



# A Re-examination of 'A Predatory West, Africa's Postcolonial States, International Trade Relations and Underdevelopment in Africa:' Reechoing Centre-Periphery Issues

**Peter Sakwe Masumbe**

Departments of Public Law and Public Administration and  
Political Science and Comparative Politics, University of Buea, Cameroon

## ABSTRACT

This article reexamines the international trade relations and division of labour, (in primary and secondary goods), between core Western capitalist and African peripheral capitalist states; incarnated by David Ricardo's politico-economic Comparative Advantage Theory; arguing that, these relations are skewed against Africans, given Africans' despondent peripheral capitalist positioning. Herein, the West dictates cheap trade mechanisms upon Africa's primary goods. Later, the West exorbitantly sell secondary goods, produced from Africans' primary goods. In this process, the West gets richer, while Africans get impoverished. Whereas, in international relations, states being the key actors, fashion societal development or underdevelopment in societies. Nonetheless, the prevailing centre-periphery relations, shape African states' debilities, even with decades of self-rules. Today, like yesterday, African states exhibit traumatising underdevelopment, incarnated by unappealing political, social, economic infrastructures, which exacerbate citizens' governance apathy; while enhancing unimaginable wretchedness in insecurity, hunger, poverty, diseases, conflicts and fragmentation of nationalities. Using the historical research methodology, Prebisch's (1949) Dependency Theory and Wallenstein's (1970) Modern World Systems, I dismiss Ricardo's comparative advantage thesis, because, it is an imperial construct in centre-periphery relations for fragilising and annihilating Africans' economies. Conclusively, I advocate for Africans' unwavering reawakening and disciplined nationalism against this despondent peripheral capitalism, because, it perpetuates Africans' underdevelopment.

**Keywords:** Predatory, trade, relations, postcolonial, underdevelopment, centre-periphery.

## INTRODUCTION - THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Undeniably, teaching the course - POS 311: The State and the International System – Centre-Periphery Issues; in the Department of Political Science and Comparative Politics, University of Buea, Cameroon, for several years offered me extensive but sordid insights about the character of international trade relations between core Western and postcolonial Africa's peripheral capitalist states. This knowledge prompts engagement with subtle and pernicious concepts of 'trade' and 'underdevelopment' in Africa. Although extensively treated, these concepts require further research, because, they anchor on predatory mindset from an insatiable and voracious West against postcolonial African states. Arguably, skewed trade relations, frame Africans' inexpressible and excruciating underdevelopment; reminiscent to outright slavery and

colonialism. Herein, the orchestration is by a predatory West's unbridled penchant for African' natural resources, which enrich the West, while impoverishing Africans (Jega 2000, Masumbe 2019). Cuing from this premise, the following issues arise with great concern:

1. low pricing and buying mechanisms associated with the massively extracted natural resources from African states, which are exported for energising Western industries,
2. the West's selling of secondary goods to postcolonial African states at very exorbitant prices,
3. the exploitative foreign direct investment mechanisms without a corresponding Africans' investments in the West, except in illicit banking,
4. the vicious incorporation and monetisation of African states' economies into Western capitalism,
5. the relegation of African states into despondent peripheral capitalist formations in the international division of wealth production,
6. the primitive accumulation of wealth from African states through skewed trade relations,
7. the West's imposition of imperially designed and misleading politico-economic theories, which promote Africans' underdevelopment given African states leaderships imbued unassertive mentalities,
8. the West's perpetuation of underdevelopment-oriented politico-economic foreign policies in postcolonial African states,
9. the enforcement of obnoxious imperial political, economic and military pacts in postcolonial African states,
10. the incessant presence of West's exploitative trading multinational corporations – SCAO Motors, Total Energies, Cami Toyota, Shell BP, Chevron, Exxon, among others, and
11. the avoidable probabilities for annihilating African states' economies, and so on.

### **MY PERSUADING RATIONALE**

The above list, although not exhaustive, constitutes the bulk of the irking concerns that fashion the exploitative centre-periphery relations; wherein the predatory West's propels skewed international trade and division of labour mechanisms, now representing phenomenal signposts of underdevelopment that ravage and despair Africans, even with their several decades of self-rules. Consequently, reminiscent of the underdevelopment trajectories arising from slavery and colonisation, we herein reecho West's predaciousness against Africans' trading, political, economic, social and psychological landscapes. The key purpose is to expose West's trade gimmicks as antecedent of development-adversaries in Africa. On this path, the paper engages its analysis via three ambitions, namely:

1. to present a rigorous theoretical and empirical understanding about the character of international trade between the West and African states; as essentially predatory, vicious, subjugating, exploitative, insulting, slavery-like and degrading to Africans,
2. to reawaken the consciousness of Africans towards their liberation from another humiliating slavery session slavery and re-colonialism,
3. to pressure the end of a predatory West's characteristic aversion against unsuspecting Africans,

Accordingly, we marshal our problematic via expounding the worries over the Argentina's 1940's trade relations with the West, which forced Hans Prebisch to reexamine David Ricardo's comparative advantage thesis. This re-examination birthed a new school of economic thought

in the 1949. Herein, Prebisch separated out the purely theoretical aspects of economics from the actual practice of trade and the power structures that underlain trading institutions and agreements (Toye 2003). His resulting division of the world into the economic 'centre' consisting of Western industrialised nations; and 'periphery', consisting of non-industrialised nations; currently resonates. Similarly, we analyse Wallerstein's (1970) MWS thesis, in wherein he developed the best-known version of world systems analysis, which empirically collaborates Prebisch's (1949) dependency theory, to show how a predatory West's grip upon Africans' trade relations, inhibit Africans' economic emancipation.

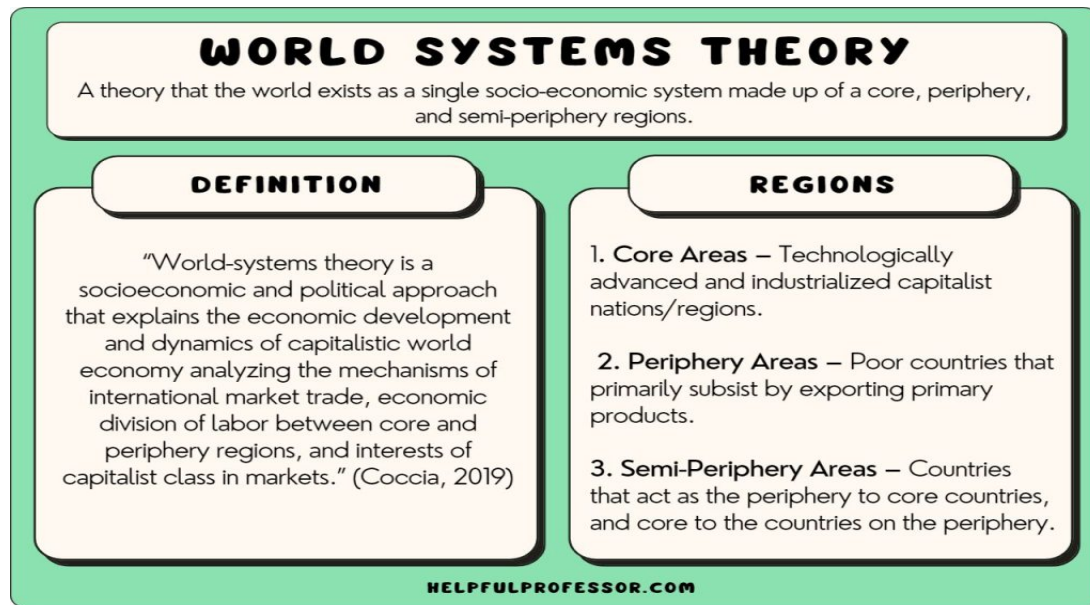
Essentially, the Dependency Theory (DT) and Modern World Systems suggest that, "...core countries, which are industrially advanced and rich, via owning superior science and technological capabilities, extract, underprice, under-buy and undermine the natural resources from poor countries, which are exported for energising Western rich countries." As Wallerstein (1970:45) opines, "These rich countries transform raw materials obtained from non-industrialised nations into secondary goods through their massive industrial complexes, and re-sell their products to these poor non-industrialised countries at very exorbitant prices. As this contemptuous circle evolves, it impoverishes the already impoverished countries, while the rich countries continue increasing their wealth and political power. Accordingly, the poor countries remain economically strangulated, weak and failing in providing the basic necessities to their citizens." Wallerstein traces the rise of the centre-periphery relations in world capitalism within the length and breadth of the 16th century (c. 1450–1640), which in his view, "...was an accidental outcome of the acutely protracted crisis of feudalism, but was later used as path to subjugate other territories."

For instance, historically, France mischievously created its parasitic imperialist franc cfa as the operating currency, and imposed it on all its fourteen postcolonial African states. Henceforth, France has erroneously been considered by these states as their most reliable trading ally that provides their economic, political, technical, monetary and military directions. In fact, "...the fca has become the most callous colonial instrument perpetuated by France upon Africans" (Mentan 1984, Ibeanu 1993). According to Degan and Zoubir (2011), "France's traumatic decolonisation experience in Indo-China and Algeria, leading to the consequential loss of French influence in these parts of the world, orbited France into griping its African territories. Thereafter, Monnerville, (1897-1991) alludes, 'without overseas territories, today's France would decline to a lesser power, needing liberation, rather than a winner of WWII.' Similarly, Mitterrand (1916 -1996) adds, 'Without Africa, there would be no French history in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.'"

Paradoxically, France grips fourteen postcolonial African states, whose economic, political, military, monetary and social landscapes are near total annihilation, while France waxes higher into economic and political power prosperity. To better understand the deceptive character of trade relations, it is important appreciating the tenets of the dependency and modern system theses.

Accordingly, we reecho that, postcolonial African states' characteristic incessant declining, debilitating and failures are direct functions of a predatory West's approach, to deliberately dwarf Africans' development. To achieve this, the West's avariciously premediates despondent

peripheral capitalist position for African states in the international trade and division of wealth production.



**Fig. 1: The World System Theory by Immanuel Wallerstein, demonstrating its definition and operational mechanisms**

Source: Adapted from Bluffer (2015) *Theories of Development and Underdevelopment in Africa*, Lagos: PANA Press, p..78

Hence, between 2013 and 2023, France extracted, under-bought and imported some whopping 17,640 tons of uranium from Niger, paying a meagre 1,411,200 Euros to this impoverished postcolonial African state. However, France sold these 17,640 tons of uranium at 3, 513, 888,000 Euros. (www.dw.com). As Ali (2023) reports, “...on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2023, Niger chose a radical path of its uranium trade away from France. Accordingly, Niger increased its uranium price to 200 Euros per kg, thereby boosting Niger’s economy.” Certainly, France’s Niger exploitation represents just one case in the fourteen postcolonial African states under France’s core-capitalist grip. Hence, Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) calls this predatory West’s avariciousness, “a vampire and monstrous system, incarnated by the exploitation of man by man, within dubious economic mindset that negates all historical processes of human self-determination, emancipation and man’s dignity before another man.”

Obviously, this West’s bossy grip upon of African states’ is phenomenally pernicious and irking, because, it undermines every effort at human and material conditions, including all sorts of economic factors development in the region. Moreover, it narrows the enviable status of the state as a core player in international relations. As Thompson and Clinton (2006:3), quoting Hans J. Morgenthau (1948), opine, “In the international state system, a state is less relevant, if it cannot exert real power over other states, to maximise realising its national interest.” So, in the prevailing character of international trade and economic relations, African states are virtually less relevant than others, insofar as African states are unable to exert real power (political and economic) in the international state system. Contextually, however, postcolonial African states should have overcome underdevelopment, given that, they obtained self-rules

over sixty years now, but, the malignant nexus between the West and African states remains the dreadful cord, undoubtedly seeking emancipation (Dumont 1988, Columbus 2002).

Like Morgenthau (1948:56), we believe that, "In the absence of real power, it is even baseless talking about gaining substantial domestic or international relevance, which demand the use of hard power politics to galvanise liberated resource mobilisation, allocation and consumption at the national and international levels." Thus, African states must fashion autochthonous motivated science and technological capabilities, to positively redefine themselves in the international state system, even if, as Sesay and Ojo (1988) posit "...even the powerful West still requires more power to ensure its own survival in a world inundated with real power interplays, dynamics, economic determinism and competition." Nonetheless, as Walker (2002:89), believes, "postcolonial Africans must develop self-redefinition towards radical economic determinism, through what Machiavelli calls "*realpolitik*," to facilitate their gainful participation in international trade relations." Certainly, staying in indefensibly enervating slumber only supports an assertion by a former Governor of Imo State in Nigeria, Samuel O. Mbakwe, who in 1984 regrettably said: "The docility-imbued, corruption-ridden and mentally deconstructed Nigerian society do not understand the dire need for economic determinism of Nigerians nay Africans. Consequently, they need another 50 years in colonialism, if that would alter their economy preservation senses."

### **THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

This reechoing of centre-periphery issues revolves on Prebisch's (1949) dependency theory and Wallenstein's (1970) Modern World System (MWS) analysis. The MWS is actually one of the three central theories in the political economy of international relations, namely, (i) the dual economy theory, (ii) the modern world system theory, and (iii) the hegemonic theory, which account for understanding the character of centre-periphery issues (Gilpin 2007). These frameworks highlight the development impossibilities, confronting African states as long as they continue occupying the despondent peripheral capitalist formations in the international division of labour, characterised by a predatory West' intentions to Africans' politico-economic asphyxiation.

Apparently, though Westerners, Immanuel Wallerstein, like Karl Marx, (1818-1883), Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and a host of others with human compassion appear freeing themselves from Western imperialism, as they illuminate deceptive trends in Western scholarship, incarnated in Ricardo's (1772 - 1823) Comparative Advantage theory, Rostow's (1964) 'The Stages of Economic Development Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto, Organski's (1967) The Stages of Political Development, and so on. As Ake (1978) posits, "...these Western scholarships are essentially imperialistic, as they invest in relegating African states into perpetual peripheral capitalism, with its attendant underdevelopment incarnated by disproportionate buying and selling mechanisms of primary goods mostly produced by African states vis-à-vis goods Western industrial goods." Thus, economic determinism, which we now advocate for Africans is a socioeconomic theory that explains and supports economic relationships devoid of capital exploiting labour and vice versa. Sumptuously, this must be the foundation upon which African societal and political arrangements must stand; in order to wrestle their economic freedom from a predatory West. Equivocal as it is, this theory rightly stresses that societies are divided into competing economic classes, whose relative political power is determined by the power of their economic system indicated by the amount of wealth produced, and most importantly

controlled internally and externally. Thus, below is Wallerstein's centre-periphery schema demonstrating West's predatory subjugating and exploitative mindset towards African states' despondent capitalist positioning as peripherals.



**Fig 2: An empirical schema of centre-periphery issues of Prebisch, explaining the underdevelopment relations arising from the peripheral position occupied by the postcolonial African state in international trade relations with the West.**

Source: Free download: ID – 1220752. Retrieved on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024 at Buea, Cameroon, 5pm.

Agreeing with Chandler's (1962) strategy-structure alignment thesis, and with Wallerstein's and Prebisch's theories, we theoretically and empirically dismiss the Ricardo's politico-trade thesis as imperialistically misleading, mischievous and exploitative. It cannot be used as a point of departure to foster trade relations and economic growth in African states. Obviously, this theory insinuates that developing countries must continuously take advantage of their vast tropical forests (environment) to produce only raw materials, which they can best produce at cheap cost, and which must be exported to the West at cheap prices, (Dumont 1988:183, Walker 2002:127). Further African states must not engage into producing industrial good, in which they lack the expertise. To say the least, this theory is essentially the epicentre of a malignant imperial tool, arrogantly nurtured and maliciously perpetuated by the West to deconstruct the in-depth cognitive, affective and psychomotor senses of economic and trade emancipation.

For Ricardo, supposing the West lacks the environment to produce iron ore, timber, rubber, cocoa beans, and so on, but have the cognitive capacities to produce cars, aircrafts, computers, beverages from raw material obtained from African states. These raw material (timber, uranium, gold, iron-ore, crude oil, coffee, cocoa, cotton, rubber) the flow of primary goods produced by African states must continue. Hence, the production of primary products is a cost advantage over the West, not minding how deceptively, these primary commodities are underpriced and purchased by the West at disdainful low costs, which impoverish Africans. In simple arithmetic, the politico-economic and trade implications here are that, those who produce raw material at low cost should continue doing so, because they lack the cognitive capacities to produce cars, aircrafts, computers, which are

expensive to produce; while those produce cars, aircrafts, computers must continue doing so.

Irrefutably, Ricardo's comparative advantage thesis is based upon these deceptive assumptions that:

1. Various states should participate in international division of labour based on what they can best produce, irrespective of how ungainful such production is to the producers.
2. Governments should not intervene in the economic system.
3. Perfect competition exists both in the commodity and factor markets.
4. There must be obvious static conditions in the primary economies, implying factors of supply and demands, techniques of production, pricing mechanisms, tastes and preferences.
5. Production function is homogeneous of the first degree, implying outputs changes exactly in the same ratio in which the factors' inputs are varied. In other words, production is governed by constant returns to scale.
6. Labour is not the only factor of production and the cost of producing a commodity is expressed only in labour units, but must be commensurate to wage earned.
7. Labour must be perfectly mobile within the country but perfectly immobile among different countries.
8. Transport costs are absent so that production cost, measured in terms of labour input alone, determines the cost of producing a given commodity.

### **MERCANTILISM AS THE PREDATORY BASES OF WEST-AFRICA INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONS: AN OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC ANNIHILATION**

Historically, this West's predaciousness arose from several politico-economic thinking of many Westerners, among whom was Thomas Munn, (1571 – 1641), an English mercantilist, who selfishly opinionated that, "the British nay Europe must engage more into exports rather than in imports of goods for the growth of the West's internal political economic bases" (Palmer, Colton and Kramer 2002). Munn's mercantilist senses that Europe's importation of goods from other countries, no matter their necessity, must be avoided to enable Europe produce only industrial goods, only makes exploitative senses. Nevertheless, these senses anchor only on ensuring an imperialist bedrock that politically and economically make England nay Europe richer and stronger in order to perpetuate a weaker Africa.

Therefore, the declining, weakening and failing states syndrome of African states arise from this historicism, which must be a point of departure for all vengeful reasons for reviewing Africans' obnoxious trade relations with the West. To extricate themselves from this imperial scheme, Africans must re-establish themselves as strategic partakers and unavoidable competitors in international trade relations, given their huge natural resource, so that their true political, economic, social and psychological independence becomes a twenty-first century's reality. It is completely absurd for postcolonial African states to continue energising Western gigantic and monstrous military and civilian industrial complexes at the detriment of Africans' economic growth.

Actually, mercantilism, was a trading foreign policy and economic determinism counterpart of political absolutism, which insinuated and continue doing so, that, Europe must export more

and import less, in order to guarantee the (gold bullion) economic and by extension the political power of Europe over other world regions (Bade 1988, Dumont 1988:132). Mun and his colleagues, thus, believed that a nation's holding of gold is the main measure of its wealth. Munn, instigated European governments to regulate trade to produce excess of exports over imports in order to gain more gold for their countries.

"Its 17th-century publicists, that is most notably, Thomas Munn in England, Jean-Baptiste Colbert in France, and Antonio Serra in Italy, hardly used the term themselves; as it was given currency by the Scottish economist Adam Smith's (1776) work: *An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations*" (Palmer, Colton and Kramer 2002:417). Mercantilism contained many interlocking principles, which guided its progression. For instance, things such as precious metals, in the form of gold, diamond and silver, were deemed indispensable to a nation's wealth. If a nation did not possess mines or have access to them, as were abundantly found in Africa, precious metals should be obtained by trade. It was believed that trade balances must be favourable, meaning an excess of exports over imports. In this direction, colonial possessions (colonised territories) should serve as markets for exports and suppliers of raw materials to the mother country. Manufacturing was forbidden in colonies, and all commerce between colonies and mother country was a monopoly of the mother country (Palmer, Colton and Kramer 2002:341)

Therefore, prosperous trade became the most dependable panacea for Europe's prosperity in honour and supremacy over other parts of the world over. This explains Europe's grip trade grip on Africans, because, trade, anywhere in the globe represents the moving force of wealth of nations, hence, its importance to politics, economics and social wellbeing of statesmen. Thus, the European Union through Munn of 16<sup>th</sup> century England, became immersed into capitalism via the groundwork laid for the emergent imperialist designs against African states. The West/EU as a politico-economic block is now deeply fastened into global markets both for the products it sources (cheap labour and raw materials) from African states and the exports of secondary goods at exorbitant prices into misery ridden African states. The EU trade policy is an important element of the external dimension of the 'Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' and is one of the main pillars of the EU's relations with the rest of the world. Because the 28 EU member states share a single market and a single external border, unlike Africans with strict borders barricades, diverse and divisive trade policies and currencies, EU member states have open borders, single trade policy and currency, which make it easier for the West to speak and negotiate collectively, both in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), where the rules of international trade are agreed and enforced, (Ezigwe 2021, Fatima 2022).

This facilitates the Western states to maximise their national interests, through impactful negotiations; with less care about impoverishing African states, which are premeditatedly in dispersed ranks. Thus, the calculated openness of West's international trade regime makes the West the biggest player on the global trading scene; even with its imperialistic trading mechanisms. With modern transport and communications, it is easier to obtain, industrialise, and sell goods around the world, which gives Western companies of every size great trading potentials at the detriment of African states, whose transport and communication infrastructures are the poorest on earth; and these narrow Africans' chances of healthy global competitiveness.



## **AN OVERVIEW OF INTRA-POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN TRADE RELATIONS**

In 1994, I sent three letters abroad through a Cameroon post office. One went to Nigeria with a postage stamp of 750 francs cfa about \$2.10. Another to France with a postage stamp of 250 francs cfa about US\$0.55 cents. The third to Australia with a postage stamp of 1,350 francs cfa, about US\$3.78. Concerning Australia, not only was I shocked by the postage stamp cost but also by the counter clerk's admonishment that, "Please, if you want a reply from your letter to Australia, your address must be: Cameroon, c/o France." This demonstrates just another enervating despondent aspect in Africa's estranged nexus with a predatory West, because, it is cheaper doing business the West and Africa, than between Africa and Africa.

Thus, intra-African trade, defined as the average exports and imports, movement of people and goods, availability of enticing political, economic and social opportunities is maliciously and imperially nightmarishly segregated by the West. Thus, intra-African trade is abysmally at very low standing just around 14% of the total, which is conditioned by the poor character of intra-African haulage infrastructure - air, sea or land (Berthélemy and Soderling 2002). Thus, colonialism and neo-colonialism created intra-African artificial barriers, which are fostered through language, customs, hatred, self-contempt and so on. Understandably, then, intra-African trade is lower globally, when compared to intra-Europe, intra-US, or intra-Asia, and so on. Consequently, despite the proliferation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) even after gaining self-rules, the character of intra-African trade infrastructure remains inferior to facilitate any enviable trade within Africa ((Berthélemy and Soderling 2002:169-209).

## **TRENDS IN FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) IN AFRICAN STATES**

Except in bourgeois politico-economic thinking, foreign direct investment is not a panacea for development of a people. Said otherwise, it is a reinforcement of imperialism, intended to destroy any libertarian cognitive capacities of self-reliance, through self-determination in a people's autochthonous environment and aspirations. As Karl Marx notes, "it is essentially unwise allowing people to use one's land, cheap labour and wealth for the benefit of other people." Similarly, the Chinese teaches that, we teach people how catch fishes, than perpetuating offering people fishes. Nonetheless, China builds gigantic public edifices in Africa with Chinese cognitive capacities minus Africans, so what lessons does China offers, if not imperialism? However, although the total intra-African investment remain small in global terms, it is significant in relation to Africa's trading size - a size fashioned by imperial policies from the predatory West (Ake 1996:98, Bade 1990:56). For instance, in Africa, some top five recipients of the so-called foreign direct investment, according to (UNCTAD, 2019) are: (i) Egypt, (ii) South Africa, (iii) Congo, (iv) Morocco and (v) Ethiopia are mere showcases of brute imperialism.

In West's imperial designs, foreign direct investment (FDI) in some large economies, such as in Egypt and Nigeria, is balanced by a surge in other African countries, with best examples being South Africa and Ethiopia. However, in absolute terms, this surge is informed by the senses of capital safety in these countries, and the supposed unsafety in countries like Nigeria, which poses human and material insecurity. In terms of top investor countries, France, with a huge number of ex-colonies is the largest, albeit with no stock increases and good livelihood for Africans, though. The Netherlands, the United States, The United Kingdom (UK) and China follow on the top of this opaque investors' list. However, following Brexit, and of significance

was the recent UK-Africa Summit, and the first after the Brexit, held in January 2020, which looked towards strengthening trade and investment for British companies after Brexit.

### **EMPIRICAL LENGTHS IN WEST'S PREDACIOUSNESS AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

#### **a) The US and its Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)**

Though couched in showcasing good intents about Africa's growth, AGOA is essentially a malignant tool for capitalist exploitation, which the US supposedly formulated as an economic and trade instrument for African growth and opportunities. According to its founders, AGOA would promote a win-win trade relations between the US and African countries. This was even necessary, because, the United States would not import anything commodity from Africa, which does not meet the standards of the people of this first world, given the peripheral capitalist capacities of Africans in science and technology. Given this, African states, which already relish in the West's predatory peripheral capitalist positioning, could export only raw materials and natural products into the US, with corresponding US exports of finished goods into the postcolonial African states.

Consequently, since its enactment in 2000, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been at the core of U.S. economic policy and commercial engagement with Africa. Accordingly, AGOA provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products, in addition to the more than 5,000 products that are eligible for duty-free access under the Generalised System of Preferences Programme (GSPP) into Africa. To meet AGOA's rigorous eligibility requirements, countries must establish or make continual progress toward establishing a market-based economy, the rule of law, political pluralism, and the right to democratic norms. Additionally, countries must eliminate barriers to U.S. trade and investment, enact policies to reduce poverty, combat corruption, and protect human rights (Berthélemy and Soderling 2023).

With supposedly new market opportunities, AGOA asserts helping bolster economic growth, promoted economic and political reform, and improve U.S. economic and trade relations in the region. Accordingly, 36 countries were eligible to benefit from AGOA in 2022. Secondly, by providing entry of duty-free goods into the US for the named African products, AGOA would help expand and diversify African exports to the US, while fostering an improved business environment in many African countries. But if one may ask: What character of goods, would Africa export to the US, if not raw materials, which propel the US industries into higher wealth, while impoverishing African countries with lack of own industrial bases?

#### **The AGOA, U.S.-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership**

During a virtual meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 in Washington, D.C., the United States Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, and Kenya's Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and Enterprise Development, Cabinet Secretary, Betty Maina, launched what two countries, (i) a core capitalist – the US; (ii) a periphery capitalist – Kenya, call “the United States-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP).” Building on their June 13, 2022 meeting in Geneva, Ambassador Tai and Cabinet Secretary Maina agreed that their governments will pursue an engagement enhancement, which would eventually lead to high standard commitments in a wide range of areas with a view to increasing investment; promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth; which would benefit workers, consumers, and businesses (including micro-

small-and medium-sized enterprises); and to support African regional economic integration. Consequently, they identified the following initial issues where the US and Kenya will develop ambitious roadmap for enhanced cooperation with the goal of negotiating high-standard commitments for achieving economically meaningful outcomes:

1. **Agriculture:** The US and Kenya will consider measures to facilitate agricultural trade and enhance transparency and understanding of the application of science- and risk-based Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures. These would foster sustainable agricultural practices, as well as create an enabling environment for innovative agricultural technologies that would help achieve food security, increase farm productivity, and improve farmer livelihoods, while addressing climate change concerns.
2. **Anti-Corruption:** The US and Kenya share a commitment to combat bribery and other forms of corruption. The two sides will engage in information sharing of best practices to prevent corruption and will explore negotiating specific commitments.
3. **Digital Trade:** The US and Kenya share interests in fostering consumer, business, and worker trust in the digital economy, ensuring access to information, promoting the development, resilience and secure digital infrastructure, promoting competitiveness in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and addressing discriminatory practices. The two countries will discuss measures to support digital inclusion, including accessibility, and online consumer protection. The two countries will also monitor global discussions on emerging issues in digital trade which are of mutual interests.
4. **Environment and Climate Change Action:** The United States and Kenya share common values with respect to environmental protection, a commitment to conservation, pursuing measures to support climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the importance of the sustainable use and management of each country's natural resources as they strengthen their trade and investment relations. The two sides will engage on strengthening these efforts, including with respect to climate adaptation and mitigation practices.
5. **Good Regulatory Practices:** The US and Kenya will explore negotiating high-level commitments on topics such as: ensuring adequate public consultations on proposed regulations; posting proposed regulations for review by interested stakeholders; basing regulatory decisions on best available information, science, and evidence, including undertaking risk analysis and regulatory impact assessment when necessary. The two sides will also explore negotiating provisions on domestic services regulations.
6. **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):** The US and Kenya believe that the successes of MSMEs are key elements to promote sustained economic growth, including women-owned enterprises. The two countries will discuss approaches to integrate MSMEs into international trade, by initiating periodic technical best practices exchanges and roundtables on micro, small and medium enterprises.
7. **Promoting Workers' Rights and Protections:** The US and Kenya share a desire to work together to advance labour rights through: enforcement of and compliance with labour laws, promotion of social dialogue, and cooperation in areas of mutual interest on labour and employment priorities, including avoidance of forced and child labour in global supply chains.
8. **Supporting Participation of Women, Youth, and Others in Trade:** The US and Kenya will commit to promoting economic opportunities for women and youth and continue

to examine how to develop and adopt trade policies that promote and facilitate the participation of women and youth in international trade and to promote good paying, high-quality jobs and sustainable livelihoods.

9. **Standards Collaboration:** The US and Kenya will discuss the role of standards, conformity assessment procedures and technical regulations that have significant impact on trade, including opportunities to reduce impediments to trade due to differences in their respective political systems. The two sides intend to engage on and discuss in-depth on their respective processes for the preparation, adoption, and application of technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures based on mutually agreed best practices.
10. **Trade Facilitation and Customs Procedures:** The US and Kenya recognise pandemic's impact on supply chains and demonstrated benefits of streamlining border procedures and accelerating WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; and the implementation trade relations during any challenging time. The two sides will discuss opportunities to simplify procedures, especially those that allow new entrants to engage in trade. In this regard, the two sides will consider various customs practices, transparency and cooperation on customs enforcement to promote mutual understanding, including the Agreement between the Government of the US and Kenya, (Berthélemy and Soderling 2023:169-209).

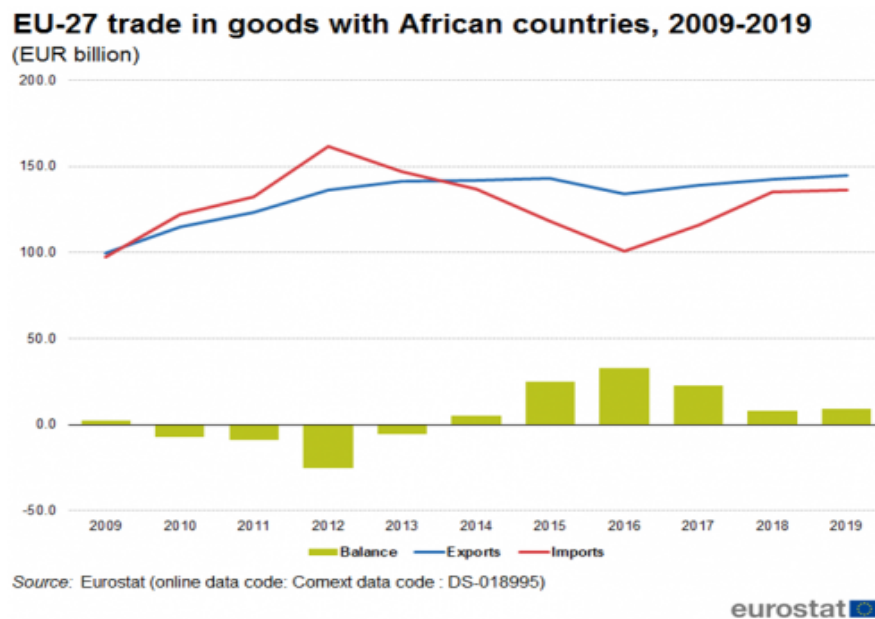
However, as Davis (2023) states, “irrespective of this seemingly booming picture, the on-the-ground commitment in terms of equitable trade relations between the US and Kenya, is basically that of servant-master relations. Herein, centre-periphery capitalist issues prevail, because, Kenya does not have the industrial capacity possessed by the US. So, Kenya cannot produce high scientific and technologically propelled goods, which the US can import.” Thus, Kenya trades on only specific primary goods, such as coffee, raw tea leaves, hides and skins, forest product, seafood, while Kenya imports automobile products, heavy duty earth moving equipment, aircrafts and so on.

### **(b)The West/European Union**

#### **A Predatory West and Postcolonial African States International Trade Relations: Exploitative or Fair:**

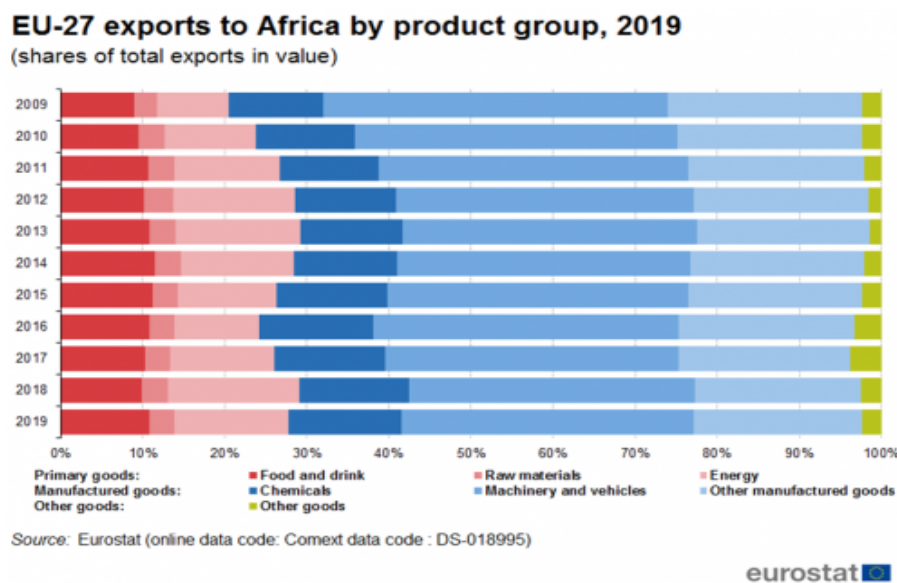
The tables and figures below justify this study's intellectual argument, with trade discrepancies between the West and African states. Thus, African states must gainfully assert themselves to redefine these relations (Dumont 1988:278, Ake, 1996:153, Bade 1996:201). As Wallerstein (1970:55) argues:

*Europe moved towards the establishment of a capitalist world economy in order to ensure its continued economic growth than in other countries. Thus, this entailed the expansion of its geographical size grip of the world, the development of different modes of labour control and the creation of relatively strong core state machineries in Western Europe. In response to the feudal crisis, by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the world economic system emerged with the periphery and core capitalist states emerging in the process. Consequently, the core regions benefited the most from the capitalist world economy. Politically, the states within this part of Europe developed strong central governments, extensive bureaucracies, and large mercenary armies.*



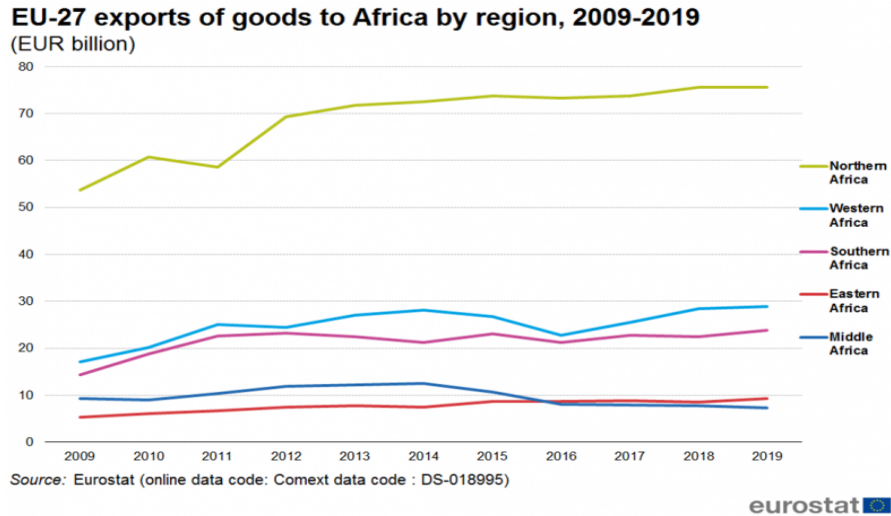
**Fig 3: European Union trade in goods with postcolonial African states 2009-2019**  
Source: euro-statistics

Essentially, industrial goods from Europe dominate exports to Africa. For instance, in 2009, 77 % of goods exported from the European Union to postcolonial African states were industrial goods (see fig. 3 above). This share fell to 70 % in 2019, while the share of primary goods rose from 20 % to 28 %. The declining share of industrial goods was mostly caused by the declining share of machinery and vehicles, from 42 % in 2009 to 36 % in 2019, a declining share of machinery and vehicles is ‘the almighty Europe’ speaks to amplify the philosophy of retributive justice in favour of postcolonial African states.



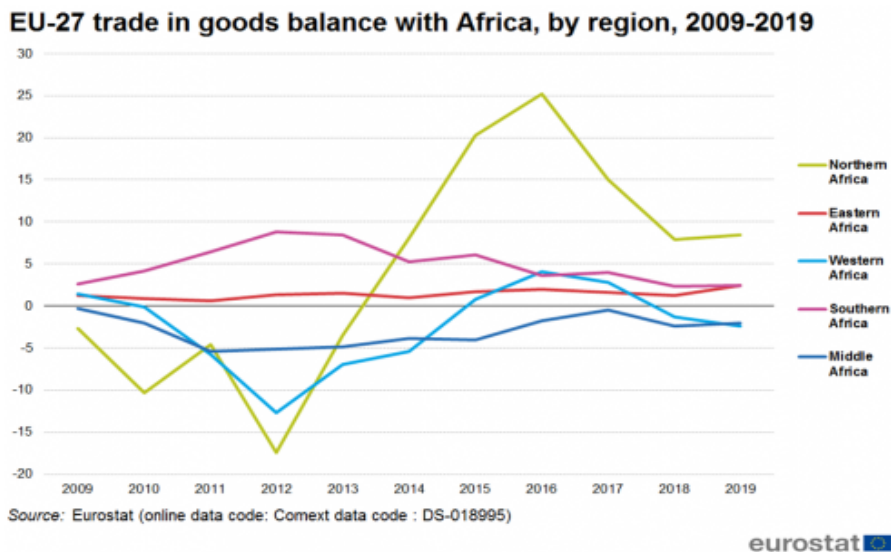
**Fig 4: EU member states exports (secondary goods) to postcolonial African states by nature of product group in 2019**  
Source: euro-statistics

Herein, primary goods (raw materials) dominate imports with Africa. Thus, as for imports from Africa, mostly they primary goods, which are in the largest group (see fig. 4 above). However, between 2009 and 2019 there share decreased from 77 % to 66 % mainly due to the decreasing share of energy, which is partly explained by falling oil and gas prices. In the same period, the share of manufactured goods rose from 21 % to 32 %. This was mainly due to increasing imports of machinery and vehicles from 7 % to 15 %.

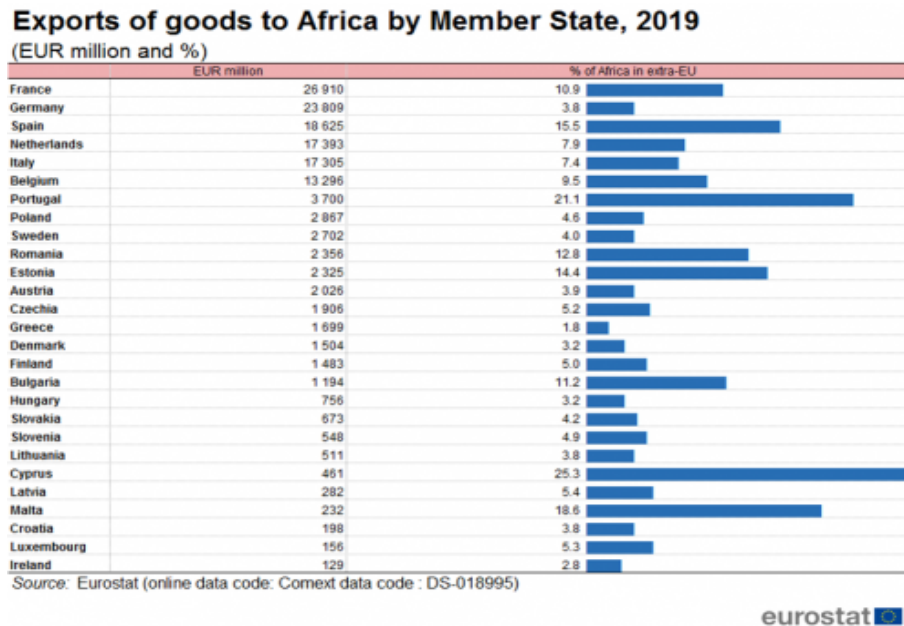


**Fig.5: Northern Africa’s largest trade in goods with member states of the EU in 2009-2019.**  
Source: euro-statistics

The European Union’s (EU) exports of goods to Northern Africa rose from EUR 54 billion in 2009 to EUR 76 billion in 2019 (see fig. 5 above), equivalent to an average annual growth rate of 3.5 %. The growth rate was highest in Eastern Africa (5.7 %) followed by Western Africa (5.4 %) and Southern Africa (5.2 %). Exports of goods to Middle Africa (-2.3 %) declined in this period.



**Fig 6: European Union trade mostly in secondary goods with Africa, by region, 2009-2019.**  
Source: euro-statistics



**Fig 6: European Union member states' exports of goods (secondary goods) to African in 2019**  
Source: euro-statistics

From the above graph, it is discernable that, Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy are the highest European Union (EU) member states in the so-called trading or development partnerships with Africa. Paradoxically, mostly these good are in the form of raw material exported to voracious European imperialists, who front as messiahs to the incessantly unassertive Africans. For instance, France (EUR 27 billion), Germany (EUR 24 billion), Spain (EUR 19 billion), the Netherlands and Italy (both EUR 17 billion) were the largest exporters of goods to Africa in 2019 (see fig. 6 above). Cyprus (25.3 %), Portugal (21.1 %) and Malta (18.6 %) had the highest shares for exports to Africa in their total exports to countries outside the EU. From the tables and figures shown above, it is plausible to discern the size, expanse and quality of the market open to Europe within the African continent. Since trade is the most single instrument par excellence, through which sensible countries are built and empowered. Thus, it behooves upon Africans and their sympathisers, to weigh into understanding the core reasons why Europe cannot stop perpetuating imperialistic designs unto African.

### **Postcolonial Africans, Assertiveness, Self-reliant Mindsets and Human Development**

Herein, I argue that, any further plunging of millions of postcolonial Africans, whose livelihoods surge in piercing impoverishment into what I call, 'advanced underdevelopment,' might evoke unimaginable individual and collective consequences against the West. Indeed, the West must remember its Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Colonialism misdeeds against Africans. Hence, the quick abstention from perpetuating its neo-colonial avarices against postcolonial Africans would guarantee a peaceful and stable West. As Mentan (2004), Combs (2010), agree, it is essentially the razor-sharp negative politico-economic foreign policies from the West that prodded and continue to prod international terrorism. As a British adage holds, "A hungry man is an angry man." Thus, while not advocating terror against any part of humanity, the West must be mindful of the consequences of its diabolic predaciousness, as it takes pretext in being a development partner of postcolonial African states. Essentially, we call on African political and

economic leaders to assert themselves towards understanding how this partnership is couched into impoverishing the Africans through the unbridled exploitation of their resources (Dumont 1988:122, Bade 1993).

Consequently, the implementation of repressive domestic and foreign policies against immigrants from the Africa by the West is baseless. After-all, the West created conditions, which favour Africans fleeing their poor states to the rich Western states. As Tella (2002) Palmer, Colton and Kramer (2002) Ankie (2007) observe, the West was built through cheap labour and other forms of pilfering of wealth from the lands of these congregating immigrants. Thus, As Fanon puts (1963) it, "...these immigrants must be in search of their inheritances." Walls building against immigrants will not prosper, after-all Donald Trump, the ignoble apostle of wall-building is an immigrant from Scotland, not a Native America (Colton and Kramer 2002:314). Rather than build walls, the West should abandon its imperial designs epitomised by anti-development international trade relations, which position African states into peripheral capitalist formations. As Arrigo (2023) posits:

*The French Embassy in Yaoundé, Cameroon; occupies over fifty hectares of land, whereas, the indigenes hole into tiny pieces of land for their family homes and livelihoods. France, amply characterises Western predaciousness in Africa. Yaoundé appear to serve as the beehive of all French exploitative grip upon its docile ex-colonies with devastating colonial military, political, economic and social negating pacts and deceptive agreements. In this provocative mindset, the French believe that, if Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea slip away from its neocolonialism, there is Cameroon, Senegal, Gabon, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Tchad, Togo, Benin Republic and Ivory Coast to exploit. Certainly, this is sheer hallucination" (pp. 9 – 14).*

According to Deutsch (1988:109), "The Nobel Prize winning physicist and philosopher, Percy W. Bridgman once said: The Future of mankind is a project, not a programme. Every scientific prediction is based on the extrapolation of some earlier events or observations. Man derives his guesses and actions about the future by projecting ahead of some time series of events and experiences from the past." The obvious implication of the foregoing is that, France must early enough start re-defining its relations with its postcolonial African states, because, change, sometimes, radical change is an inevitable process in life. As Palmer, Colton and Kramer (2002:1) allude, "Researchers have found persuasive materials evidence to show that human beings originated from Africa, [not from Europe]."

They add, "However, ...Europe has undoubtedly shaped much of the modern world history – partly because of its overseas expansion [imperialism], partly because of what it borrowed from other parts of the world through primitive accumulation, and partly because of its decisive economic and cultural influences on the emergence of an increasingly global civilisation. All these happened through imperialism and skewed globalisation fraught with imperceptibly massive exploitation of resources from other lands]." Thus, it is very important to cue from the foregoing to understand how the prevailing character of international trade relations and the ensuing political, economic, social and psychological implications of these historical facts, vis-à-vis the debilitating political, economic, social and psychological underdevelopment of



Africans, whose historical passages have witnessed, brutal slavery, colonialism and now, neo-colonialism. Certainly, the West is just one of the spheres in human history, but its negative contributions to the essentialism and existentialism of Africans, is crucial to understanding what are now called centre-periphery issues.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although, much have been said about Africa's underdevelopment, much remain unsaid. Herein, we attempt reechoing what has been echoed but unfinished, which include, highlighting the debilitating West's predaciousness through centre-periphery trade relational issues, which excessively aggravate Africa's underdevelopment. Trade, as pundits would agree constitutes the bedrock of economic emancipation. Hence, this research engaged into hard-talk, to re-vigourise postcolonial Africans' reawakening towards its assertiveness against the spoils perpetuated a predatory West's incessant skewed trade and division of labour against Africa. Through relevant theoretical and empirical delineations, we advocate critical reawake of Africans' consciousness towards their undue servitude under the caprices of an acknowledge predatory West.

Certainly, Africans must emancipate into political and economic development by rebuking West's trade absolutism and economic determinism against Africans. Herein, we reecho to the wider multifaceted African and Western publics, that, enough is enough of the predaciousness and unassertiveness. In this sense, we argued that, the orchestrated Europe-Africa, China-Africa, US-Africa, India-Africa, Russia-Russia, France-Africa, Japan-Africa, Italy-Africa summits tantamount to predaciousness and perpetuation of neocolonialism in Africa, which Africans must vehemently reject.

Insofar as we detest violence, regrettably, postcolonial Africans might soon become radicalised against West's hostile economic determinism, and political absolutism, which annihilate Africans' politics and economies. Therefore, only positive changes that redefine the existing international trade relations and division of labour mechanism between the West and Africa would soothe Africans. Thus, Africans must construct self-pricing and selling mechanisms for their raw materials, without the West spearheading such pricing and buying mechanisms. Certainly, achieving this new order might attract great resistance, consequently, it will require that:

1. Africans must see the West as essentially malevolent and mischievous against Africans.
2. Africans must imbue solid mindsets for engaging into self-constructive regional blocs' economic determinism to create enviable libertarian science and technological capacities for transforming their raw materials into finished goods;
3. Africans must imbue great reflexivity, tact and watchfulness in unwavering patriotic politico-economic discipline and will;
4. Africans must create sustainable infrastructures for enhancing trading through sound political, economic, haulage, education, healthcare, agriculture, security, in high profile people-friendly policies.
5. Africans must never despair to galvanise deep individual and collective responsibilities for their emancipation.

As Elwyn Brooks White (1899-1985) an American essayist notes, "Despair is no good for a writer, for anyone. Only hope can carry us aloft, can keep us afloat. Only hope, and a certain

faith that the incredible structure that has been fashioned by this strangest and ingenious of all mammals (man) cannot end in ruin and disaster. This faith is a writer's faith, for writing itself is an act of faith, nothing else." Herein, my faith in writing about hardcore issues of trade relations between the West and Africa surges like wild bush fire, because, underdevelopment evokes evil, evil evokes death. Thus, Africans must not die for the West to live. Thus, by writing, I hope quenching this fire through conscious struggles to repudiate neocolonialism to enhance human and material development in Africa. In the direction, all African states, including Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea, must be encouraged toward measures to liberate their politico-economic grips. Africans must unite against neocolonialism.

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