr. "Corruption and Development in Africa," in *Corruption and Development in Africa*, ed. Kempe and Bornwell C. Chikulo, (Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), 18.

in Sierra Leone (the Vouchergate scandal) when the warped-minded felt fortunate to be in a governmental position in which one could 'milk' public coffers or solicit bribes from those needing services. Everyone knew that their (i.e., corrupt government officials) lavish lifestyle was financed by corruption; but, instead of eliciting feelings of disgust and disapproval, these individuals were admired and praised by their benefactors and a portion of the public. The disheartening thing is that most of those who squander government resources do not invest the money locally. Most of it is siphoned off to foreign accounts and investments. This proves that these corrupt officials were/are well aware of the consequences of their illicit acts—they are destroying their nation and economy. Hence they have no confidence in their economy to invest in it.

Though I mentioned, in chapter three, that corruption in the foreign aid program was perpetrated by not only recipient nations but also by some donors; the latter is but a drop in the ocean when compared to the former. Aid abuse and misappropriation reached near epidemic proportions in some African nations. Projects were embarked on, not because of their utility, but because they offered greater kickbacks or embezzlement opportunities for officials. According to Gervase S. Maipose, aid was also wasted on ill-conceived projects and programmes, and by even able and well-intentioned leaders such as Tanzania's Nyerere and Zambia's Kaunda.[57] Citing instances of aid abuse or misuse, Maipose reports that within the past three years an estimated US $1.6 billion has been lost in South Africa due to official corruption. In Zimbabwe, the government in 1991, as

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Gervase S. Maipose, "Aid Abuse and Mismanagement in Africa: Problems of Accountability, Transparency and Ethical Leadership," in *Corruption and Development in Africa*, ed. Kempe and Bornwell C. Chikulo, (Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), 92.

a result of theft and fraud by public officials, lost a total of US $3 million.[58] The former president of Zaire, Mobutu, is legendary as far as the misuse and abuse of aid is concerned. Mobutu built for himself a self-enrichment system which, according to Maipose, "rested on the pillars of direct bribes from foreign governments and security agencies, payments and takings from investors, diversion from government budgets, embezzlement of export earnings, and diversion of foreign aid and foreign loans."[59] The peculiar thing about Mobutu's embezzlement scheme is that Western governments were quite aware of his corrupt ways and, in a sense, acquiesced by continuing to "deliver foreign aid—grants and concessional loans—as a direct pay-off for Mobutu's political services...."[60] Mobutu performed specific military ventures (for e.g. during the Angolan civil war) and foreign governments, says Maipose, had "found that providing [him] with a chance to make money facilitated their desired transactions."[61] "Official flows of loans were dictated largely by political considerations, not by Zaire's credit-worthiness or the probability that funded projects would produce enough resources to repay the debt."[62] Consequently, by 1991, reports Maipose, Zaire had amassed a foreign debt of US $10.7 billion.[63] The military ventures/assistance rendered by Mobutu in Angola, Chad and Togo are an example of corruption having an impact on politics. Without the possibility of financial gain, I am quite sure he would not have been willing to offer assistance to these countries. The embezzlement/misuse of aid funds has resulted in what I refer to as the recycling of funds/resources. Western nations give aid to African nations, which is embezzled by corrupt officials and then invested by these officials in Western nations. In

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[58] Ibid., 92-93.
[59] Ibid., 94.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

reality, the aid did not benefit the people of Africa but the officials and the Western nations that offered the aid.

What then are the causes of corruption in Africa? Hope cites six causes of corruption. Briefly, the causes of corruption are: One, the "total exercise by the ruling elite of all power attached to national sovereignty."[64] This has led to the supremacy of the state over civil society and to the ascendancy of the patrimonial state, which, in turn, has created a stranglehold on the economic and political levers of power. Corruption, he says, thrives through this stranglehold for "it is through this stranglehold that all decision-making occurs and patronage is dispensed."[65] In fact, in some African nations no distinction is made between public and private interest and public officials blatantly appropriate government funds.[66] Two, "along with the emergence of the patrimonial state came the expanded [and unavoidable] role of state activity."[67] Economic decisions became centralized and a bureaucracy with discretionary power expanded. The involvement of government in the economy "has allowed for the systematic exploitation of illegal income earning opportunities by public officials and the enhancement of rent-seeking opportunities."[68] Thus, even getting a driver's license meant that one might be coerced into paying a bribe. Third, the "economic retardation and elusive development" that resulted from this centralized economy has made the majority of African nations to be

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Hope, 19.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., 20.
[68] Ibid.

among the poorest in the world.[69] Poverty, obviously, is one of the primary causes of corruption. Thus, under such circumstances, many of the forthright in Africa are forced to engage in corrupt acts to supplement, and sometimes even provide income if they want to survive. Four, corruption is engendered by the lack of the rule of law and of administrative predictability. Within the context of the patrimonial state, predictability and the rule of law are very important. Without them, says Hope, there is significant discretion in decision making, which "produces irrational decisions that may be illegal but which cannot be challenged in the courts. Under such circumstances, corruption not only thrives but is more likely to go unpunished."[70] Five, the paucity of exemplary ethical leadership exhibited by politicians and public officials is another contributing factor to corruption. This factor, I believe, is not only important, but is also one of the primary causes of corruption in Africa. This is because, as Hope states, when leadership is unethical it encourages corruption in subordinates; whereas a forthright leadership would instill the same in all sections of society.[71] The government of Siaka Stevens in Sierra Leone is a good example of this. Corruption in Sierra Leone became rampant after the pilfering of public funds by Stevens and his officials became public. Finally, sociocultural norms, says Hope, contributes to corruption. He claims that the "widespread existence of personalism results in significant loyalties to one's family, tribe, and friends."[72] The impact which he says personalism has on society is somewhat similar to the claim I make that one's cultural ties and obligations to family and friends conflict with the duties one has within a Western liberal democratic system. He states

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[69] Ibid., 21.
[70] Ibid., 22.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

that "[s]uch loyalties are at the expense of loyalty to the state for they often require the contravention of rules and regulations to maintain them."[73] These sociocultural norms, asserts Hope, are a major source of corruption and nepotism in public life.

If these are the causes of corruption what, then, can be done to control or eliminate it? I will say that we need to start first with our leadership. By choosing leaders who have a genuine concern for their nation and people and are forthright, we can be on the road to progress and development. As mentioned in chapter three, most of Africa's problems are man-made. Without good governance and good management, regardless of how much assistance we get from donors, we will remain in this whirlpool of decay and devastation. Hope does suggest using punishment as a deterrent, but, as he himself admits, attempts at this (for example in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia) are short lived.[74] Military takeovers in these countries meted out punishment to perpetrators and promised accountability only to commit the same offenses themselves. This is why I say a complete revolution in the minds of Africans is needed in conjunction with a political system (like a single-party consensus democracy) that reinforces the traditional ideals that used to be valued—honesty, community before self, equality etc. I am convinced that there was, and probably still is, a lack of patriotism in our rulers. If a citizen (especially one in a position of authority) truly loves his/her nation, he/she would think twice before engaging in acts inimical to society and the economy.

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 28-29.

To bring about this revolution, we can embark on some reform strategies that are designed to influence behavior modification and improve public accountability. Hope suggests certain reform strategies that I believe are a step in the right direction. He recommends that we introduce codes of conduct for public officials. These could be developed as either codes of ethics, leadership codes or codes of public accountability. By so doing, he hopes that we could instill an atmosphere of moral accountability and ethical behavior.[75] Considering that, in the past, such codes have been ignored or not enforced in nations (like Zimbabwe) that experimented with them, these codes must now be seriously enforced and infractions severely punished to ensure adherence. Another method, suggests Hope, by which corruption may be controlled is by "legislating, creating, and/or restructuring...a number of institutional frameworks to coerce discipline and accountability in public officials."[76] The purpose of these watchdog institutions is not only to bring about crucial changes in attitudes and behavior of public officials so as to promote honesty and integrity; but also, by their watchdog powers, to disclose and/or investigate any suspected acts of corruption. Examples of these institutions are the Serious Fraud Office in Ghana and the Anti-Corruption Squad and the Permanent Commission of Inquiry in Tanzania. In the past, says Hope, such institutions have been less than effective due to, among other reasons, a lack sufficient autonomy.[77] Effort should be made to ensure that these institutions command the respect of the general public by bestowing upon them the powers and autonomy to enforce the law and prosecute infractions of it. One more reform strategy to control corruption in African nations is to embark on what may be called an awareness campaign. According to Hope,

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[75] Ibid., 30.
[76] Ibid.

"These campaigns seek to publicize the negative effects of corruption, the penalties for engaging in corrupt acts, and the type of behavior that is required of public officials."[78] On a long-term basis, I suggest that emphasis should also be placed on education and on increasing the percentage of literate citizens in African nations. I am quite sure that public officials would not have been able to get away with their corrupt ways if African nations had a higher percentage of literacy. More literate citizens mean more people who are cognizant of their rights and what is expected of public officials. This, in turn, means more people with the intellectual capacity to demand more from public officials and agitate for reform. Finally, corruption can be controlled in Africa by implementing certain reform measures within the civil service. Pertaining to this, Hope suggests ridding the civil service of superfluous employees; instituting pay or grading reform whereby civil servants would be compensated better and receive performance based pay; and providing training for employees which is an important element in the process of behavior modification and instilling values of moral accountability and ethical behavior.[79]

Another category of mechanisms, suggested by Hope, to curb corruption in Africa requires the assistance of international organizations and foreign governments to deter, prevent, and combat corrupt activities. One way in which they can do this (and some have already made a pledge to do so) is to eliminate corruption from their own aid programmes. International organizations and foreign governments, Hope continues, could also give technical and other assistance to assist African governments in

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[77] Ibid., 31.
[78] Ibid., 32.

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implementing reform measures that curtail opportunities for corrupt practices and inculcate ethical behavior.[80] He offers examples of foreign governments that have made an effort to assist in the control of corruption in Africa. One such nation is the United States which, in 1977, adopted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) that prohibits corrupt practices by U.S. corporations and nationals and also by foreign corporations based in the US.

Foreign Assistance and Sovereignty

This call, by Hope, for foreign government assistance provides a good point for me to move to another issue worthy of discussion—the risks involved with relying on foreign assistance. Examining this issue, I feel, is very important if I call for the international community and other concerned nations to intervene in some crisis situations. In our case study, it was determined that in most crisis situations early intervention is required if we really want to bring the situation under control in a timely fashion. I am quite sure that the military intervention of Somalia was not a pleasant and welcome experience for the Somalis. I say so because I know the humiliation and sadness I felt when the West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, had to intervene in Sierra Leone. Having to succumb to military intervention, in the international arena, is, I am sure, the most humiliating point in a crisis situation for the nationals of nation. Why is military intervention humiliating? To answer this question we need to take a look at what a nation loses when intervention occurs—i.e., its sovereignty. Sometimes, as in the case of Somalia and Sierra Leone, intervention is requested; but I believe that even under these

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[79] Ibid., 32-33.
[80] Ibid., 34.

circumstances sovereignty is still lost and that is still a humiliating experience for the nationals. I do recall that even though I felt relieved and happy that the ECOMOG forces had intervened in the Sierra Leone crisis, I felt embarrassed and humiliated that we had to rely on another nation for survival. ECOMOG was now in control of our destiny. Sierra Leoneans were now helpless. This is somewhat akin to the way a young child would feel who is always being bullied in school. If he or she has any self-worth or pride, this will be taken away anytime he/she needs to call on someone else (e.g. a parent, teacher or friend) for protection. After sometime, this child's safety depends on this individual that does the protecting, unless he/she is able to one day stand up and fight for his/her own safety. The feeling of pride and relief that he/she feels when he/she can fight for him/herself is evidence to the fact depending on another person is not a comfortable situation to be in.

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, a sovereign nation is one that is fully independent and self-governing, a nation having total power. Within the context of our discussion, international relations, I would add a little caveat to this definition: a nation that has a person or institution with total power or authority within the borders of the nation. The reason why I offer the above caveat is revealed in the description given in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (EOP) of Jean Bodin's definition of a sovereign.[81] Though somewhat paradoxical, the description of Bodin's definition does seem to make sense within a community of (constitutional) laws. According to the EOP, Bodin defines sovereignty as "a supreme power over citizens and subjects unrestrained by law; it is the

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[81] *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 7 & 8 ,ed. Paul Edwards, (Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1967).

right to impose laws generally on all subjects regardless of their consent."[82] At the same time too, this sovereign is subject to the laws of God and of nature. Therefore he or she cannot unjustly seize the property of citizens and must keep his/her promises to them. "Moreover, he must respect the fundamental laws of the constitution, like the succession of law, for sovereignty, as a *legal* authority, stems from these."[83] Thus though the sovereign has supreme power, he/she exercises them within the laws of the constitution which are the rules that validate his/her sovereignty—they constitute the sovereign office. The sovereign does have the power to amend these rules, but only in accordance with proper procedure. Transposing this definition to the international realm we can say that though a sovereign state is one that is independent and has total power, this power is limited to its borders and by international law. One state cannot, under international law, seize dominion of another except by consent, because sovereign states must be free from interference in their domestic jurisdiction. "Even the most powerful state, however, cannot ignore altogether the need to placate its friends and to avoid provoking its foes to the point of inconvenient obstruction. Freedom to act is relative in international as in internal affairs."[84]

With the above definition we see that the military intervention in an independent state (A) by another state (B), compromises the sovereignty of (A). Upon intervention, (A) ceases to be a nation that is self-governing and having total authority or power over its citizens/borders. With the intervention of Somalia there was, technically, no official government, so one may make the case that sovereignty was already compromised before

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[82] Ibid., 502.
[83] Ibid.

the U.S. intervention. However, in Sierra Leone, there was an official government, but because of its inability to govern and protect its citizens, it had to rely on an outside force. By so doing I contend that it ceased to be a truly sovereign nation

The above examples are pretty clear-cut. The question now is whether there are other cases of intervention that compromise sovereignty which are not so clear cut? I want to argue that there are such cases and that the move from the point at which a sovereign nation allows intervention to the point at which sovereignty is compromised is a slippery slope. The move from one spectrum to the other is easy. The occasional need for disaster or humanitarian assistance, I am sure most would agree, does not compromise sovereignty. However, situations in which a nation has to rely on another nation or organization, to the extent that the nation or organization can or does determine policy within the recipient nation, are a little tricky in determining whether sovereignty is compromised. The determining factor, I believe, is the ability to have bargaining power. In a situation where both parties (the recipient and donor) need each other, the relationship is more or less equal. They are on a level playing field. However, in a case where the relationship is unequal, the party with more power begins to control and determine the terms of the relationship. If the recipient nation always comes to the bargaining table cap in hand (as most African nations do), then gradually we begin to see a slide down the slope to the other end of the spectrum where sovereignty is compromised. As the saying goes, "he who pays the piper calls the tune." The recipient country may then be said to have geographical independence but not economic or even political independence. This, unfortunately, is the situation of many African nations.

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[84] Ibid., 505.

Today the political and economic policies of many African nations are written thousands of miles away in Western nations. To regain their political and economic independence (in other words, to become truly sovereign) African nations must break the chains of dependence on the West. Until we can come to the bargaining table with something to offer, we shall remain subservient to the West. A good example of the difference in the relationship on both sides of the spectrum is the on going oil crisis. Here, the relationship between the West and members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is one of an equal partnership. Both parties apparently need each other and, consequently, are willing to compromise for mutual gain. That is why they are said to be in *negotiation* and are not being instructed to produce more oil. On the other side of the spectrum, the relationship between the West and many African nations, the situation is totally different. One party (Africa) needs the other (West) more, and the result is an unequal relationship. Thus, the latter is at liberty to set the terms of the relationship.

This is why, in chapter three, I call for minimal intervention in nations whose leaders, especially in the minds of the people, and to an extent the international community, respect the rights and needs of citizens. The occasional offers of economic/political/humanitarian assistance are quite fine and do not necessarily compromise sovereignty. However, under conditions of abuse or the violation of human rights, the right to sovereignty is abrogated or nullified. In such situations, where the flagrant abuse of human rights is perpetrated by leaders on their citizens or on citizens of other nations, the international community ought to intervene. It is instructive, at this point, to refer to Rawls' view on how well-ordered or law-abiding societies ought to deal

with outlaw regimes. For a nation to fall into the former (well-ordered) category it must meet three necessary conditions—"that it respect the principles of peace and not be expansionist, that its system of law meet the essentials of legitimacy in the eyes of its own people, and that it honor basic human rights."[85] African nations falling into this category require little or no intervention and, instead, may establish alliances or to the extent possible equal relations/partnerships. The latter (outlaw regimes), he says, are nations whose governments "seem to recognize no conception of right and justice at all."[86] A more common type of outlaw regimes is the expansionist type—nations "whose rulers affirm comprehensive doctrines that recognize no geographical limits to the legitimate authority of their established religious and philosophical views."[87] In dealing with outlaw regimes, Rawls states that law-abiding nations exist in a state of nature with them. They (i.e., law-abiding nations) thus have a "duty to their own and to one another's societies and well-being, as well as a duty to the well being of peoples subjected to outlaw regimes, though not to their rulers and elites."[88] Thus, as indicated earlier, nations that, in other words, fail to recognize and respect the rights of both nationals and non-nationals lose their sovereignty rights and face the wrath of the international community. However "the only legitimate grounds of the right to war against outlaw regimes is defense of the society of well-ordered peoples and, in grave cases, of innocent persons subject to outlaw regimes and the protection of their human rights."[89] Rawls does allow, though, that well-ordered nations can work to bring all other nations to honor the law of peoples and to become full-fledged members of the society of well-ordered peoples. This

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[85] John Rawls, "The Law of Peoples" in *On Human Rights*, ed. Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 79.
[86] Ibid., 72.
[87] Ibid.

can be done by pressuring such nations to reform, backed with military, economic, and other sanctions.

Those nations striving, without any coercion, to become equal partners in the society of well-ordered peoples, must, to achieve their goal, break the chains of dependence. And, if the West really wants to help Africa in breaking the chains of dependence it ought to be selective in the kind of assistance offered. At this stage of economic and political decay, most African nations will accept just about any assistance, even if it is detrimental to the economic or political development of the nation. The onus is thus on the West to do right by Africa by only offering aid which, after feasibility studies, has been determined to be in the interest of the recipient's political and economic development. Determination of aid utility should not be conducted solely by the West. Doing so will be paternalistic, because it will be a situation in which the West will be telling us (Africans) what they think is good for us. Aid utility should be determined, not by African politicians but by the experts themselves—scholars or professionals in the field and those who shall be using and benefiting from the assistance. I am hesitant to include African politicians as participants in the determination of aid utility because of their past record of abuse and misuse of aid. Politicians who have demonstrated the appropriate qualities of forthrightness and a genuine concern for the development of their nation and people may, however, be consulted. We should take all the lessons learned from the past and use them as a tool to guide us in the future. For instance, a very important lesson that was learned in Somalia was that an early intervention is necessary if we want to avoid

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[88] Ibid., 73.
[89] Ibid.

escalated situations and the need for military intervention. Unfortunately, we are yet to put in practice this lesson learned.

Conclusion

So far, it has been determined that urgent reform or revolution is required in the foreign aid program, the political system in African nations, and in the minds of the people of Africa. With the right changes, we can look forward to a brighter future for our lovely continent Africa. I am aware that the recommendations made in this study cannot be attained over night, but, as Africans, if we begin to make a change within ourselves and our respective nations, the rest of the world will follow. Africans cannot expect the West and other nations to take the first step. Africans should take this step themselves. The complexity of issues and questions discussed here in do underscore the place and need for ethics in international affairs. As Africans we should be the first to appreciate the place of ethics in international affairs because, without a conception of ethics by which nations are expected to abide, there is no telling what the status of our continent would be today. At least, ethics deters the possibility of a recurrence of the bold-faced and brazen exploitation of our continent that took place years ago. Also with an international code of ethics other nations are able to censure or put a stop to the current exploitation and persecution of us by our own so-called leaders. Without morality to guide and evaluate our actions we would be lost, unaware of what we are doing wrong and at the mercy of the powerful.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study began with an overview of ethics in international relations. We learned, in chapter one, that amidst much resistance, the view that normative theory is part and parcel of the study and practice of international relations eventually prevailed. Objection to this view came from the positivists and realists. Positivists, in their attempt to construct a more scientific approach to social studies, did not fail, by the mid 1900s, to influence the study of international relations. Following the positivist desire to ascribe cognitive status only to facts, as opposed to value, scholars in international relations tried to establish international relations as a discipline independent from all ethical and philosophical presuppositions. Fortunately, the positivist influence on international relations was short-lived. After receiving its own share of criticism, the influence the positivist school of thought had on international relations began to wane. This had the positive impact of reviving the discussion on the role of ethics in international relations. Postulating what came to be known as the domestic analogy, ethicists tried to show that the moral principles used to guide behavior in the domestic context can be reinterpreted to apply to the international realm.

As was revealed in this study, maintaining this discussion on the role of ethics in international relations was quite a challenge for ethicists and political theorists alike. Though this discussion survived the reign of positivism, it still faced considerable objection from realists—a tradition that dates back to the writings of the ancient philosophers like Plato and Thucydides. We were able to show, by adopting an argument put forward by Plato himself, that if we take the true definition of an art or skill an inconsistency is revealed in Thrasymachus' argument. Challenges also came from those

realists who proposed a Hobbesian state of nature (in which there is no pre-political idea of right and wrong) as opposed to a Lockean state of nature (in which moral laws, if not civil laws apply in a pre-political state) in describing the condition/relationship of states in international affairs. As we saw in chapter one, realists believed that in ascribing a Hobbesian state of nature to the relation between states in the international realm they would have good grounds for denying the relevance/possibility of ethics in international relations. According to Hobbesian realists, there is no common power and hence no law in the international realm. There is thus no inclination for states to seek peace and their sole concern should be the national interest and seeking power after power. It was revealed that the basis on which Hobbesians make this claim has been shown by theorists like Marshall Cohen to be untenable. Cohen dismantles certain key tenets of Hobbes' theory. By so doing he shows that the conditions of Hobbes' state of nature— unpredictability, chaos, and fear—that preclude the possibility of morality in the state of nature are almost non-existent in the international arena.

Though we were able to show the weaknesses in the Hobbesian realist's argument, the dawning of modern realism brought with it two realists to reckon with—Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau. Niebuhr and Morgenthau turned out to be two formidable objectors to the view that ethics had a place/role in international relations. In putting forward his argument, we learned that Niebuhr draws a distinction between this-worldly and other-worldly values—justice (politics) belonging to the former and agape (ethics) belonging to the latter. Thus, politics and ethics are two conceptually autonomous spheres that have different goals. As I argued in this chapter, the argument

postulated by Niebuhr is based on a number of assumptions which question the validity of his argument that ethics has no place in international politics. Having shown the weaknesses in Niebuhr's argument, we went on to outline Morgenthau's argument and subsequently criticized it also. We saw that for Morgenthau, politics is an unending struggle for power and that political ethics is truly the ethics of doing evil. Essential to this view of Morgenthau is his pessimistic account of human nature. Based on his view that central to human nature is selfishness and a lust for power, Morgenthau seems to be making the claim that if man himself cannot be moral, how much less can this be asked of a state? He thus argues that the political realist must maintain the autonomy of the political sphere and ought not to subordinate it to other disciplines, especially, ethics. He urges that the national interest, rather than moral considerations, should be a nation's first priority. With the help of Cohen's argument we showed that Morgenthau's attempt to drive a wedge between ethics and politics, by postulating a distinct and separate political sphere, is misguided. Also, we showed that Morgenthau's emphasis on the national interest as a nation's first priority can be troublesome—the national interest is not easily defined, nor is it an amoral concept as he supposed. The above points, among others, are used to show weaknesses in both Niebuhr's and Morgenthau's arguments.

Though weaknesses are revealed, it is clear from the overview in chapter one that objectors to ethics in international relations have made some valid points. For example, the indiscriminate use of morality to justify action/policy (instead of being used as a guide to action/policy) can be dangerous. I, however, contend that their objections only served to add vibrancy and perspective to the debate. The value of the debate that ensued

is revealed in the fact that—following John Mill's criteria for the truth of an opinion/view[1]—having listened to what our detractors had to say and having successfully met their objections we are now justified in assuming the truth of our position—that normative ethical theory does have a place in the practice and study of international relations—for the purposes of action.[2]

Embarking, in chapter one, on an overview and defense of the role of ethics in international relations was imperative because of the content of the ensuing chapters. An ethical evaluation of the foreign aid program would have been meaningless if we had not previously shown that ethics does have a role to play in international politics. The whole study would have been based on an assumption and a (possibly) false premise if we had failed, not only to show that not all theorists agreed with our view, but also failed to defend our position. By so doing, one hopes to show the reader that this study is based on a thorough understanding of the issues and points of view involved. To this end we acknowledged that there are/will be some theorists who disagree/would disagree with our position—that ethics has a place in international politics—and also attempted to show the weaknesses in their position and the strengths in ours. With the latter (and in the absence of information or evidence to the contrary), it was safe to presume that embarking, in chapter two, on an ethical evaluation of the international aid program was merited/justified.

[1] J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism, On Liberty and Considerations on Representative Government*, ed. H.B. Acton (Gt. Britain: Everyman's Library, 1988), 85 – 89.
[2] Here I paraphrase J.S. Mill (page 87).

Consequently, in chapter two, we examined the various arguments put forward for and against foreign aid. We came to the conclusion that Garrett Hardin's case against helping the poor was derived from unfounded fears which he based on a questionable probability. He feared that feeding (saving) the starving today would only result in the multiplication of the starving population, which would only make things more difficult and expensive to feed them in the future. Thus, he argues that the death and starvation we avoid today would lead to a much greater catastrophe tomorrow. Singer criticizes Hardin for being too quick to accept the certain evil of "absolute poverty." He asks, "how probable is this forecast (by Hardin and other objectors) that continued assistance now will lead to greater disasters in the future?" He argues that "[a] course of action that will certainly produce some benefit is to be preferred to an alternative course that may lead to a slightly larger benefit, but is equally likely to result in no benefit at all."[3] He makes the claim that the suffering and death that goes on in poor countries is preventable and only a serious commitment to aid on the part of rich nations can put an end to it. He comes up with his now famous "principle of obligation" to show that rich nations are obligated to help poor nations: "If it is in our power to prevent something very bad happening without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable significance, we ought to do it."[4] Meeting this principle of obligation in the international arena, we saw, was bound (because of the tax requirements) to receive fierce objection from libertarians like Nozick who put forward a troubling but yet understandable argument against any redistribution of wealth or resources.

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[3] Singer, 238.
[4] Ibid., 229.

In chapter two, we also examined a non-consequential, rights based argument for aid propounded by Henry Shue. Central to his argument is his conception of basic rights, which he says are everyone's minimum reasonable demands upon the rest of humanity. There are two such basic rights: security and subsistence rights. As was revealed, part of the justification he offers for according priority to the latter (subsistence) can be used against the libertarian objection to positive rights. He does this by showing that (1) security rights are not as negative as most people assume and, (2) that subsistence rights are more negative and less positive than they are normally said to be. With the above points settled, Shue concludes that the distinction that ought to be made is between duties rather than rights. He then goes on to outline the duties that need to be performed for the basic right to be fully honored. In showing that everyone has certain basic rights to which are attached certain duties, Shue builds for us another cogent case for foreign aid. As disclosed in chapter two, the objections and responses he gives to some of the challenges levied against subsistence rights are quite similar to those levied against Singer.

After examining the moral arguments put forward for the justification of aid, we then moved on, in chapter two, to consider other objections against the existing aid program itself and the effect it has had on Africa. As was stated, an examination of these arguments is necessary for one to successfully render an argument for aid. Though the picture of the foreign aid program portrayed by Borgin, Corbett and Ayittey was quite pessimistic and negative, we derived from this study a better understanding of things from which we were able to draw certain conclusions. It became clear to us that though

the current aid program may be pernicious, it still does not negate the fact that the aid program in itself is a good thing and that rich nations, as demonstrated earlier in the chapter, *do* have a moral obligation to assist poor nations. With this in mind we made the case that radical reform of the aid program is needed. The responsibility for change rests, first and foremost, on African nations and also on donor nations. An aid program, we argued, that is beneficial to both the donor and recipient with the latter's interest being primary is needed.

With our ethical evaluation of the foreign aid program complete, it was appropriate that we embark on a case study to see the real life effects of the foreign aid program on an African nation. Somalia, as we stated, is paradigmatic because, among other reasons, it is the sub-Saharan nation that probably received the most aid. It was clear from our case study that most of the conclusions/findings in chapter two were reinforced. That is, that the practice of providing aid/assistance to poor nations, in itself, is not a bad thing, as exemplified by the success of the aid program in Botswana. Rather, it is the mismanagement and abuse on the part of the recipient and poor monitoring and regulation on the part of the donor that is the primary cause for the failure of the aid program in most African countries. As we saw from the case study, a combination of these factors led to the break-down and destruction of Somalia's political institutions, economy, and society. Instead of being a solution to the problems facing Somalia, the aid/relief effort, for the most part, aggravated the situation and generated its own pernicious dynamic—food became the main item of commerce that was commandeered at the point of a gun. Also reinforced was the point made, in chapter two, that

responsibility for decaying conditions lay on both the recipient and donor. Primary responsibility was placed squarely on the Somalis (or Africans in general) because they, under no compulsion at all, were the one's taking up arms and destroying each other. The donor nations we found to be culpable because, not only did they, in many cases, provide the weapons of destruction, but they sometimes, knowingly/unknowingly aggravated the situation and encouraged the perpetrators of destruction and death. We concluded that donor nations like Russia, Italy and the United States that were active in Somalia after its independence were partially blameworthy for the devastation that took place in Somalia. Though *aware* of the atrocities committed by Siyad Barre, they did little or nothing to stop/ prevent the impending catastrophe. The failed intervention in Somalia, we argued, was too little, too late. As authorities on the Somalia crisis have argued, it was within the power of donor nations like the US and Italy to prevent or put an end to the developing crisis by forcing Barre to step down, but they did nothing. We concluded that if the international community is really committed to averting a recurrence of the death and destruction that took place in Somalia, it must make an effort to intervene sooner rather than later in crisis situations. Intervention after the situation has escalated is, often, futile and only results in unnecessary death and destruction.

In chapters two and three, we saw that a principal cause for the failure of the foreign aid program was the political situation in the recipient nation. It was, therefore, expedient that, in chapter four, we contemplate the contributing factors to the political demise of some African nations. We found that most of the proposals/solution made to resolve the (political) decay in African nations have either been misguided or futile. We therefore

decided to examine three issues/questions facing Africa—(a) the question of what type of democracy is appropriate; (b) corruption; and (c) the issue of compromising sovereignty by allowing intervention. As was argued, previous attempts at implementing democratic systems in most of Africa have failed because most of the systems implemented have not been congenial to the African political, socio-cultural context—they have mostly been attempts at imitating the west. We thus proposed that a system of democracy that acknowledges and incorporates the African culture be implemented. In other words, a system of democracy that is adapted and useful to the African situation is required. The most likely candidate, we argued, is a consensus one-party system of government. This system of government was seen as the most suitable because, among other reasons, it is the most cohesive. This, because of all the tribal rivalries and conflicts, is what the nations of Africa need. For help in deciphering how such a system may be attained we turned to the pragmatic school of thought. As was expressed, a conception of liberal democracy similar to the one Rorty propounds—one that is practical, dynamic, progressive/non-foundational and takes into consideration history and culture—is the most ideal for African nations.

The other contributing factor to Africa's political and economic devastation we looked at is corruption. After offering a definition of corruption we looked at some examples of it and some of its causes as adumbrated by Kempe Hope. Following this we offered some suggestions to control or eliminate corruption. One of the suggestions offered involved assistance from international organizations and foreign governments. Discussing this option led us to the third issue facing Africa—the risks involved with relying on foreign

assistance. Examining this issue, it was stated, is quite important if one is going to call for intervention by the international community in some crisis situations. It was determined that if a nation has to consistently rely on another nation to subsist, without having any bargaining power, that nation loses its sovereignty. We also made the claim that under conditions of human rights abuse, sovereignty rights are abrogated.

Once again, looking back on the content of chapters two to four, we see that the topics of each chapter could not have been discussed if we had not first established, in chapter one, that normative theory does apply to international politics. Any talk of (moral) rights and culpability as far as states are concerned would have been pointless/meaningless if we had left open/unanswered the question of the applicability of ethics to international relations. With the applicability of moral concepts/judgements to international politics we can judge the actions of states to be right or wrong. For example, we could say that the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq was wrong because the latter violated the former's sovereignty rights or we could say that the atrocities Siyad Barre committed against his people violated their basic human rights. Without the applicability of ethics we would not be able to make these determinations and take action against them. Without them the world will truly be in a Hobbesian state of nature. Averting this underscores the importance and need for ethics in international relations. With our capability to make moral judgements, we are able to evaluate the morality of our (nation's) actions and the actions of others. From this we draw certain conclusions which determine our moral convictions about issues. Our moral convictions are, admittedly, not written in stone, but in the absence of evidence or information to the contrary, we are able to act on them or

use them as a guide to action. In the past, when morality was not an integral part of the study and practice of international relations, we saw that certain horrors committed by states or in states (for example, the slave trade and the holocaust) were allowed to go on. Only when the atrocities reached an impossible level to bear before anything was done about it. The world was at the mercy of the powerful. Today, as a result of the moral convictions we have developed over the years, we can, with the instruments of technology at our disposal, hopefully do something about atrocities before they go too far. Admittedly, the international community still does not move fast enough but, at least, today citizens of nations can pass moral judgement on the actions of other nations, which was not really done in the past. In the past, the objection could have been made, in spite of the atrocities, that the nation in question was doing what is in its interest. Today, I do not believe such an objection would be acceptable. Thanks to the prevalence of the view that ethics does apply in international relations.

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