

Corresponding: Brel Grâce Mangalala (Université Marien Ngouabi, Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines Flash Parcours-Type, Langues Vivantes Etrangères, Congo-Brazzaville.

(Ph.D. Scholar & Assistant Lecturer, Department of Foreign and Modern Languages, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, University of Marien Ngouabi, Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo.

Email: brelthebest@gmail.com

URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2023\(VIII-III\).01](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2023(VIII-III).01)

e-ISSN: 2663-7030

p- ISSN: 2616-955X



Kwame Nkrumah's Vision for African Unity: A Protection against any Colonial Policy in Africa



Brel Grâce Mangalala *

Abstract: *The present study investigates Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-African vision for African unity. Through a historical perspective, the study reveals that Nkrumah insisted that the advantage of having a unified military will be to assure our own security, defense and to achieve freedom for every part of Africa. It is also one of the ways to eliminate European military presence and standing armies in our countries, as well as to eradicate the imperialist forces which are engineering our division and seeking to make Africa a war-ground of contending interest. Nkrumah also believed that the "world peace is not possible without the liquidation of colonialism and the total liberation of Africa." The paper recommends that the African people must think of Nkrumah's vision today in order to seek the way for the total liberation of Africa, if not Africa will remain under the European, American and the Asian domination.*

Key Words: Nkrumah, Vision, African-unity, Security, Defense, Peace

Introduction

Following Ghana's 1957 independence, Kwame Nkrumah and his advisor, Padmore, began working toward the union of Africa as well as the liberation of the entire continent. In addition to using the Ghanaian independence movement as a template for other African countries, they sought to advance pan-Africanism throughout the continent. According to this viewpoint, Nkrumah's primary goals were to ensure Africa's security, defense, and peace in addition to upholding the "hard-won independence and sovereignty" of African governments. Because he saw Africa as a battleground of competing interests and a place of attacks, battles, arrests, killings, and coups d'état. Nkrumah was prompted by this

to consider ways to ensure global peace. Thus, he arranged the first conference of Independent African States in April 1958, which was attended by eight delegates from nations including Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Liberia, and Morocco. According to Nkrumah (1963: 136), the summit's objectives were to: discuss and share ideas on issues of shared interest; investigate strategies for strengthening and preserving our independence; develop economic and cultural links between our nations; determine practical plans for assisting fellow Africans who were still under colonial rule; and investigate the central global issue of securing peace.

In this regard, the analysis of Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-African vision for African

* Université Marien Ngouabi, Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines Flash Parcours-Type, Langues Vivantes Etrangères, Congo-Brazzaville.

(Ph.D. Scholar & Assistant lecturer, Department of Foreign and Modern Languages, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, University of Marien Ngouabi, Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo.)

unity is the main emphasis of this study. After that, my theme says this: African Unity in Kwame Nkrumah's Vision: A Defense Against All Colonial Policies in Africa. I have two reasons for choosing this subject. It is connected to my goal of pursuing world peace now, first and foremost. Furthermore, it is connected to my goal of achieving Africa's complete liberty and independence.

Regarding the literature review, a lot of writing has been done on Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-African goal for African unity. Ahlman (1982), for example, wrote on Nkrumah's ideas of liberation. Rahman (2007) depicted Kwame Nkrumah's regime shift. Vincent Doodoo (2012) illustrated Nkrumah's vision and mission for Africa and the world in his paper. Kanu (2013) wrote about Nkrumah's efforts to unite Africa. Ama Biney (2011) also written about Kwame Nkrumah's Political and Social Thought. David Rooney (2007) investigated the tragedy and vision of Kwame Nkrumah. However, none of those writers depicted Nkrumah's goal of unifying Africa as a shield against colonial practices.

In this sense, the paper demonstrate how Nkrumah's vision of African unity might serve as a safeguard and a defense for Africans against colonialists and any colonial policies or systems in the continent. Thus, how can we bring about peace, security, and defense in Africa in the modern era? is the paper question. The study's premise is that "Africa Must Unite" with a single army to destroy all of the continent's standing armies as well as the imperialist forces that are dividing us and trying to turn Africa into a battlefield for rival factions. In terms of methodology, the paper used a historical approach to accomplish my study—not only in the strict sense of the word, but also in the telling of historical events. In doing so, these, historical literature, and documentary reviews were among the data collection techniques used. Thus, there are two primary components to this study. Nkrumah's vision of African unity is presented in section one as a means of achieving security and peace for Africans, and in section two it is illustrated that African unity is the means by which Africans may defend themselves against any current colonial policies or systems in Africa.

African Unity: A Way Towards Peace and Security

The idea of peace and security for the African continent as envisioned by Nkrumah is the main topic of this section. In this sense, Kwame Nkrumah was essentially the only African leader to view the continent's destiny from a global perspective during the decade following 1957, when several African nations began their own journey toward independence. Since he saw no security or protection for African States, he envisioned a united and self-sufficient Africa as the ultimate goal of all the independent African nations. Nkrumah (1963: 145) believed that "in unity lies strength, and as I see it, African States must unite" because Africans can secure their freedom by uniting as a continent, and unity ensures that we have the strongest and only defense available. According to Kwame Nkrumah (1963: 203), "African union can resolve wars, conflicts, and aggressions" and "Africa's total independence and unity is necessary for world peace today." Understanding Nkrumah better, one method to ensure that Africans live in peace, happiness, and independence is through African unity. According to this view, Pope Jean Paul II, cited by Philippe Conte (2001: 52), says that to truly achieve peace, conditions must be met in place that authentically respect each and every human being's rights and dignity in order to allow for their full realization. The exploitation of the weakest, areas occupied by misery, and glaring socioeconomic inequality are all barriers that prevent the establishment of stable circumstances for genuine peace.

It is obvious that the West would appreciate us if we succeed in uniting Africa. We shall regain our dignity in this way because uniting as one Africa and one people is the best way to protect our people from colonial persecution. In my opinion, African unity can only be achieved through cooperation. According to Kwame Nkrumah (1963: 142), African unity will enable "the State of the union which may become victim of aggression to mobilize all the means of defense at its disposal." This means that conflicts, coup d'états, arrests, imprisonments, assassinations, murders, and

other problems that we observe today throughout Africa must end if we come together.

To put it another way, unity in Africa is essential for its security, because unity breeds political, social, and economic freedom. Julius Nyerere, quoted by Chachage and Cassam (2010: 16), says, "I believe very strongly in unity," to support this claim. "I think unity is an instrument of liberation," too, I say. Similarly, Emery Patrice Lumumba, cited by Lierde (1972: 320), believes that African unification will cause Africa to "take a position, Africa to tell the West that the period of domination and colonization is over now." Because Nkrumah (1967: 37) thinks that "colonialism and imperialism may come to Africa in different guises," we must unite Africa in order to live in peace and safeguard our society from the return of colonialism. He believes that if we stand together, we can combat neocolonialism and the return of colonialism by remaining watchful and having the ability to "recognize this wherever and whenever it rears its head and prepare ourselves to fight against it." Thus, Kofi Annan, cited by Meister (2007: 228), feels that "peace can be brought to this land if we all work together and put the enmities of the past behind us."

Moreover, Nkrumah (1963: 203) argued that even "world peace is not possible without the liquidation of colonialism and the total liberation of Africa," which is why Vincent Dadoo (2012: 78) thinks that Nkrumah "had a vision not only for Africa but also the whole world." A warning that if Africans do not attain African unity, the world's peace will be jeopardized. For example, Nkrumah actively promoted world peace during the African-Asian Conference (1955), which was previously held in Bandung. He also pushed for the dismantling of the nuclear tension in the Sahara in February 1960. He also aimed to put an end to the American-Vietnamese War. Nkrumah himself believes that "he went on to condemn U.S. policy in Vietnam, and to expose the hypocrisy of American so-called peace moves" in *Dark Days in Ghana* (1968: 13).

In addition, he criticized neo-colonialism and declared that the average person will ultimately triumph. "He continued by

denouncing American aggression in Vietnam and advocating for the total withdrawal of American forces in order to facilitate peace talks."

Nkrumah (1973: 303) made the following claim in an address at the Organization of African Unity summit conference that was held in Accra in 1965:

"We cannot ignore the fact that the same imperialist forces that exploit and subvert our independent States and that exploit and oppress our peoples in the remaining colonial enclaves of Africa are the very same forces that breed armed conflicts, civil strife, and economic impoverishment on other continents. It would be foolish of us to imagine Africa as a prosperous and peaceful continent in the middle of a globe engulfed in war, plagued by starvation and illness, and constantly threatened by imperialist plots and aggression. The peace of the world is seriously threatened by the armed struggle in Vietnam. If there is to be world peace, we have to figure out a means to put an end to that fight once and for all"

The current wave of aggressiveness and violent wars, which are endangering global peace and causing immense misery, must also be stopped, Kwame Nkrumah cautioned. According to Nkrumah (1973: 304), Africa thus demands the creation of an Atom Free Zone, the complete annihilation of nuclear stockpiles wherever they may be, and the prohibition of nuclear weapons manufacturing.

Nkrumah stressed that we expect respect from the rest of the world for our beliefs, positions, cultural heritage, freedom, and independence. All we crave and want is that. Furthermore, Nkrumah (1973: 140) stated that "no African State can be considered secure or free to utilize its resources for the betterment of its own citizens." Each is unstable politically and has a poor economy. Africa cannot advance or experience peace unless its people come together, as the pain of the continent's people will never end. According to him, achieving African unity is the only way to guarantee the security of our resources since it will enable us to live in a peaceful community. Philippe Conte (2001: 52) asserts that "la paix n'est pas un état, c'est un

processus" in this regard. La paix pourra être instaurée par la fabrication collective d'une société fraternelle.

Kwame Nkrumah also observed that Africa turned into a continent plagued by wars, attacks, and skirmishes. At the Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa, which took place in Accra from April 7 to 10, 1960, he expressed his vision of peace and security by denouncing not only the French's "Atomic Arrogance," but also their brutalities in Algeria and the most recent Sharpeville massacre in South Africa. As stated by Barbara Biney Ama (2007: 258):

Kwame Nkrumah stated that the fundamental tenet that Africa is not a continuation of Europe or any other continent is what keeps his land peaceful and secure. The conclusion that Africa will not serve as a theater for the East-West conflict or as a command center for attacks on the West or East is a corollary of this premise.

Nkrumah's remarks at the conference revealed his extreme aversion to nuclear weapons, his disapproval of Africa being used as a pawn in Cold War disputes, and his concern for the safety and stability of the African continent. His government recalled the Ghanaian ambassador to France and confiscated French property in the nation as a practical measure. In conclusion, it is clear that Nkrumah had a purpose to bring about world peace in addition to his vision for the security and peace of Africa. Nkrumah declared almost fifty years ago that "the future of the world" and peace "will be decided in Africa" when the West realizes that Africa is not a place of attacks, conflicts, arrests, assassinations, coups d'état, cold wars, and genocides. This is according to Jean Allman (2008: 98).

African Unity: A Way Towards Defense

This section aims to illustrate Nkrumah's concept of African unification as a means of guaranteeing Africa's comprehensive defense. In this regard, Kwame Nkrumah shared the same dream of a united Africa as his friend Martin Luther King, Jr.: an Africa powerful enough to fend off small-scale military dictatorship, resilient enough to oppose multinational corporations and other

neocolonialist forces, and prosperous enough to provide prosperity to all of its peoples. Ensuring Africa's defense at all levels within the framework of unity was one of his objectives.

The creation of "a Union of the African States is a necessity which should be pursued energetically in the interests of African solidarity and security," according to Nkrumah (1963: 147). Because the majority of independent African states are currently heading in ways that put us in danger of imperialism and the return of colonialism, and because a frightening military apparatus is being developed in Africa with the intention of destroying African independence and keeping millions of Africans in conditions of slavery under the rule of white supremacists. "We must unite to plan for our comprehensive defense and the full exploitation of our material and human means, in the full interests of all our peoples," stated Nkrumah (1963: xvii), "if we are to remain free, if we are to reap the full benefits of Africa's abundant resources."

"In Africa we need to secure the conditions which would allow us to pursue our policy of reconstruction and development," stated Kwame Nkrumah (1963: 179). A warning that the creation of multiple weak and unstable states by African independent states is not necessary, as it is believed that such states will guarantee their ongoing reliance on former colonial powers. Nkrumah (1963: 220) said that "we should aim at the establishment of a unified military and defense strategy" in order to prevent such a risk. According to Nkrumah, in order to provide political direction to our combined efforts for the security and economic advancement of our continent, we in Africa must also establish a single foreign policy and diplomacy if we are to have a unified military and defense strategy. To emphasize this issue, Nkrumah (1963: 219) said the following:

Developing and maintaining large armed forces for self-defense seems like a bad idea to me, as they wouldn't be useful against a significant attack on any of our individual states. If we approach this issue honestly, we ought to be able to ask ourselves this important question: Which African sovereign

governments currently stand a chance against an imperialist aggressor?

To better comprehend Nkrumah, consider that it is absurd for each State to take on self-defense on its own. These young African States are in dire need of funding for internal development. Therefore, he issued a warning: if our armed forces are not brought together for a common defense, individual States may be persuaded to enter into defense agreements with foreign countries out of a sense of insecurity, endangering our collective security. Nkrumah (1963: 203) stated that "any kind of military pacts or alliance with outside powers would be unnecessary" in the framework of African unification. Since an attack on any African nation would be seen as an attack on the union, our combined might would be enough to thwart any invader. As a result, foreign military installations would not exist throughout Africa. Furthermore, this truth will support independent African states in shielding their own populations from the inevitable tragedy of mass slaughter. In order to bolster the final argument, Nkrumah (1963: 202) states that:

The only continent in Africa that could contribute more to global peace and advancement is a united one. For starters, it would put an end to the conflicts caused by the colonial powers' arbitrary borders, which would eradicate irredentist divisions. On African territory, there would be no foreign military installations. They wouldn't be necessary if there was a single defense strategy and coherent foreign policy. No African nation would be left in a position of isolation or vulnerability in the concourse of African unification.

It follows that it will be advantageous to have a unified military in order to ensure our own security and bring about independence for all of Africa. It's also a means of getting rid of the European military presence and standing armies in our nations, as well as the imperialist forces that are dividing us and trying to turn Africa into a battlefield between competing interests. Nkrumah (1969: 22) states:

Currently, seventeen air bases in Africa are owned and run by NATO nations. Nine

foreign naval bases are present. For instance, Kenya, Morocco, Liberia, Libya, South Africa, Senegal, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, and Ivory Coast are home to foreign military missions. North Africa also has an atomic testing range and three rocket sites.

To comprehend Nkrumah better, consider that the military might of foreign nations on our continent poses an unbeatable challenge to the African revolutionary cause in addition to being a major threat. According to Nkrumah, we must band together to destroy all of the continent's standing militaries. Nkrumah also believed that failure to pool military forces for collective defense would likely result in instability and present a chance to forge defense agreements with other nations.

In summary, it is evident that Nkrumah (1963: 203) stated that "there must come an end to all forms of exploitation and oppression of man by man, of nation by nation; there must come an end to wars," conflicts, and other issues that we notice across Africa today will need to be resolved if Africans are to achieve African union and establish a unified military and defense strategy. "The outcome must be the prosperity and happiness of all people as well as peaceful coexistence." By the way, since African unity protects and defends Africans against any colonial mission or policy in Africa, there won't be any more colonialists in Africa.

Conclusion

African unity is the best means of defending and shielding Africans from colonialists and any colonial policies or systems within the continent. According to my study's findings, Kwame Nkrumah promoted African unity by holding that "Africa Must Unite" with a single army in order to destroy all of the continent's standing armies. He underlined that the benefit of having a single military would be to ensure our own safety and defense as well as to bring about independence for all of Africa. It's also a means of getting rid of the European military presence and standing armies in our nations, as well as the imperialist forces that are dividing us and trying to turn Africa into a battlefield between competing interests.

Nkrumah believed that failing to pool military forces for collective defense would likely result in instability and present chances to forge defensive alliances with other nations.

The study also concurs that Nkrumah envisioned a global peace mission in addition to Africa's security, defense, and peace. Because he argued that "the complete liberation of Africa and the liquidation of colonialism are necessary for world peace." According to Nkrumah, the West's realization that Africa is not a continent plagued by attacks, conflicts, arrests, assassinations, coups d'état, cold wars, and genocides will determine the fate of international peace. Nkrumah desired the establishment of

a "Atom Free Zone" in Africa in order to safeguard and defend the continent. In addition, he called for the complete annihilation of nuclear stockpiles, wherever they may be, as well as the prohibition against producing them. This demonstrates Nkrumah's goal of maintaining international peace and security in addition to his opposition to nuclear weapons. Therefore, in order to find a path toward Africa's complete independence, my thesis suggests that Africans consider Nkrumah's vision today. If they don't, Africa will continue to be ruled by the United States, Europe, and Asia. The question that matters now is why Africa is unable to produce nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

References

- Ahlman, J. (1982). *Kwame Nkrumah Visions of Liberation*. New-York: Ohio University press.
- (2008). "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom Ghana 1959-1962". *The Trustees of Columbia University*.10(2), 83-102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940802115419>
- Biney, A. (2007). *"Kwame Nkrumah: An Intellectual Biography."* Doctoral dissertation the University of London.
- (2011). *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah*. New-York: Palgrave.
- Chachage, C. & Cassam, A. (2010). *Africa's Liberation: The Legacy of Nyerere*. Kampala Uganda: Pampazuka press.
- Conte, P. (2001). *Afghanistan Guerre Lointaine*. Paris : l'Harmattan.
- Dodoo, V. (2012). "Kwame Nkrumah's Mission and Vision for Africa and The World." *The Journal of Pan-African Studies*. 4(10), 78-92.
- Kanu, I. A. (2013). "Nkrumah and the Quest for African Unity." *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*. 3(6), 111-114.
- Lierde, J. V. (1972). *Lumumba Speaks: The Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba 1958-1961, Introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre Translated from French by Helen R. Lane*. Boston: Little Brown and Co.
- Nkrumah, K.(1963). *Africa Must Unite*. New-York: Frederick A. Praeger.
- (1966). *Neo-colonialism The Last Stage of Imperialism*.
- (1967). *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah*. London: Panaf books.
- (1969). *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*. New-York: International publisher.
- (1973). *Revolutionary Path*. London: Panaf books.
- Rahman, A. (2007). *The Regime Change of Kwame Nkrumah Epic Heroism in Africa and the Diaspora*. New-York: Palgrave.
- Rooney, D. (2007). *Kwame Nkrumah Vision and Tragedy*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.