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Internal Conflict and Its International context

by

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I.   Introduction

Generally appreciated these days both within international
fora, particularly those within the United Nations System and
its associates and within academia with a Third World Outlook is
the "African Crisis". This is a term which has come to encompass
phenomena such as repeated food shortages which frequently
degenerate into famine situations for which emergency multi-
lateral and bilateral food "relief" measures have had to be
resorted to. Even more wellknown and perhaps even broader are
the economies of Third World countries, particularly those in our
Continent which seem to be incapable of taking off and in which
the general trend is a downward drift towards greater dependency on
external aid. What is "Crisis" about both these is that the Con-
tinent is very well endowed with resources to produce food for
internal consumption and a surplus for export but that instead of
this coming about emergency food aid has become the norm and
surplus food produced inside the Continent has become the exception.
Instead of massive external funds making it possible for Africa to
tap its vast natural and human resources to achieve an economic
breakthrough, the Continent is having to require more and more
aid, not to advance but to pay interest on previously acquired
loans which can only worsen the debt-repayment burden. How these
apparent anomalies come about is obviously a matter of great
international interest, but equally important is the fact that this
cannot escape the critical analysis of academia.(1)

Less frequent in international fora, even those of the United
Nations whose principal objective was intended to be to spare the
World of Scourge of war, is the phenomenon of internal politico-
Military convulsions. Geneva is busy talking about controlling
strategic weapons; disarmament discussions hesitantly take place

in the UN system, but these do not seem to seriously focus on the flow of conventional weapons into Africa and the rest of the Third World. Both the UN and the Super Powers in Geneva and the allied summits seem to be busy thinking of avoiding a World War III as if war is war only when it involves Northern Hemisphere countries generally and directly. In the Far East, in the Middle East, in Southern Africa, in Chad, in South West Sahara, in Latin and South America - in all these countries what is remarkably constant are the pounding guns, the downing or launching of Migs, the movement of tanks and impressive military parades, although in none of them is any of these equipments manufactured. The same countries which tolerate these apparently inexplainable obsurdities are those which are characterized by the crisis discussed above.[2]

Underneath these crossfires, not among or between nations but within our countries themselves are irritations between ethnic communities, religious identities, political affiliations, which very soon turn into open hostilities. In Uganda, in Ethiopia, in Angola, in Mozambique, in the Sudan, and in Chad, and beyond Africa in Sri Lankha, these form the bleak but prominent profiles, of their respective national lives. Yet, research as an international effort, on these matters is more conspicuous for its paucity. This monotonous barrenness of international indifference both in scholarly and policy fora has only intermittently been disturbed by the establishment in recent years of an Institute for Ethnic Studies in Sri Lanka and the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway.

Is there a relationship between the "crisis" previously presented and Internal Conflict now under reference? There is no doubt that a broader posing of the question would be useful because it is time we started to identify problems in their entirety. Convenience, however, as well as the requirements of the session for

which this paper is prepared dictate a partial focus. To probe
the international implications of internal conflict and to suggest
possible remedies for them, form an underlying objective of this
paper. However, it is not possible to attain these two goals
without first despising of the question of what really constitutes
Internal Conflict; how this phenomenon manifests itself, as well as
its deeper effects on our political systems. Crucially important
also is the need to conceptualize properly the relationship between
the domestic situation and the international situation which is
why the paper bears its present title. I propose to deal with these
each in turn.

In the paper, a view will be advanced to the effect that,
given the nature of contemporary international forces and given
the character of the state in Africa and the rest of the Third
World, the Cracks which internal conflicts betray in our domestic
situations pose the greatest risk to our development as viable
entities and prosperous communities and that a great need, therefore,
now exists to manage the internal diversities of our states in a
manner that relegates innevitable domestic disputes and disagree-
ments to inconsequence. Meanwhile, internal conflict as a
phenomenon.

II.   Internal Conflict

There is hardly any need for a full-scale entry into defina-
tinal banalities over conflict. Conflict is simply conflict and
it is internal, meaning within a country, if the protagonists are
internally located, or, if externally domiciled, if they are
internally rooted and the cause for which they conflict can be
identified to be domestic. On this, there is a complication as
shall be demonstrated later. The conflict may range from in
to communicate because of the depth of feeling and the gulf

This condition of fluidity, of possibilities of breaking
and the elusive search for a new balance is fertile ground for
minor disagreements to develop into active conflicts which can
escalate into open hostilities. Mutual suspicions on the part
of persons and groups, political and otherwise, absence of shared
values and norms for attaining valued goals are in abundance.
Political leaders respect nobody and honour no pledges; economic
actors act without regard to the social good; professionals forget
their oaths as soon as they say the last word of the same; armies
define the people who finance their barracks and pay for their
uniforms and their weapons as objects for manipulation, even
slaughter.

Governments are not governments of countries or nations but
of partialities serving particular interests. There has to be a
party government, a movement government, an army government which,
in conditions of zero sum game must take all. This anomic situation
heightens the conflict potential in Africa and beyond.

b) Poverty

There are many ways of looking at poverty. The term
generally denotes meagreness of economic resources for sustaining
life; clothing, shelter, transport, diet, these are affected. To
be poor is to be in the red, or near so, so far as these are
concerned. But it can also denote difficiency of valuable but
intangible things. Self respect, civility, respect and consideration
for others, etc. When one is poor in the material sense and also in
this subjective sense, one will be a thief, one will kill, one will
rig elections, another will rig systems for no other reason than
ones own personal glory.

Our countries are gripped by this condition. The ruthless search for accumulation; regarding public office as a lincence for building up economic power and holding society to ransom. People live lives and do things as if there are no moral inhibition. In the case of Uganda of the post independence era, these attributes have their clearest manifestation. No wonder, in a space of 20 years our country has had three civil wars. Poverty of this kind can be a real nuisense and exercabate internal tensions.

c) Ineptitude in the Management of Diversity

Nothing is perhaps more dangerous generally than a supposition that only ones side has a monopoly of virtue; has any real justification for existing, or a pretence that one can impose uniformity and achieve unanimity.

This point we touched upon earlier and must be reiterated. In political science we apply two terms to this tendency: intolerance and zero sum game. One finds it difficult to accept and live with another person, another idea, another group (tribe, party, religion). This leads to a very serious defficiency in managing differences. It leads to pretences that differences can be shouted down, cultural diversity is frowned upon, and one persues wholism to the exclusion of peculiarities.

Open hostilities among tribes, among religions, among political parties can arise from the sheer fact that ones peculiarities are not appreciated. Minor irritations become beginnings of national dissasters. This is particularly so in modern circumstances when the world is more aware, where even the most illiterate and poor, yawns for freedoms and self assertion. The age of democratic ideas when people talk of human rights surely cannot mean very much unless

states have learn to manage diversities. The times we live in, therefore, do add to the difficulties of reducing internal hostilities unless a serious thinking takes place on our part.

d) Psychological variables

Not losing face, protecting ones ego; viewing oneself as beyond question because of unjustifiable confidence, sheer arrogance, these are psychological traits. And far too many countries have suffered when they have been led by leaders and governments whose actions can be described by these terms. Africa have had leaders who would rather destroy their parties, their armies and even their countries than have themselves loose power. Far too many of our countries have governments which think that statesmanship and glory comes only from continuing in power even when this leads to a bleeding nation and a suffering people. People have not yet acquired the modesty to accept failure and voluntarily give their countries a chance to try someone else. These are obviously psychological and cultural problems because at their root lie questions of how one judges ones role in history, whether one considers the country to be more important than its leader or its ruling party, army or government.

They are instances of psychological pathology living side by side, in a mutually reinforcing way, with what one Ugandan scholar has termed institutional pathology.[3] They are part of the environment of crisis which leads to internal convulsions to which we refer herein.

IV.   International Context of Internal Conflict

As already indicated, our principal task in this paper is to probe the international implications of Internal Conflicts as already defined, and to suggest some remedies or to avert such conflicts.

It is quite clear that no good job in this connection is possible
unless the interconnections between internal crisis and the
external situation is properly conceptualized. To this we now
turn.

To begin with, let us note that the burden of what was said
earlier on about the fluidity and brittle quality of our political
systems to which we applied the terms "Amoeba-type" and the
"Bwegege" is to show the rather unstable and manipulate or expose
form of these polities. Terms such as "dependent", "neo-colonial"
and "penetrated" have been used by various scholars to put, with
various degrees of intensity, this quality of our polities in
sharp relief.(4)

Internal incoherence means a pervious framework where the
insularity of the old polities becomes impossible. Because of
this, the external element, easily intrudes into our polities.
In a real sense, our political systems have leaking roofs where
the external storms continue to leak long after the storms have
subsided. Entry through the legitimate doors continues to take
place but damage is more possible through the leakages.

The situation could hardly be otherwise because of the
following. Our states were put together by an external force,
colonialism, and by the time it departed, the external constituency
was so strong that formal independence had to accommodate it.
Economically, politically and even militarily, our countries show
very clear features of the colonial period. Even underlying
assumptions in our scholarship seriously betray the colonial
ethos and practices.

Many of our leading public servants; the celebrated scholars the influencial statesmen, the forces that shape our economies, our armies many of which have seized power - many of these have clear marks of colonialism on them. To make a clear separation between the domestic environment and the external circumstance would be most unrelistic, in the circumstances. But the situation is compounded by the following.

The contemporary world of which our states are a part is a much smaller world, neatly linked by strongly interlocking economic political and military forces which find the leaking roofs much useful to their goals. Imperialism of various types, so keen to control raw materials, to control sea routes, to maintain spheres of incluence, is completely at ease with this condition and will seek to protect and expand opportunity.

More important, the global constellation of forces, Military political-ideological, is such that this struggle must intensify, particularly in the Third World. The multipolar world, with its rival ideologies is also a <u>dangerously armed world</u>. The relative balance among the powerful countries of the North, with regard to the means of destruction, has been characterized as the balance of terror.

One remarkable aspect of the balance of terror is that, even though it does not preclude continuation or prolongation of ideological struggles and the flexing of military muscles among the powerful and rich countries, it does never-the-less almost rule out, at least experience has showed us todate, an open and direct military clash between the East and the West <u>in the Northern Hemisphere itself</u>.

Such confrontations, either direct or, which is more often,
by proxy takes place in the far off lands in Africa, Latin America,
Middle East and Asia. On the surface of it is a puzzle that in
the areas of the world where evidence of war, largely internal
(which is why we must stress it here) is more dramatic and
dangerous are precisely those countries which produce not a single
weapon they use. Not even a simple bullet or a simple gun comes
from within!

They are areas which find it very easy to procure military
aid to prosecute internal wars. The testing ground of weapons,
particularly conventional weapons which can be used for years
without any threat to the supplier, is our continent. The powerful
countries, aware of the consensus among themselves in matters of
their mutual security have engineered the Nuclear Non Prolifera-
tion Treaty which affects weapons which few really want to use
and which few countries really need for internal wars. This,
they have insisted countries of the Third World to sign, giving
the false impression that they are really interested in intern-
ational peace and security. But no one excels them in their
enthusiasm for handing out either cash or Military hardware or
both ostensibly to fight against social imperialism, as the Angola
Communism , as in Latin America; to fight against
case in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrated; and to fight against
international capitalism and USA hegemonism as the arming of Amin
of Uganda used to be justified in the 1970's. None has ever
suggested any serious international effort to control or regulate
the traffic of arms to the third world, which trigger-happy
governments use   with abandon to terrorise their own citizens
and ruin the economy.

In sum we can state the interconnection between the internal situation of which Internal Conflict is a prominent aspect, and the external environment shown /in the immediately proceeding paragraphs, in the following way. Because, on the one hand, our political systems are internally incoherent, extremely fluid and easy to break; because aspects of their internal form are projections of the external environment; and because, on the other hand, the external environment; anxious to seize opportunity of various sorts, sharply in conflict within itself but so scared of each other, creates a situation in which the relationship between the two is of a type where the external impinges on our internal situation with a force which breaks through the leaking roofs and uses its constituencies in our midist to open wide to acquire legitimate entry for illegitimate purposes. Internal conflicts in this context can be an opening for others to acquire a foothold 'or could be a result of an illegitimate entry of the outsider in order to break the back-borne of a hitherto strongly fortified nationalistic people.

This kind of conceptualization does not permit us to focus only on the international implications of internal conflict. Such would be to direct our concern only to a small aspect of the problem. The point is that internal conflicts have international implications for internal conflicts, precisely because internal conflict is a product of the interaction between the two domains. It is precisely for this reason that I have preferred to talk of the International context of these conflicts.

V.   Illustrations

In order to demonstrate more concretely the interconnections between the external and the internal, let us cite the following instances, some historical, others contemporary.

Recently, in a British weekly <u>The Guadian</u> a report appeared
about the former chief of the Rhodesian Secret Service Organization,
who surprisingly Prime Minister R. Mugabe had the innocence to
continue as the boss of the successor body in independent Zimbabwe.
He continued in this role until 1982. In the report in question,
he was revealing that he and his colleagues under Prime Minister
Smith had really recruited what is now the MNR in Mozambique in
order to divert Frelimo Government under President Samora Machel
away from active support for the Patriotic Front, particularly
Mr. Mugabe's ZANU. ZANU was launching a serious offensive from
the Mozambique side and Smith wanted to inconvenience them by
"destabilizing" Mozambique from within.

The General was extra-ordinarily frank to the extent of
saying: "we recruited them, we trained them, we paid them.
They really had no programme, no mission; they just wanted
money".(4)

From this obscure background, Smith did organize a force
of indeginous Mozambiquans, strong enough to inconvenience
Mozambique while at the same time launching an ugly search and
destroy terror against the Zimbabwean people, inside Rhodesia.
This was one of the conditions which forced Mugabe to enter into
negotiations with Smith in late 1970s.

After Zimbabwean independence, there was no longer any
facility for MNR support from Zimbabwe, but, used to foreign money,
they were anxious to have another backer, and South Africa has come
in earnest, pursuing exactly the same objectives for itself as did
Smith's Rhodesia. It is now common knowledge that South Africa has
invested heavily in the MNR and that MNR has developed, in the
process, into a formidable distruptive force against the Frelimo
Government.

The economy of the country, already suffering from the
after effects of a long and bitter liberation war against
Portugal, has continued to deteriorate. The consequence was
Nkomati, a form of hood-winking which South Africa duped Zimbabwe
into, possibly to embarrass Mozambique and weaken its solidarity
with the rest of Africa. It is not surprising that Nkomati Accord
was followed by the bombing of targets inside Mozambique by South
Africa and the so-called accidental air crash which killed
Mr. Somora Machel himself. It is true that the conflict or war
in Zimbabwe is internal, between the Government and its opponents,
but the money the dissidents use, the logistical support and
training they receive, the weapons they use and the objectives
for which the offensive is launched cannot be said to be wholly
or even mainly internal.

But it is necessary to point out that the MNR, bad and
misguided as it is, was fundamentally created by an inept handling
of minority groups which were not part of Frelimo during the
struggle against Portugal. Dizzy with success, after the collapse
of Portuguese colonialism, Frelimo leaders descended on their
apparently ineffectual opponents, some of whom had been close
to the colonial state system, with a rare arrogance and exuberance.
Many of them were paraded at jubilant victory rallies as traitors
to whom promises of pardon were given, forgetting that public
humiliation of this kind sells to very few people. In victory,
Frelimo leaders thought that those who appeared weak and defeated
had no cards. These cards they have now shown to possess and the
situation is pretty serious.

In short, Frelimo leaders widened the cracks which did not
have to widen, in the internal situation and the storm of foreign
intrusion has turned the leaking roofs into floods.

From the Nigeria of the 1966s is to be found additional
proof of the interconnection between the domestic and the external.

There, the country had three distinct ethnic blocks. The
Hausas, a little more than one half of the total population of
Nigeria but found in the Northern Region of the country which had
a total of only three such Regions. The Hausas, therefore,
regionally occupied only one third of the Regions of the country.
They happened also to be culturally and religiously different,
being Muslims while the other two Regions, the West and the East,
were mainly Christian. Economically, the North, so barren and
semi-desert, was the least productive of the regions, a condition
which had been exacerbated by the neglect of the Region by the
British colonial Administration.

The East and the West were the more productive areas of
the country, much of them being in the Tropical forest zones;
The East soon discovered that it had oil. Yet, despite the fact
that the East and the West produced the country's wealth, and had
high level manpower to man the bureaucracies of the state, politi-
cally they were marginal because democracy accorded to the majority
State, especially if neatly organized as the North was, a capacity
to dominate national representative organs which, in a Parliamentary
democracy, gave them ability to control government.

The situation was of course worsened by the indirect rule of
Britain which permitted the most minimal forms of horrizontal
integration among the ethnic communities of the country, least unic
with educational resources, culturally and religiously more conserv

than the rest, could never-the-less, by the sheer weight of
numbers control the destiny of the country. In a situation such
as this, sociology will show that the dominant group, bearing
these characteristics, will want to exercise power in a trigger
happy way because to lose power is to lose the only means available
to compete competently in the difficient areas with those who are
superior. The census will be rigged to maintain numerical
superiority over a strong and threatening minority.

In the case of Nigeria of the 1960s, all these were evident.
The state, once under the Hausa, had to remain so while this
created nervousness among the disadvantaged. In desparation, a
coup is organized which was characterized by sectarion excesses,
particularly committed by the Ibo Army offices against others,
mainly Hausa leaders. In response, the Hausa officers and men as
well as rural communities directed their vengeance towards the
Ibos, particularly the business elements spread out in the
country. Hundreds of Ibo's were murdered within hours without
the slightest evidence that these were members of the same country.
No wonder, from 1966-70, the country was engulfed into a serious
civil war in which the state of Biafra composed of the Ibos was
proclaimed, trying to break away from Nigeria.

There can be no doubt that within Nigeria, there were cracks
in the roof of the polity. Internally the system was incoherent
because of a combination of factors such as imbalance in economic
development in the country, religious distinctiveness and a
tradition of being separate. Those in the control of the state
demonstrated an incapacity to establish a reassuring balance of
hopes and advantages as between the different peoples of Nigeria.

To the extent that Nigerians failed to reassure their anxious
compatriots and failed to manage their own diversities, and ended
up shooting at each other in a grueling civil war, we can talk
of an internal conflict. The war between Biafra and Federal
Nigeria was definately a war between Nigerians but with divergent
hopes for the future. It was by all appearances internal.

But note should be taken also of the fact that indirect rule
was not created by Nigerians; that uneven development between the
North and the rest of the country had colonial roots which had
become internalized and gave the impression of being a legacy
of Nigeria. To this extent this denotes both externality and
internality.

However, of the greatest importance is the fact that East/
West ambitions endangered the lives of millions of Nigerians.
Nigeria is an African giant that can be a prize to a non-African
state having a foot-hold on it. Britain was the former colonial
power and, consistent with the well known sphere of influence
mentality among powerful states, Nigeria was within its orbit.
After All, it was part of the British Commonwealth. And so
Britain was present in Nigeria and wanted to continue there, if
not to strengthen its base.

But Nigeria was also an independent country that had developed
relations with other countries such as the Soviet Union which also
wanted to strengthen its roots if not weaken the roots of its
rivals such as Britain.   Attention was focussed on Nigeria with
the USA, somewhat a little far off, looking on anxiously if Britain
might slacken and give it an opportunity to step in. Countries
which believe that Third World countries cannot be independent and can
only trade imperialism, cannot do otherwise. They have to
keep watching any possible power that might jump in.

And so it was when Nigeria found itself faced with internal difficulties. Britain rushed in arms aid to assist the Federal Government in accordance to tradition. However, such aid become more substantial and long lasting when the Soviet Union extended Military assistance also. The official reason was to save the integrity of a sovereign and independent Nigeria. - Yet, beneath all these apparently disinterested gestures lay a sordid military and foreign policy calculation on the part of both countries to ensure that neither surplanted the other by being seen to have tipped the balance in the civil war in favour of the Federal Government. (5)

In the precess the Federal Government which might have been willing to reach an accommodation with its dissenting region, was turned into a belligerent because of the overconfidence which Anglo-Soviet assistance gave it. Not to be outmaneauvred by both the Soviet Union and Britain, De Gaule of France came to assist Biafra. However, logistical problems arising from the geophysical location of Biafra, plus the fact that no country had yet recognised the independence of Biafra, made French support both subtle and ineffective. But it gave to Biafra a false feeling of security, a feeling that better days might arrive. The end result was that this external intrusion escalated the level of violence leading to horrors against the Ibos in Biafra. Nigerians were murdering each other on an unprecedented scale, fueled by sectarian national-interest-motivated arms "aid" to the two sides of the war.

In short, the Nigerian civil war was a case where externalities and internalities were combined in near mutual harmony.

The case of Uganda is more well known to us and a lot of
the papers in the Conference, no doubt, will deal with it
severally and in detail. In an earlier work I have myself gone
into our tragedies and our irresponsibilities in some detail.[6]
There can be no doubt that our leaders in the last 25 years have
failed us and their failures are, in a great measure, also
attributable to us as society.[7]

A small country, with sharp religious, political and, above
all, ethnic cleavages but at the same time with a large educated
middle class ever ready to dwarfen the achievements of every
leader, Uganda is a tragic case that has turned every available
opportunity into a cost. We have truly become the Beirut of
East Africa. Matters of uneven development between a military
powerful Northern Region (by virtue of its dominance in the
colonial and post-colonial army) but an economically near
impoverished one, and an economically more affluent South, an
equally educationally advanced area; the confirrance of political
power on the North, the weakening of political parties as organs
of free popular expression, of too many Kings and royal families
in too small a country, coexisting with people with strong
republican sympathies, this country has turned itself into death
chambers where successning regimes and their rivals hatch plots
for conquest. One, in fact, suspects that sometimes this country
is gripped by a lynching hysteria.

The arms with which we fight each other are all imported,
an externality. The equipment that successive secret service
agencies use to invade the privacy of Uganda's citizens are not
made here. The techniques of torture which we have heard so much
about are not indigenous to our country. These and others are
evidence of strong externalities.

On the other hand, the ineptitude with which regimes handle
opponents which frequently turns simple incidents and irritations
into crisis; their inability frequently to realise that this is
20th century when many people demand the right to be different
without endangering national interest; their inability to
separate regime interests from national interests, these are
internalities. However, there is no doubt that these two reinforce
each other, hence the idea of an interaction between them.

VI.   Implications of Internal Conflict

In the light of the preceding discussions it is not useful
to focus on the international implications of internal conflicts.
There is a two way traffic in terms of implications. Internal
conflicts definately have international implications. They excite
intervention of anxious powers seeking to control. Internal
conflicts exercabate the fluid internal situation and bring into
doubt the future course of our countries. Who will hold sway,
which leader or party or army will acquire supremacy, become real
issues. For powers anxious to exercise influence the desire to
step in and help the preferred party, internal conflict as a bonus.

The real danger of internal conflict for international peace
is to trigger off competition among powerful states and the
escallation of armament traffic from rival countries towards the
Third World Countries. The illustrations cited above are proof
enough of this danger. Internal conflicts therefore heighten
international tensions.

International conflicts are also dangerous because of the
refugee crisis which they worsen. One danger is the human crisis
represented by refugee conditions. Statelessness, the turning
of nationals into roofless people cannot be described in any other

way. But this does lead to international complications when this flood of roofless people, anxious to find income and stable environments are pressured/turned into extensions of underground security networks of rival imperialist countries. In addition to being part of the human crisis and an abuse of human rights, it is dangerous to the security of their home countries as well as to everybody else. This flood of potential mercenaries at the service of the powerful, is a constant danger to our states.

But the implications are also internal. Internal conflicts expose our political systems to great pressure, and make others take advantage of our weaknesses. They do expose our independence as countries to great pressure. If we are neocolonial countries already, internal conflicts can only worsen our condition since they weaken our resource base to effect meaningful independence. Since internal conflicts are either sponsored or at least financed or subsidised by powerful states/forces outside our environments, there is a danger that the condition of dependence will be intensified and real national freedom to choose an independence course will be impaired.

In economic terms, internal conflict worsens the crisis identified in the introduction. Importation of more weapons purchased either with cash procured from sales of our commodities in conditions where terms of trade are unfavourable to our countries, or with aid from powerful forces, diverts useful money into useless things. The productive sectors of our countries are thereby starved of foreign exchange in favour of internal military adventures. Besides, internal conflict disturbs an environment for true and constructive effort and diverts the energies of the people into suicidal, self defeating preoccupations. No country demonstrates the validity of these assertions more than Uganda's 25 years of

VII.   Conclusion

In the introduction I stated that the underlying contention
in this paper was that given the nature of our contemporary
international life, the character of the contemporary state in
Africa, internal conflict posed to our states grave risks. It
impairs any development efforts and undermines our ability to
stand as viable entities. It exposes our affairs to grave
external manipulation. Its effects, both globaly and internally,
are far-reaching and depressing. What we have discussed about
the interconnection between internal and external situations and
the illustrations cited, should by now have shown how so true our
fears are and how justified is our concern.

We cannot finish this paper without a word about how these
internal conflicts may be averted or their effects minimized.
In doing so, it should be recalled that conflicts or disagreements
are natural and that they must always be expected. Difference is
a fact of life. Disagreements and conflicts arise because of
this underlying natural phenomenon. One way to confront internal
conflict is not to pretend that unanimity and sameness will be
achieved or consensus dictated.

One has to start from the point that diversity is natural
and legitimate; recognize that it can never-the-less be dangerous,
and acquire the skill of managing it in such a way that it becomes
a useful and constructive resource. To recognise the legitimacy
of diversity and to cultivate a spirit of tolerance for the other
side will be one useful step in the road to domesticate diversity.

To explore what unites our groups and our parties; what is common among our tribes, our religions, will certainly move us further in the right direction. Inflation of our differences is most dnagerous.(8)

Above all, since internal conflict is related to the goings on in the external environment in the way already presented, it is useful to view internal conflict as weakening our countries in a conflict ridden world, in which we fight each other either on behalf of others or in their economic and military interests. To be truly nationalistic and to strive for the interests of our people and countries will be a great asset because in the process we shall learn to treat each other at home in a manner that maximizes our unity and strengthens our defences against external intrusion and manipulation. When these safeguards are taken, there should be chances of controlling internal conflict.

Footnotes

1. On this whole theme of the African crisis, see a special issue of Eastern Africa Social Science Review, Vol. 1, No.2, 1985 devoted to "The African Crisis".

2. It is generally known that the biggest bulk of arms trade in the world today particularly conventional weapons is with the Third World, simultaneously countries with lowest income per capita. Consult here the June issue of the Eastern Africa Social Science Review, Vol. II No.2, 1986, particularly articles by D. Rahmato, Horace Campbell, A. Mujaju, etc.

3. D. Mudoola, "Institutional Pathology in Uganda" Mawazo, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1986.

4. E. Galeano, Open Veins of Latin America, New York; Monthly Review 1973; J. Rosenau The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy (1971).

    See here K. Nkrumah, Neo colonialism (1965)

5. See C. Legum in Y. Tandon, African Diplomacy, Nairobi: E.A.P.H. 1974.

6. See "The Conquest Syndrome and Constitutional Development in Uganda" paper delivered to a Conference on Constitutionalism and Political Stability in Eastern Africa, held in Duduville, Nairobi, January 1987.

7. See my "A Public Sector Without a Public Philosophy: The case of Uganda" paper read at the second Triennial Congress of Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern AfricaI held in Eldoret, Kenya, July, 1986, for a discussion of this theme.

8. These ideas on how to manage diversity were first developed in a full lecture on "Ecumenism as An Aspect of Managing Diversity in Uganda" delivered on June 1, 1987 to the Plenary Session of the Joint Christian Council Meeting in Pope Paul Memorial Hall, Rubaga, Kampala. They also follow my earlier discussion: Consensus And The Party System in Uganda, Kampala: Orbitas Publishers, 1986.

by disagreements among the parties involved, to full blown military
hostilities among the same.

The contestants or belligerents may be classes, one in power
controlling the state and its economy, the other(s) suffering
under the subjection of the farmer but which they seek surplant.
It may be hositlity between communities, such as ethnic or tribal
ones, sometimes religious ones, especially if they predominate in
a region which is part of a country in which they are a politically
perhaps also, economically disadvantaged. They thus explain their
status in terms of their religious identity.

Often also, the conflict may be between undisciplined political
parties, one in control of state power, the other(s) in opposition
in conditions of zero sum politics where tolerance is the exception.
The conflict may be directly between rival armies, conventional or
guerilla, sponsored by the established disagreeable parties.

In any case, conditions of internal conflict are, frequently
either directly or potentially, ones of turmoil which can be ruinous
to the economy. More important, they leave big scars on the bodies
of the polity because mutual animosity and bitterness may be long
lasting, disrupting the process of developing stable and accepted
political relations.

III.   Causes of Internal Conflicts

Perhaps before we address the causes of Internal Conflicts,
let me stress that the natural condition among human beings is one
of conflict. People will conflict over valued resources because
they have different appetities for them; such resources are
frequently economic and political. They will conflict over food
when it is in short supply and they will conflict over jobs. Also
possible are conflicts generated by egos, psychological needs for
status, recognition sometimes also adventure. In a way Hobbes may

have a point in the way he describes the state of nature because,
stripped of the veil of civility, human beings are capable of the
excesses of other beasts. Hobbes may have been vulgar and
extravagant in the way he presented the state of nature and
particularly in the solutions he advocated, but certainly conflict
is its predominant quality.

This means, therefore, that it is society which tries to keep
conflict in check by managing intergroup relations, political and
economic, on the basis of equity or to control its intensity and
effects by legitimizing inequity. The potential for hostilities
is always real. This must always be born in mind. What needs
probing, therefore, are thr thresholds, the trigger points which
make organized or active conflict endemic or lead to its
escallation. The following may be cited.

a) Amoeba Type Political Systems

One condition which is conducive to frequent hostilities
and the turning of hitherto under-surface tensions into open
hostilities in Africa is the amoeba type political systems which
now exist in our continent. These are ones which, like an amoeba
are small, internally fluid, constantly changing. Unlike amoeba,
however, when they change establishing a new balance of stable
relations becomes difficult. In addition to this condition, one
must apply another image, the one of being brittle, though
inconsistent this may appear to be. To be fluid and changing and
to be brittle at the same time sounds impossible but impossible
things happen in our systems. To this extent one can call them
Bwegege political systems, because, in trying to establish a new
balance breaking is a real possibility. They are so delicate, the
can easily break.