

**POWER POLITICS, DEPENDENCY OR COOPERATION? EXAMINING  
MALAWI'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTHERN AFRICA, 1964-2007**

**M.A. (Political Science) Thesis**

**By**

**MUKUSE DANIEL SAGAWA**

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Social Science,  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts (Political Science)

**University of Malawi  
Chancellor College**

**May 2010**



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## **DECLARATION**

I the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

**MUKUSE DANIEL SAGAWA**

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**Signature**

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**Date:**

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents for their love, encouragement and support. Not forgetting my grandmother for her moral support.

## Certificate of Approval

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank God for giving me an opportunity to undertake this challenging endeavour. I would also like to express my gratitude to the management and staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their unprecedented support during the course of the study including all people interviewed. Special thanks to the management and staff of the Daily Times and The Nation Newspaper for giving me an opportunity to review archived newspaper articles.

Furthermore, I wish to thank my supervisors, Dr. B. Chinsinga and Mr. H. Kayuni including Mr. Tambulasi and Mr. H. Chingaipe for their supervision, timely comments and encouragement. Special thanks to my friends and classmates Mr. Vitima Mkandawire and Mr. John Minofu and all those who played a part in the completion of this thesis.

I am also grateful to the Norad Programme for Masters Studies (NOMA) for awarding me a scholarship to pursue the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa from 1964 to 2007. The paper assesses the political and economic factors and also leadership perception in the shaping of Malawi's foreign policy in the Southern African regional sub-system. The study uses the dependency and realist approaches to analyse the domestic and international factors that influenced the formulation and implementation of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa. The study observes that Malawi's foreign policy has been influenced by power politics both as a means to an end and also as a response to an anarchical international system. This analysis adds value to earlier studies on Malawi's foreign policy, which have mainly focused on personality as a critical determinant of Malawi's regional approach. The study observes that even though presidential personality has influenced foreign policy decisions, it has not been the single determinant variable. Foreign policy decisions have also been influenced by the cold war, democratisation and bureaucratic factors. Even though the end of the cold war and the attainment of democracy critically reduced the volatility of relations in the region, competition between Malawi and neighbouring states particularly Mozambique and Tanzania continues as a consequence of past relations.

## **ACRONYMS**

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
BLS	Botswana Lesotho and Swaziland
CAC	Current Affairs Committee
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern Africa
COSATU	Congress of Southern Africa Trade Unions
FRELIMO	Forum for the Liberation of Mozambique
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
JDSC	Joint Defence and Security Commission
JPCC	Joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation
MCCI	Malawi Confederation of Chambers and Industry
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MNR/ RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MYP	Malawi Young Pioneers
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADCC	Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference

SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SDI	Spatial Development Initiative
SPC	Secretary to the President and Cabinet
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TEBA	Transvaal Employment Bureau of Africa
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
U.S.A /U.S.	United States of America
U.S.S.R	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0. Introduction and Background to the Problem**

The emergence of the African independent state in the 1960s necessitated the need for these countries to assert themselves in the international system in order to preserve their sovereignty and pursue socio-economic interests aimed at reducing the high levels of dependency, poverty and underdevelopment. Foreign policy became the core of this process. Foreign policy is defined as “the decision making processes that produce it, the goals that officials heading states seek abroad, the values that underlie those goals and the means and instruments used to pursue them” (Kegley and Wittkopf 2004:63). However, the epoch of independence came at the height of the cold war between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The cold war led to fierce competition between these two global super powers in what is known as power politics. Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:37) define power politics as “the factors that enable one actor to manipulate another actor’s behaviour against its preferences”. Power politics led to the bipolarity of the international system and in essence forced countries around the world to hastily align themselves either to the USA or the USSR. Countries that aligned themselves to the two super powers by extension had to engage in military, economic, cultural and scientific competition. Power politics determined the foreign policy conduct of many African countries under the cold war. In addition, developing nations engaged in power politics in order to preserve their independence and sovereignty and to balance out hegemonic powers (Olatunde et al, 1987).

At the attainment of independence in 1964, Malawi like many other independent and developing nation-states was faced with a dilemma on how best to organize her foreign policy.

Malawi's foreign policy had to reflect her ever-growing developmental needs and challenges without compromising on her newly won sovereignty in a bipolar international system.

McMaster (1974) argues that at independence, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi's first president, propagated the doctrine of political realism in her relations with countries of the Southern African sub-region. The realist perspective regards the state as the primary actor in an anarchical international system where conflicts and competition among nation-states are inevitable. Therefore, the primary role of states is to promote their *raison d'état* or national interests defined as the economic and security goals that states pursue in order to capitalise on what is best for their country and ensure their survival in an antagonistic environment characterised by the desire to maintain and acquire power (Kegley and Wittkopf 2004:37, 615). Realism regards power as a means to an end as states seek to promote national interests in a system where conflict is inevitable. Dr. Banda's realist assertions in foreign policy were based on the argument that the character of Malawi's political economy necessitated the maintenance of political and economic ties with apartheid South Africa and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) while engaging the countries in continuous contact and dialogue. However, the approach by Dr. Banda towards Southern Africa was viewed as idiosyncratic, particularly his preference to maintain relations with white ruled regimes in Southern Africa (McMaster 1974, Hedges 1989, Patel and Hajat 2007).

Internally, Dr. Banda's stance on Malawi's foreign policy gave rise to the infamous 1964 cabinet crisis whereby the establishment of relations with Mainland China, South Africa and Portugal became a contentious issue (McMaster 1974, Hedges 1989).

### **1.0.1. Regional Politics and the Cold War**

At the regional level, the attainment of independence by Mozambique in 1975 following the military coup in Portugal in 1974 changed the balance of power in the region. Mozambique became a challenge to the South African and Rhodesian governments because of economic and military support to the African National Congress (ANC) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) which had intensified the liberation struggle. The South African government responded to this challenge by developing the “total strategy”, which led to the creation of the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR or RENAMO). Hedges (1989) argues that Dr. Banda’s policy from 1975 onwards seems to show contradictory trends because of Malawi’s support for Renamo. According to Munslow (1988), this led to increased tensions between Malawi and Mozambique that in 1986, the two countries came to the brink of war when Mozambique threatened Malawi.

Within the context of the cold war, the end of the détente between the USA and USSR following the latter’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to proxy wars in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. “The Reagan Doctrine pledged U.S. support for anticommunist insurgents who sought to overthrow Soviet-supported governments in Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua” (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2004:119). However, the FRELIMO government like its MPLA counterpart in Luanda had Marxists orientations which prompted the Soviet Union to act in their favour forcing the United States to support UNITA and MNR. Chazan et al (1999:436) noted that “the Soviets viewed the entire Southern African theatre as an area ripe for change. When South Africa struck across its borders, as it did against Mozambique in 1981, the Soviets had to show the flag; when Pretoria armed Renamo, the Soviets were virtually obliged to provide weapons to Frelimo. Thus Mozambique received some \$250 million worth of armaments”.

## **1.0.2. Democratisation**

Following the end of the cold war in 1989 and the triumph of Capitalism over Communism, western countries advocated for democratic change in Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. Malawi and other countries in the Southern African sub-region underwent regime change to democracy<sup>1</sup>. In Malawi, the change from one party to multiparty democracy, which occurred in 1994, with Bakili Muluzi as the new president of Malawi, necessitated a shift in Malawi's foreign policy. With democratisation, Malawi's foreign policy despite maintaining a pro-western stance opened up to Arab countries such as Libya (Patel and Hajat 2007). In the year 2000, a written policy document, "The foreign policy of the Republic of Malawi" was formulated<sup>2</sup>. The new foreign policy clearly identified development diplomacy as its core objective and recognized the importance of trade, investment, tourism and aid in the development process of Malawi. The policy further recognized as critical the promotion and maintenance of peace and security (Patel and Hajat 2007).

## **1.1. Problem Statement**

What were the critical factors that shaped Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa apart from leadership cognition or psychological factors? This question is critical in trying to understand holistically, Malawi's regional approach from 1964-2007. It should be noted that earlier studies on Malawi's foreign policy have attributed decisions to Dr Banda's personal ambitions or idiosyncrasies (McMaster 1974, Henderson, Hedges 1989, Hajat and Patel 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of the democratisation process in Malawi after the end of the cold war, see Donge V.K. (1995) "Kamuzu's Legacy: The Democratization of Malawi: Or Searching for the Rules of the Game in African Politics", *African Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 375. pp. 227-257.

<sup>2</sup> A written foreign policy document was produced by the Government of President Bakili Muluzi in 2000. This was a departure from the norm under the one-party era and in the early years of democracy from 1994-2001 whereby Malawi did not have a written foreign policy document guiding the country's political leadership.

Personality issues particularly Dr. Banda's absolute control of the political system in Malawi, and his preferences to maintain diplomatic relations with white ruled states of Southern Africa seem to have been the main thrusts of Malawi's foreign policy in Southern Africa (McMaster 1974, Hedges, Patel and Hajat 2007). For instance Hedges (1989) and Patel and Hajat (2007) argue that Dr. Banda's personal ambitions to expand Malawi's territory beyond its national border led to the establishment of close links with the Portuguese East Africa and Apartheid South Africa.

In addition, this foreign policy inclination was necessary to maintain his hold on power through assurances of support against any subversive activities against Dr. Banda's government. However, these relations were taking place at a time when Malawi was endeavouring to promote her national interests, that is to maintain and safeguard sovereignty and achieve economic development through continued economic, trade and military links with the white ruled states of Africa. Even though McMaster (1974) and Hedges (1989) present a well researched analysis of Malawi's foreign policy, the preoccupation with Bandaism presents a scenario where personality is the main determinant of foreign policy. Even though Henderson (1977) tries to examine the implication of future relations, his analysis is limited to Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania and does not look at the Southern African region as a whole. In addition, it fails to illuminate on the prospects of regime change that occurred after the cold war and the democratisation process and their impact on foreign policy.

The realist approach to international relations argues that in the promotion of national self interests which are economic and security in nature, states and or leaders are rational actors who respond to developments and challenges within the international system. This analytical understanding of foreign policy is lacking in earlier studies of Malawi's foreign policy. On the

other hand, Patel and Hajat (2007) in their analysis of Malawi's relations in the post 1994 period adopt an approach that outlines Malawi's participation in regional integration arrangements such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and regional and continental peace keeping initiatives under the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU). The approach by Patel and Hajat (2007) does not analyze the critical determinants of international relations in general and foreign policy in particular such as power politics and dependency. The studies give an indication that end of the cold war and the democratisation process particularly in Southern Africa seems to have thawed the zero-sum political games between Malawi and her Southern African neighbours. In addition, they fail to illuminate on the implications of future relations up to 2007. In essence, the availability of literature on foreign policy with particular emphasis on Malawi is limited. This presents a problem in the analysis of Malawi's foreign policy.

The quest by a state to solve her economic problems and to promote her national security can have both positive and negative repercussions particularly in relations characterised by zero-sum games. The perception, that one country's gain is another country's loss is a clear recipe for power politics among nations as they endeavour to promote their national interests. According to Kegley and Wittkopf (2004: 615), "the national quest for narrow self advantage position often carries prohibitively high costs. The historic tendency towards chauvinism in defining national interest can be counterproductive domestically as well as internationally. No country can afford to pursue its own welfare in ways that reduce its competitor's security and welfare".

Empirical questions, therefore, arise in the examination of Malawi's foreign policy. For instance, did Malawi's foreign policy towards Mozambique and South Africa during the leadership of Dr Banda produce prohibitively high costs on relations with Southern Africa? Was

Dr. Banda's personality the main causative factor in Malawi's foreign policy as exemplified by McMaster (1974), Hedges (1989) and Patel and Hajat (2007) or was foreign policy a characteristic of interdependent relationships among several causative variables and a response to an anarchical international system as observed by Henderson (1977).

In the post cold war period according to Patel and Hajat (2007), Malawi's foreign policy has been one of continuity and change. However, what has been the pattern of relations in the period after the cold and the attainment of democracy in Southern Africa? Is Malawi's foreign policy devoid of conflict because of its pursuit of regional peace and security as observed by Patel and Hajat (2007)? It is in the light of the foregoing that this study sets out to examine Malawi's foreign policy towards southern Africa from 1964 to 2007.

## **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa from 1964 to 2007.

### **Specific Objectives**

- I. To assess the internal and external factors that influence Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa.
- II. To explore the aims of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa
- III. To explore the influence of political changes in Malawi and in the region on Malawi's foreign policy
- IV. To assess people's perceptions on the opportunities gained or lost in Malawi's relations with Southern Africa

### **1.3. Research Assumptions**

The research is guided by two key assumptions.

- I. Power politics and dependency have been the main determinants of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa and that the President's influence on foreign policy has resulted from these factors.
- II. Malawi's foreign policy has pursued regional cooperation in order to avoid conflictual relations in Southern Africa and to advance national interests.

### **1.4. Justification of the Study**

This study is justified based on the understanding that studies on Malawi's foreign policy by McMaster (1974), Hedges (1989), Patel and Hajat (2007) have mainly focused on Dr. Banda's personality, thereby undermining a critical and broader analysis of Malawi's foreign policy within the key domestic and international determinants of foreign policy. In addition, there is limited literature on Malawi's foreign policy from 1964-2007. Generally the study of foreign policy in Africa is underdeveloped and where such studies have been carried out they have mainly focused on the pivotal role that presidents have played in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy (Shaw 1976). This approach in the study of foreign policy as noted by Henderson (1977) has tended to undermine Malawi's ability to pursue a foreign policy commensurate with its national interests. This study provides additional value to earlier studies by focusing on the domestic and international determinants of foreign policy within the context of power politics and dependency. Furthermore, apart from the study by Patel and Hajat (2007), there was no critical research on Malawi's foreign policy in the post Muluzi era. Therefore, the study critically assesses whether there has been continuity or change in Malawi's relations with

Southern Africa after the end of the cold war and the attainment of democracy in 1994 up to 2007.

## **1.5. Outline of the Thesis**

The thesis is divided into five chapters. This chapter has comprehensively provided a background of Malawi's relations in Southern Africa from 1964 to 2007. It has analysed the context within which Malawi's foreign policy was pursued by focusing on studies by McMaster (1974), Henderson (1977) Hedges (1989) and Patel and Hajat (2007). In addition it has reviewed the international political context within which Malawi's foreign policy was being implemented. The focus has been on regional politics and the cold war and also on the impact of democratisation on Malawi's foreign policy. Furthermore the problem statement guiding the research has been articulated. The problem statement notes that earlier studies on Malawi's foreign policy particularly by McMaster (1974), Hedges (1989) and Patel and Hajat (2007) have mainly focused on leadership perception, cognition or psychological factors and its impact on foreign policy. This approach has undermined Malawi's ability to respond, act and promote national interests within an anarchical international system. The chapter further states the objectives of the study and the research assumptions guiding the study.

Chapter two reviews literature on the international and domestic determinants of foreign policy. These determinants include political factors, military leverage and security issues, economic factors, bureaucratic factors and systemic factors both at the international and regional levels. At the regional level, focus is on subordinate regional and state systems in Southern Africa. At the global level, focus is on the cold war and the role of the super powers in influencing Southern Africa's regional politics. The literature review identifies gaps that provide

impetus for further research and provides the basis for the formulation of a conceptual framework for the study. In addition, the chapter reviews three main critical theories in the study of foreign policy such as dependency, idealism/liberalism and realism. The conceptual framework for the study is guided by a combination of both dependency and realist assumptions within the context of international politics in general and foreign policy in particular.

Chapter three discusses the research methodology for the study. The study was qualitative and data was collected through key informant interviews, document analysis and also the review of appropriate documentation such as newspaper articles, academic journals and speeches. The chapter further discusses the sampling methodology utilised and also discusses the method of data analysis.

Chapter four presents and discusses the study findings under two sections. The study findings are discussed in a narrative format. The first section focuses on Malawi's foreign policy from 1964-1994. The second section focuses on Malawi's foreign policy in a democratic dispensation from 1994 to 2007. The second section is further divided into two sub-sections. The first section focuses on the period 1994-2004 under the presidency of Bakili Muluzi while sub-section two focuses on the period 2004-2007 under the presidency of Bingu wa Mutharika.

Chapter five concludes the study and provides recommendations including the need for further research. The chapter discusses the two research assumptions which are found to be plausible but inconclusive meaning that there is impetus for further research under alternative methodologies and conceptual frameworks.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0. Introduction**

This chapter analyses available literature on international relations in general and foreign policy in particular with reference to Malawi and the Southern African regional sub-system. The review focuses on key issue areas in order to build a strong case for the critical analysis of the factors that shaped Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa apart from leadership cognition or psychological factors. In so doing, the study assesses whether the studies on Malawi's foreign policy in particular and international relations in general were exhaustive and what insights can be drawn. The chapter, therefore, reviews literature on the domestic and international determinants of foreign policy in order to understand the factors that shape the process. It further analyses literature on Malawi and its relations with Southern Africa. The chapter also reviews the nature of relations in Southern Africa within the broader context of international relations particularly during the cold war. It further reviews several theoretical approaches to the study of foreign policy.

It should be noted that there is limited available literature on foreign policy with particular focus on Malawi. Studies that have focused on Malawi include those by McMaster (1974), Henderson (1977), Hedges (1989) and Patel and Hajat (2007). Other available literature focuses on regional cooperation and conflict in Southern Africa in general but do not zero in on Malawi. In addition, several writers such as Shaw (1976), Hill (1983), Davies and O'meara (1985), Kibble and Bush (1986), Wright (1989) have focused on individual foreign policies

particularly of South Africa, Zambia and the United States of America with a bias on the situation in Southern Africa from 1964 to the post cold war period. In addition, Leys and Tostensen (1982) focus on regional integration initiatives within the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Even though most of these studies take a historical approach in the analysis of foreign policy and regional integration initiatives, nevertheless, most of these studies have a broader focus in terms of the relations within the Southern African regional subsystem hence their usefulness to the study.

## **2.1. Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of the National Interest**

The promotion and protection of national interests by states in an international system is conducted through foreign policy. Foreign policy translates aims or objectives into more or less practical goals, which can be pursued and achieved. In trying to understand foreign policy, it is important to note that states pursuit of the national interest is determined by both domestic and external factors. The instruments of foreign policy vary from state to state and range from military capability or hard power, to peaceful diplomacy and agenda setting or soft power. In recent years, there has been a shift towards development diplomacy whose emphasis dwells on the promotion of trade, aid and foreign direct investment particularly for developing countries. Olatunde et al (1987:45) notes that “the choice of method or instrument is, in most cases, a function of the resources available to the particular state, the responses and capabilities of other interested or affected states, and the prevailing climate of international opinion at the given time”.

States, therefore, pursue different foreign policy strategies based on a combination of factors ranging from the domestic to the international. Magstadt (2003:514) observes that states in their pursuit of national interests are faced with two choices: “a defensive status quo strategy

versus an offensive expansionist strategy”. According to Magstadt (2003) nations which pursue foreign policies that lean towards the former are often satisfied with the existing power relationships and hence want to maintain the status quo in the international system. For the latter, the dissatisfaction with the international system characterised by unequal power distribution compels states to pursue policies aimed at changing the balance of power in the international system through military build ups, provocative actions and the waging of wars. According to Mearsheimer (2006:121, 122) the intention of states in the international system is to survive, “they cannot be certain about the intentions of other states, states look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of other states, and to make sure that other states don’t take advantage of them”. In other words, Mearsheimer (2006) contends that defensive or status quo factors do not matter in foreign policy. What matters is state survival that is the promotion of the national interest through offensive strategies in an anarchical international system.

One critical question arises as to whether developing countries particularly in the sub-Saharan Africa have pursued foreign policies based on Magstadt (2003) and Mearsheimer (2006) analysis. In addition, have other factors been critical in the shaping of foreign policy? Pardesi (1976) argues that apart from colonial history whereby foreign policies of the colonies were an extension of the colonialist’s diplomatic pursuits, after the attainment of independence, many developing countries pursued foreign policies based on their economic and social needs. Shaw (1975) further reinforces Pardesi’s observations by arguing that the need to reduce socio-economic dependence determines the “strategies for international confrontation” by African states. The issue of the national interest and foreign policy with regard to Malawi is extensively tackled by McMaster (1974), Henderson (1977) and Hedges (1989). The authors note that Malawi’s foreign policy towards Mozambique and South Africa was based on the need to foster

economic development. On the other hand, McMaster (1974) and Hedges (1989) attribute foreign policy decisions to personality or cognitive factors. However, economic development is critical in shaping a country's foreign policy as noted by Pardesi (1976:25):

*The actualization of which depends largely on external forces. Foreign policy thus becomes an extension of domestic policy constrained by both internal as well as external systems. The role of individuals and geographical factors are very significant indeed, so are internal political processes and traditions. However, the urge for economic development and the creation of requisite conditions for it within the country and outside, provide the material and ideological basis for having a foreign policy in the first place.*

Even though personality or the action of individual leaders is important in the pursuit of foreign policy, national interest becomes the most important factor. In addition, economic development is pursued concurrently with national security which forms a broader conception of national interests. Even though economic development is pursued to produce socio-economic change in society, it is also recognised that through development a country's international prestige and power are achieved. Economic development is a necessary tool which contributes to the protection of a country's sovereignty and territory. In this regard, foreign policy is shaped by national interests, which are economic and security in nature. According to Pardesi (1976:25) "every independent nation whether big or small, is compelled by its very nature of existence as a nation-state to maintain territorial integrity, political independence, social system and values and

to become economically and militarily powerful". Therefore, economic and security interests in foreign policy are inseparable.

Pardesi (1976) analysis of factors influencing the foreign policies of developing countries, are critical to this study. The focus on the foreign policy of developing countries, draws insights into the factors that have influenced foreign policy in developing countries since the attainment of independence. However, Pardesi (1976) fails to put into context the foreign policy strategies that were pursued by developing countries and whether these policies in effect have contributed to conflict between states.

## **2.2. International and Domestic Determinants of Foreign Policy**

The interface between domestic and international factors is critical to the understanding of foreign policy. Pardesi (1976) presents a critical analysis of this interface which is useful to the study. The argument dwells on the understanding that the pursuit of national interests by states is not only determined by their desire to achieve economic development, maintain military prowess or power but also by domestic political competition. According to Shaw (1975:30) the promotion of national interests by states in Africa, led to coup d'etats and one-party states, both designed to maximize control over the state and to achieve political order if not development. In addition, developing country foreign policies respond to developments at the international level.

### **2.2.1. Political Factors**

#### **2.2.1.1 Type of Government.**

The political determinants of foreign policy range from political ideology to the system of government that is whether autocratic or democratic. Discourse on the impact of government

type on foreign policy making has mainly focused on the how's and why's of foreign policy decisions. Unlike in representative governments where policy decisions are made and influenced by a diversity of interest groups, autocracies or dictatorships are characterized by minimal participation or the absence of interest group participation outside the official policy making framework. In essence, autocracies pursue foreign policies that are confrontational (Kegley and Wittkopf 2004:69, Russet et al 2004:166).

Kegley and Wittkopf (2004) and Russet et al (2004) presuppose that the typology of governments affects a states foreign policy contrary to assertions by realism where national interest is the preoccupation of a state's behaviour regardless of its political system. However, critical questions arise as to whether an infant democracy without a mature participatory framework in foreign policy decision making can subscribe to the Fukuyama thesis that liberal democracies are likely to enjoy non-confrontational relations with other states because of the checks and balances that the society puts on the government hence producing a more rational foreign policy<sup>3</sup>.

According to Ratner (2009), democracy brings about the re-orientation of foreign policy. The democracy-foreign policy thesis further presupposes that presidential dominance in foreign policy making decisions is abridged by competing interests. According to Peterson (1994:217) despite congressional participation in foreign policy, the US president continues to be a dominant figure in the process. Democracies are likely to make inefficient, "less rational" decisions than autocracies because of group interests and participation "the tendency to react without foresight or moderation therefore abrogating their role of pursuing the national interest in an anarchical international system" (Silverson and Emmons in Kegley and Wittkopf 2004:71). However, the

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Francis Fukuyama Thesis as noted in Kegley and Wittkopf (2004), the end of the cold war and the triumph of liberal democracy symbolises "the end of history", or power politics. This is based on the understanding that since democracies share similar values, their relations are likely to non-confrontational.

approach by Peterson (1994) assumes that because of group interests, democracies are unable to effectively pursue national interests than autocracies. The approach assumes that instead of states reacting to the international system, types of government become critical in foreign policy decisions. According to Matsanduno (1999:279) building on Theodore Lowi's analysis, America's pluralistic political system has led to inefficient foreign policy decisions. This stems from the fact that unlike in totalitarian or autocratic systems whereby foreign policy decisions are deemed to be efficient because of minimal participation by interest groups, in democratic systems, there is a struggle for control of foreign policy between the executive, the legislature and non-state actors.

Talbott (1999) on the other hand posits that democracies unlike autocracies are more likely to make decisions that are more inclined towards promoting nations interests such as economic development. He further notes that democracies are more likely to incline their foreign policies towards cooperation with other states in the system and avoid conflict. According to Talbott (1999:304) "Progress in individual African countries has led to cooperative efforts to consolidate the trend. When the monarch of Lesotho threatened to disband parliament in August 1994, the elected presidents of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana banded together to pressure him to uphold democracy".

The notion by Talbott (1999) is that foreign policies of democratic states in developing countries aim at avoiding conflict within the system and encouraging cooperation. How has the system of government from one party dictatorship to multiparty democracy impacted on Malawi's foreign policy? The democracy-autocracy thesis would be critical in understanding whether there has been continuity or change in Malawi's foreign policy in terms of power politics after the attainment of democracy in 1994.

### **2.2.1.2 Presidents and Foreign Policy.**

It is argued that Malawi's foreign policy preferences under Dr. Banda were a reflection of his absolutist control of Malawi's political system. The most practical example has been the decision to fire four cabinet ministers in the 1964 cabinet crisis. The cabinet crisis was based on disagreements over domestic and foreign policy with the latter focusing on whether Malawi was to establish relations with the white regimes of Southern Africa at the expense of liberation politics and also the diplomatic preference for Taiwan against Mainland China (Hedges 1989, McMaster 1974). The cognitive or psychological approach to the study of Malawi's foreign policy under Dr. Banda has tended to understate Malawi's ability to act in its own best interests. This approach to the study of foreign policy should not understate a country's pursuit of its national interests and the ability of a foreign policy to respond to developments both at the domestic and international levels. Presidential dominance in the foreign policy making process is a factor that cannot be ignored. Studies on U.S. and Brazilian foreign policies by Paul Peterson and Jeffrey Cason and Timothy Power respectively have observed that the President has been a dominant figure in the foreign policy making process: According to Peterson (1994:223):

*The fundamental responsibility for conducting the nation's foreign policy remained in the hands of presidents and their executive branch advisers. Jimmy Carter negotiated SALT II agreement.....Carter reversed a policy of détente with the Soviet Union, once the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had taken place.....the Reagan administration continued the defence build up and successfully concluded the START and INF arms negotiations. Finally, the Bush administration invaded Panama, defined the*

*U.S. response to the democratization of Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet empire.*

On the other hand Cason and Power (2009) observe that the dominance in foreign policy decisions under the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil was a response to factors ranging from international to regional and to domestic politics.

Peterson (1994) and Cason and Power (2009) observations are critical to the understanding of how presidents or foreign policy makers respond to the international environment. The unitary actor and rational decision making models of foreign policy are therefore pertinent in the analysis of presidential action. According to Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:73) “strategic calculations about national security are the determinants of policymakers’ choices”. Leaders respond to changes or circumstances at the global level and in taking action they carry out rational choices in order to come up with the best outcomes. Leaders are assumed to be unitary actors. The unitary actor perspective asserts that it is international and not domestic factors that shape the behavior of leaders on the international stage. Realism also regards states as unitary actors in that they respond to challenges within the international system and pursue rational self interests (Holsti 1999, Matsanduno et al 1999, Chatterjee 2003). Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger describe the rational actor approach. According to Hans Morgenthau as quoted in Peterson (1994:229)

*We put ourselves in the position of a statesman who must meet a certain problem of foreign policy.....and we ask ourselves what the rational alternatives are from which a statesman may choose..... and which of these rational alternatives this particular*

*statesman.....is likely to choose. It is the testing of this rational hypothesis....that...makes a theory of politics possible*

Henry Kissinger as quoted in Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:72) on the other hand observes that:

*An effective decision-making process must.....reflect well thought out policy choices-that is, they must answer these questions: what are we trying to achieve, or what are we trying to prevent? What consequences do we expect from this decision and what steps do we have in mind for dealing with them? What is the cost of the proposed action? Are we willing to pay that price and for what length of time?*

This realist notion of leadership action in foreign policy decision making is critical in that it provides a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the role and dominance of presidents in the process and how they respond to foreign policy challenges.

### **2.2.1.3 Ideology.**

Ideology has been critical to the understanding of foreign policy. The area of focus has been on the cold war and its overall impact on state power. The ideological influences of capitalism and communism on the foreign policies of the U.S and the U.S.S.R and the resultant power politics have been critical to the theoretical debates in foreign policy particularly within the realist tradition. In realist terms, the emergence of the cold war in 1945 was due to the anarchical nature of the international system. According to Holsti (1999) and Mearsheimer

(2006) the development of military capabilities was central to the struggle for world domination. Furthermore, Kolodziej (2005: 79) observes that “the struggle for global dominance between these two global super powers and their allies...generated incentives for the development of state military capabilities unprecedented in human history”.

In addition, super power rivalry led to a snowball effect that impacted upon the foreign policies of developing countries in Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. For instance the two super powers fought proxy wars in many African countries including the Southern African country of Angola (Gulke 1980). It should be noted that “for realism, the cold war was a continuation of great power politics, albeit with certain additions such as nuclear weapons, arms racing and capitalist-communist ideological rivalry ” (Halliday 1994:172). Both Kolodziej (2005) and Halliday (1994) provide a critical approach to the study of subordinate state systems under the cold war such as the Southern African regional sub-system. Coker (1991) has observed that the Southern African region became a centre for superpower domination between the U.S and the Soviet Union. It can be argued that the cold war compelled countries within these subordinate state systems to follow by extension the ideologies of the super powers. Even though the analysis of Southern African regional politics vis-à-vis super power rivalry has been illustrated in studies by Bissell (1978), Gulke (1980), Coker (1991), Kolodziej (2005), the studies do not clearly state on whether the conflict in Mozambique was in effect a proxy war emanating from the cold war and how it affected or influenced the foreign policies of neighbouring countries. The literature fails to give further insight on the relations between Malawi and Mozambique and South Africa within the context of the rivalry under the cold war.

## 2.2.2 Geopolitical Environment

Kegley and Wittkopf (2004: 23) define geopolitics as “the relationship between geography and politics and their consequences for states national interests and relative power”. The geographical location of states and their physical terrain have a major impact on how states relate to the wider international environment at a bilateral, regional or international level. According to Kegley and Wittkopff (2004) geopolitics has had a major impact on the foreign policies of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, China and Latin American countries including countries in Southern Africa. In essence, the foreign policy choices of states are contingent upon their geographical location. States that are landlocked have no choice but to engage diplomatically the countries that border them in order to have access to maritime transport facilities. Geopolitics, therefore, can have a huge impact not only on the foreign policies of states but can be a determinant of the whole process of socio-economic development. For instance, landlocked countries are likely to develop at a slower pace than countries that border the seas or oceans because of access to cheap maritime transport. McMaster (1974) and Patel and Hajat (2007) have observed that Malawi’s foreign policy towards Mozambique and South Africa was determined by geo-political factors hence the need to take advantage of the transport network in Mozambique and South Africa.

However, was the geo-political environment the main determinant of Malawi’s foreign policy of maintaining relations with Portuguese East Africa and South Africa? It should be noted that this could be questionable since Botswana Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS countries) took a neutral stance while Zambia supported liberation movements.

Comparatively, BLS countries and Zambia are more economically developed than Malawi. It is critical to understand whether other factors apart from geo-politics were

instrumental in determining Malawi's regional approach. In addition, has geopolitics affected relations in the Southern African region in the post cold war period. According to Ieuan Griffiths, attempts by landlocked countries within the Southern African region to develop transport networks that would give them independent access to the sea has been a recipe for power politics. Griffiths (1989: 378) observes "Control of access to the sea has been consistently the principal means of asserting political domination. The conflict has survived change in the identity of both sets of powers and could well endure future changes. It has been a battle of geopolitical manoeuvre, strategic thrust, financial cut and guerrilla warfare".

### **2.2.3. Military Prowess-Security Interests**

The ability of a state to project its military might and to engage in the actual use of force against an adversary is an extension of the foreign policy objective of that particular state. Projection of military might in the international system after the end of World War II became more prominent during the super power rivalry between the U.S. and USSR. The quest for military advancement was based on mere deterrence. This was based on the understanding that increasing military capability would prevent a pre-emptive first strike from an adversary thereby creating Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Military superiority, therefore, took the form of nuclearization as the two superpowers strove to develop advanced nuclear weapons (Goldstein 1996).

Increasing military capability is critical in ensuring national security and in deterring possible military attacks by an adversary. According to Lahneman (2003:101) "Military power is by far the most expensive contributor to a state's operational power. In realist terms, military capability or hard power has been one of the major instruments of achieving foreign policy

objectives in the promotion and protection of national interests by states. In the analysis of the Bush doctrine and its impact on U.S. foreign policy, Coronado (2005) observes that in an attempt to advance foreign policy objectives and prevent any emerging challenging power to U.S. global influence, the Bush administration developed the doctrine of pre-emptive strike. Coronado (2005: 323) observes that “One of its salient prescriptions is preventing the emergence of any new rival power using pre-emption instead of containment and undertaking unilateral actions if necessary to protect US interests”. Within the theoretical context of realism, John Mearsheimer offers further insight into how military capability is a critical variable in the pursuit of offensive foreign policy objectives by states by observing:

*In an anarchic world where states have offensive military capabilities and might have offensive intentions, states have no choice but to fear each other. After all, there is always the possibility that at some point down the road another state will attack you. There is no way any leader can know what will be the future intentions of other states; they are simply unknowable..... The end result is that states seek to gain advantage at each other's expense..... if they hope to survive, they have no choice but to compete for power<sup>4</sup>*

Military leverage is undeniably critical in foreign policy. There is consensus in the available literature on foreign policy that military capability is critical to the achievement of foreign policy objectives. Chatterjee (2003) presents a comparative analysis of neo-realist and neo-liberal

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<sup>4</sup> This extract is based on part 2 of an interview by Prof. Ken Booth on Prof. John Mearsheimer, proponent of the theory of offensive realism. The interview was conducted at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, on 14 October 2004 in the Department of International Politics. See Conversations in International Relations: Interview with John J. Mearsheimer (Part I) (2006) *International Relations* 2006; 20; 105 accessed at <http://ire.sagepub.com> on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2009.

thinking on security or military leverage. He observes that both schools of thought agree on security factors but differ on the nature of the world. On the one hand, neo-realists view the international system as anarchical which requires states to develop effective military capabilities. On the other hand, the neo-liberals view the system as consisting of cooperative arrangements among states and a “less risky” global environment with “efficient security”. In essence, power politics is an inseparable factor in the game of international politics.

#### **2.2.4. Economic Factors**

States that enjoy unprecedented levels of economic development greatly influence the behaviour of other nation-states through their foreign policies. Such capabilities range from military advancement, foreign aid or Official Development Assistance (ODA), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows, and the terms of trade as Kegley and Wittkopff (2004:68) observe:

*The level of economic and industrial development a state enjoys affects the foreign policy goals it can pursue. Generally, the more economically developed a state is, the more likely it is to play an activist role in the global political economy. Rich states have interests that extend far beyond their borders and typically possess the means to pursue and protect them. Not coincidentally, states that enjoy industrial capabilities and extensive involvement in international trade also tend to be militarily powerful-in part because military might is a function of economic capabilities.*

The policies that a state pursues in the international system are dependent on its level of economic development which determines the level of state power which a particular state

projects and uses in the pursuit of its national interests. For instance, the United States, which is the world's economic power, also monopolises the means for the use of physical force or military power. According to Treverton and Jones (2005:6) "Today, economic power is the ultimate foundation of military power, and the best indicator of economic power is GDP". Bauer and Kramer (1972) examined U.S foreign policy on Indochina and observed that the intentions by the U.S. government to assert its influence in Indochina and also in other developing countries was driven by the need to enhance its economic power, hence strategic military capabilities through the control of resources.

On the other hand, the so called weak states are affected in their relations with the rich nations in what has been termed as the North-South divide. In addition, unequal economic advantage also manifests itself in the foreign relations among the developing countries themselves. Such relationships have led states either to comply with the wishes of rich nations and also to strive for economic independence and cooperation within the context of the North-South divide and South-South cooperation.

In recent years, the economic growth of China has led to an increase in that country's leverage on the world stage. Currently, China is expanding its influence in the world particularly in Africa by providing grants and soft loans to African governments and purchasing African goods (Moore 2008). According to realism, economic development is used as a means to acquiring power in the international system even though it is less relevant (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2004:37).

McMaster (1974) and Henderson (1977) have noted that economic interests were a determinant factor in Malawi's relations with Southern Africa. McMaster (1974) further discusses "patterns of development" and Dr . Banda's pursuit of foreign policy in order to

promote Malawi's economic interests. McMaster (1974) notes that relations between Malawi and her Western partners were forged based on Malawi's developmental needs such as access to capital, aid and markets while relations with her Southern African partners particularly Portuguese East Africa and South Africa were maintained in order to garner support in terms of aid and markets incase Malawi's western partners were not forthcoming in providing the much needed resources for development

Henderson (1977:426) observes that "the economic relations between Malawi and Mozambique are basically concerned with services, mainly port facilities and railway transportation, rather than with trade, investment and migrant labour". However, Hedges (1989) deliberately ignores Malawi's economic pursuits of foreign policy when he observes that the establishment of relations with the white regimes of Southern Africa particularly the Portuguese in Mozambique was based on Dr. Banda's preferences for these regimes against the wishes of the liberation struggle. Hedges (1989) by focusing on individual preferences fails to critically analyze Malawi's foreign policy thereby underestimating Malawi's ability to pursue an independent foreign policy. The arguments presented by both McMaster (1974) and Hedges (1989) presents a scenario within which Dr. Banda should have pursued a policy that ignored national economic interests in favour of the OAU agenda of liberation. This analysis ignores the theoretical postulates of realism which take into account the anarchical nature of the international system and the need for states to safeguard and promote their interests. Patel and Hajat (2007) observe that Malawi has benefited from regional transport corridors such as the Nacala and Beira Corridors. However, it has been noted Malawi faces transport bottlenecks that make her external trade uncompetitive (MGDS 2006). In this context, what have been the economic interests in Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa in the post 1994 period?

### **2.3. Bureaucratic Factors in Foreign Policy Making**

Bureaucratic factors are critical to the understanding of the foreign policy process particularly its formulation and implementation. According to Krasner (1999: 458) “in recent years analyses have increasingly emphasized not rational calculations of the national interest or the political goals of national leaders but rather bureaucratic procedures and bureaucratic processes”. The conduct of the bureaucracy is critical to the foreign policy process as it determines how decisions are made, who is involved and what goals are to be achieved. The bureaucratic politics model and the rational-actor model are critical to the understanding of how bureaucracies operate in the foreign policy realm. According to Allison (1999), bureaucracies operate within a hierarchical structure. Within the structure, there are competing interests striving to advance different strategic or foreign policy objectives. On the other hand, Krasner (1999) has observed that foreign policy decisions are made through rational processes. “The state is viewed as a rational unified actor. The behaviour of states is the outcome of a rational decision-making process” (Krasner 1999:459). Within the African foreign policy context, Shaw (1976) analyses the foreign policy system of Zambia in order to fill the gap which existed from the earlier approaches which mainly focused on presidential decision making and the impact of ideology on the overall foreign policy process. A foreign policy system is defined as “the relationship among all actors within the state who have international relations, then the system includes institutions such as a range of ministries, parastatal organizations, foreign missions, and local offices of multinational corporations and international organizations” (Shaw 1976:31). A foreign policy system includes major institutions such as the president’s office, the foreign and defense ministries and other secondary institutions such as the ministries responsible for trade, transport among others.

Shaw (1976) posits that in countries where there is lack of proper collaboration among the various players in international affairs, problems of “coordination and multiple advocacy” are likely to arise. It has been observed that the complex nature of Zambia’s foreign policy presented a number of challenges in terms of coordination and control. Zambia’s foreign policy was at the direction of the country’s president, Kenneth Kaunda while the party, UNIP gave direction to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thus relegating the institution to an implementation agency while State House, UNIP’s Central Committee and the Cabinet were responsible for formulation and coordination. The main challenge to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zambia was one of exercising effective control over foreign policy issues as observed.

*It is small and inexperienced; it lacks the ability to effectively monitor issues and analyze trends. It is rarely able to seize the initiative and is likely to react to events rather than to determine them. Only in its region, in southern or eastern African affairs, is Zambia capable of taking significant initiatives, and this capability is largely a function of State House rather than the ministry (Anglin, 1975a in Shaw 1976:49).*

However, this phenomenon is not limited to Zambia, as noted by Shaw (1976). It a problem associated with the foreign ministries of developing countries in general where the inability of policy staff below the level of minister to come up with policy initiatives is compounded by lack of well trained professional staff, inter-ministerial transfers and the lack of an institutional framework for a career diplomatic service. It should be noted that Shaw (1976) analysis of Zambia’s foreign policy system raises pertinent issues on the overall foreign policy making process in developing countries in Africa and Malawi in particular. The focus on

bureaucratic factors is critical to the understanding of the overall interface between the executive particularly the president and the bureaucracy in particular the Ministry of Foreign affairs in the formulation, implementation of foreign policy issues as well as on issues of coordination. However, Shaw (1976) analysis of Zambia's foreign policy system would provide further insight if incorporated within a rational/unitary actor model in order to understand the interface between the external environment and the decision making process in foreign policy.

## **2.4. International System**

### **2.4.1. Cooperation and Conflict**

Southern Africa in the years 1964-1994 can be described as a system replete with conflict and cooperation. This stems from South Africa's hegemony, the liberation political struggle and its impact on Southern African, super power politics and the impact of democratic change in Southern Africa and its overall influence on regional affairs (Shaw 1974, Shepherd, Jr 1979, Kibble and Bush 1986, Cammack 1987, Leys and Tostensen 1982, Gwaradzimba 1993).

Shaw (1974) observes that regional cooperation in Southern Africa was both economic and military with the former concerned with economic growth and the latter characterized by "hostile transnational military coalitions", with several countries particularly Malawi and BLS taking a neutral stance towards the politics of the region. However, most of the studies on Southern African politics are concerned with the regional outlook and do not provide an in-depth analysis of individual country choices particularly Malawi's foreign policy towards the region. A study by Steve Kibble and Ray Bush offers a critical approach to the understanding of the situation in Southern Africa by focusing on the international and regional frameworks of Southern Africa's political economy. Kibble and Bush (1986:204) posit that "any understanding

of the current multifaceted crisis can only be grasped at two interrelated levels: (1) the international dimension to the region's relationships with the world economy; (2) the dynamics behind on-going attempts by the member-states of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference to try and disengage their economics from the grip of South Africa”.

An important turning point in the regional politics of Southern Africa occurred in 1974, following the collapse of the Portuguese empire and the emergence of Mozambique and Angola as independent nation-states (Hedges 1989, Davies and O'Meara 1985,). Davis and O'Meara (1985) analytical study of South Africa's 'total strategy' raises important issues which are contrary to popular academic literature which reduces South Africa's regional strategy as mere destabilization. The total strategy was a well calculated strategic policy advanced by Pretoria which had three important factors as observed by Davies and O'Meara (1985:199, 200, 201):

*After 1982 it also appears that some attempt was made to distinguish between states in the region in the application of particular tactics.....The states in the first category were offered greater concessions designed either to encourage them to deepen their economic links with South African capitalism or to reward them for 'good behavior'.....States in the second and third categories were singled out for intensified destabilization measures. The brunt of these assaults fell on Lesotho, Angola and Mozambique.*

It should be pointed out that despite South African attempts to destabilize countries in the region, the success of the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) in forging a united front in the area of economic cooperation in the four years since its inception

in 1980 cannot be understated. Formed under four main cardinal objectives, SADCC made considerable progress in its first four years. However, this success was met with considerable military and economic pressure from South Africa culminating into the Nkomati accord between Mozambique and South Africa (Anglin 1989). As noted earlier, Kibble and Bush (1986) have argued that South Africa's strategy of destabilization was determined by the regions political economy whose main aim was to reverse efforts by SADCC aimed at reducing the regions overreliance on Pretoria. One interesting feature of South Africa's strategy was the attempt to create a constellation of states to counter SADCC. Were capitalist states in the region and beyond viewing SADCC as a threat because its membership mainly constituted countries that leaned towards communist? An answer to this question lies in the theoretical approach adopted by Kibble and Bush (1986) which is based on the dependency theory. The theory of sub-imperialism which was developed by R. M. Marini in the analysis of Brazil' foreign relations after 1964 and adopted by Kibble and Bush in their analysis of South Africa's relationship with the rest of Southern Africa observes:

*One way of looking at regional developments is to regard South Africa as a 'sub-imperialist' state. Although there are certain difficulties with such an analysis, this does link the relationship of central imperialism to dependent but, nevertheless, powerful, regional political and economic actors. The characteristics of such a state include the exports of raw materials to, and the imports of capital and advanced technology from, the capitalist centres; and also the exports of basic manufactured goods to, and the imports of raw materials from, the periphery (Kibble and Bush 1986:209)*

The analysis is useful in the understanding of western capitalist interests including South Africa's in the relations with the rest of Southern Africa. More importantly, Kibble and Bush (1986) provide an analysis whereby South Africa's total strategy resulted from U.S. and other western capitalist nations giving a leeway to Pretoria to protect western capitalist economic interests in the region. However, the theory assumes that complicity by South Africa's Southern African allies such as Malawi was that these countries were caught up in this sub-imperialist web hence their inability to pursue an independent foreign policy. This view point is also shared by Leys and Tostensen (1982) who posit that through South Africa's capital, countries like Malawi were coerced to establish relations with Pretoria. However, McMaster (1974) observes that the decision by Malawi to establish relations with South Africa was based on the former's interests within the Southern African sub-region. In addition, as noted by Henderson (1977) Malawi as a sovereign state within the region was also pursuing its national interests hence the alliance with South Africa.

It is critical to understand in what context and for what reason did Malawi maintain relations with South Africa. An analysis of the political economy of dependency in Southern Africa is further offered by Leys and Tostensen (1982) who categorises SADCC's dependency on South Africa in terms of trade, energy, migrant labour and transportation. "A fuller assessment of the tasks facing SADCC requires a broad, though inevitably cursory, review of the network of dependency relationships between the nine member states and the Republic of South Africa" (Leys and Tostensen 1982:57). On the one hand, it is observed that Malawi's dependency in particular rose in the 1970s with 40 percent of imports. However, the emphasis on the unimportance of trade between SADCC and South Africa which Leys and Tostensen describe as asymmetrical raises the question of whether South Africa's destabilization strategy

was merely aimed at perpetuating SADCC's dependency on its economy. Perhaps one critical view point which points to 'containment militarism' on the part of South Africa as an ally of US interests against the Soviet Union is the politics of transportation routes in Southern Africa. For instance Leys and Tostensen (1982) point to the fact that South Africa and UNITA collaborated in the sabotage of the Benguela railway line. It should be noted that both the US and South Africa supported UNITA against the Soviet backed MPLA government in Angola.

According to Leys and Tostensen (1982: 68) "the more conservative regimes see advantages in SADCC quite distinct from their relationship to South Africa. They are more interested in the specific projects in which they see an economic advantage. Whether such projects reduce their dependence on South Africa is, to them, not so important". This analysis points to both U.S. and U.S.S.R influence on Southern African politics. It further relegates the region to a subordinate regional system dependent on the foreign policies of the super powers.

#### **2.4.2. Superpower Politics**

The transcendence of the conflict between the U.S and Soviet Union to other parts of the world including Africa has been extensively covered by numerous scholars. The analyses have been on the effects of proxy wars on Africa but also the general impact of US-Soviet relations on the foreign policy choices of these countries. The Southern Africa region in particular has been extensively covered by scholars seeking to understand super power rivalry and the behavior of countries in the region. The literature presents Southern Africa as a subordinate system pursuing foreign policies as extensions of the choices between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Richard Bissell has observed that in the years preceding 1970, the Soviet Union did not have any particular interests in Southern Africa until the end of the Portuguese empire in the mid 1970s. The interests which were being pursued during détente led to a worsening of relations between

the Soviet Union and the U.S. as both countries sought to increase their spheres of influence through support for both state and non-state actors (Bissell 1978).

Bissell's (1978) approach to the U.S.-Soviet Union rivalry mainly focuses on the relationship between the two super powers. However, the analysis does not critically focus on how the possible failure of détente could have led to foreign policy changes in the Southern African countries in general and Malawi in particular. According to Wright (1989) the end of détente between the two super powers and the role of the Reagan administration in pursuing a globalist foreign policy led to an escalation of conflict in Southern Africa as the US sought to play the role of a global policeman with the aim of containing Soviet influence. According to Shepherd, Jr (1979) the west envisaged a situation whereby soviet control of Marxist-Leninist states in Southern Africa would give it greater advantage against western powers hence the need for a counter strategy. The argument was that the Soviet Union was sending large shipments of arms to Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania and that the People's Republic of China was sending arms to Mozambique. The Reagan Doctrine promoted containment policies around the world and Southern Africa in particular was a catalyst for the implementation of the "total strategy" by South Africa as noted by George Wright:

*In southern Africa, the policy (containment militarism) aimed to preserve western hegemony in the region and to support the government in Pretoria. The policy gave a green light to Pretoria to accelerate its 'total strategy' of destabilization of the region and increasing repression at home. Throughout the eighties, Pretoria was able to keep up a devastating campaign of military intervention against Angola and Mozambique, to provide essential support for UNITA and Renamo, to maintain a military occupation and*

*repression in Namibia, to exert economic and military pressures against Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, and to strike regularly against targets necessary for SADC area regional cooperation (Wright 1989:160).*

It should be noted that Wright's analysis of the events in Southern Africa is critical to the study of Malawi's foreign policy towards southern Africa. The analysis puts Southern Africa as a subordinate regional system hence pursuing a dependent foreign policy based on US-Soviet interests (Zartman 1967).

## **2.5. Theoretical Framework**

Hollis and Smith (1986) posit that theoretical choice in the analysis of foreign policy behavior of states has proved to be a difficult task for researchers. There has been a preoccupation with power and the national interests on the one hand and the role of international institutions on the other. In general, academic discourse in international relations revolves around two main theories, realism and idealism (liberalism). However, several scholars have also used the dependency theory in the analysis of the foreign policies of developing countries (McGowan and Gottwald 1975, Moon 1983, Olatunde et al 1987, Kieh 1992, Holsti 1999, Matsanduno et al 1999, Schmidt 2008). In recent years, the analysis of international relations has fallen under rationalist approaches which combine, realism, idealism and Marxism (Hobson 2000:145). Furthermore, scholars have attempted to use psychological models or decision making or bureaucratic models in order to explain foreign policies (Jarvis 1999, Tetlock and McGuire 1999). Within the context of Southern Africa in general and Malawi in particular, scholars have adopted different frameworks that fall within the major theoretical discussions in international

relations (Hedges 1989, McMaster 1974, Shaw 1976, Henderson 1977) This section reviews the major theoretical debates in foreign policy such as dependency, idealism and realism. The theoretical framework of the thesis is developed from the analysis.

### **2.5.1. Dependency**

Dependency implies a situation in which the economy or the development of one country is conditioned by the development and economy of another country in a core periphery symbiotic relationship. “It is a situation in which the economies of certain countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected” (Dos Santos, 1970:231-6 in Olatunde et al 1987:12). The theory which developed in Latin America sought to explain the continued underdevelopment of countries of the south in relation to the industrialised countries of the west in a situation whereby the dominant economies experience sustained growth at the expense of dependent economies whereby the latter economies grow as a reflection of the larger economies.

Dependence in foreign policy has been categorised as both political and economic. McGowan and Gottwald (1975:482) posit that in foreign policy behavior where political dependence is more pronounced a state “ rejects militant nonalignment...accepts ties to a former metropole or alliance system, as reflected in military and economic aid, diplomatic contacts and voting agreements in international organizations”. On the other hand, economic dependence denotes a situation within which the economy of a peripheral country in terms of trade and investment largely depends on the metropole and where a large proportion of the formers exports go to the latter.

According to Holsti (1999), the dependency approach to the study of foreign policy has come under a lot of criticism because the approach relegates to the periphery, the key variables

in the analysis of foreign policy such as the state and security. Instead, focus is on the unequal distribution of wealth in the global capitalist system (Moon 1983).

However, dependency analysis is applicable to countries at the periphery of the world economy as they relate to one another. According to Olatunde et al (1987: 14) “an observer of East African state relations will discover that the conflict between Kenya and Tanzania lies in the struggle for economic independence”. This is because Tanzania’s economy has been at the periphery of Kenya’ development. According to Pardesi (1976) the foreign policies of developing countries are determined by the economic conditions. In essence dependency particularly the desire to disengage from unfavourable economic conditions has been a pre-occupation of developing countries within the international system.

In the southern African sub-region, Malawi was dependent on Mozambique and Tanzania for transport facilities and on South Africa for trade, a trend which continues to date and which justified Malawi’s foreign policy stance at the time of independence. However, the theory would not holistically explain the pattern of relations between Malawi and her Southern African neighbours as it does not focus on the role of the state in an anarchical international system. For instance, Hedges (1989) has observed that Malawi was taking part in the “total strategy” by allowing South Africa to use its territory in support of MNR attacks in Mozambique. The critical question to ask is, if Malawi recognised the importance of Mozambique as the feasible transportation route for her imports and exports, why did it tolerate MNR attacks against inter-regional rail and port facilities? Furthermore, the theory would fail to explain the tensions that existed between Malawi and the frontline states in the mid 1980s.

However, the theory is relevant in that it would explain the path of Malawi's foreign in Southern Africa as an effort to reduce her economic dependence on South Africa and in essence to increase her power vis-à-vis other regional countries.

### **2.5.2. Idealism/Liberalism**

Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:33) have defined liberalism or idealism as “ the application of reason and universal ethics to international relations with the hope that this can lead to a more orderly, just and cooperative world and that international anarchy and war can be policed by institutional reforms that empower international organisations and laws”. In other words, unlike realism where prominence is given to the state as a rational, selfish actor in an anarchical international system, liberalism (idealism) believes that the state is not an evil entity that is motivated by selfish autonomous action in the pursuit of national interests. Goldstein (1996:95) observes that idealism in international relations holds that “morality, law, and international organisation can form the basis for relations among states and that peaceful and cooperative relations among states are possible”.

It is important to note that idealism took prominence in international relations at the end of World War I when its conceptions influenced the formation of the League of Nations. The idealist notion was that the League would promote peaceful co-existence among nation-states through cooperative efforts thereby averting a repeat of the atrocities of World War I. However, history proved that internationalism could not prevent state centric behaviour when in 1939 World War II broke out. The theory recognises the importance of international organisations in securing peace. In relation to this study, the observations by Hedges (1989) point to efforts towards internationalism through the Front Line States and later SADCC in securing peaceful co-existence among countries of the region.

However, even though SADCC played a part in enhancing relations in the region, it failed to prevent MNR attacks in Mozambique and South Africa's destabilization strategy. Thus liberalism has limitations in explaining states behaviour in relations involving two or three actors. Liberalism could be useful in explaining relations within the context of the SADC in the post cold war period. The theory does not offer a complete explanation of the issues under study. It ignores state actor behaviour in an environment where states have been preoccupied with the promotion of economic and security issues.

### **2.5.3. Realism**

The theory, which developed as a reaction to liberalism, has its origins in the works of the Italian and English political philosophers Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes respectively. Machiavelli writing in *The Prince* emphasised on the need for leaders to engage in zero-sum games where maximisation of power was the first and foremost preoccupation in ensuring survival. The Hobbessian realist conception is based on the idea that man is naturally selfish in a state of nature where no government exists. In its modern form, realism is attributed to Hans Morgenthau who expounded the idea that international relations is dominated by the struggle for power among nation-states. Realism posits that the international system is chaotic because of the absence of a supranational organisation capable of regulating the actions of states and enforcing order. According to Goldstein (1996:52) "realists tend to treat political power as separate from, predominant over, morality, ideology, and other social and economic aspects of life". In the context of realism, the absence of a world sovereign gives impetus to nation-states to pursue their interests and to subdue one another in a relationship characterised by power politics. Kegley (2005:22) notes that "realism as applied to 20<sup>th</sup> century world politics views the state as the most important actor on the world stage since it answers to no higher authority". In realist terms, the

state in the pursuit of self-interests can employ military power in order to achieve its objectives. In fact, the use of military force whether as a threat, as a means to deterrence or as a conquest tool is one of the fundamental elements of a country's political power in the pursuit of self-interests.

One assumption of realism as a theory in international relations is based on the notion that stability in the international system rests on the concept of balance of power. Goldstein (1996:74) defines balance of power as "any ratio of power capabilities between states and alliances or it can mean only a relatively equal ratio". Balance of power is mainly achieved through a country's military strength in order to contain an opposing states increasing political and military influence. Balance of power can also be achieved through the formation of military alliances or in some cases, a third party can act as a balancer between two opposing forces.

The assumptions of realism according to Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:37) can be summarised as follows: "International relations is characterised by power politics; the primary obligation of every state-the goal to which all other national objectives should be subordinated is to promote its national interests and to acquire power for this purpose; the anarchical nature of the international system dictates that states acquire sufficient military capabilities to deter attack by potential enemies and to exercise influence over others; economics is less relevant to national security that is military might, economic growth is important primarily as a means of acquiring and expanding state power and prestige; Allies might increase a state's ability to defend itself, but their loyalty and reliability should not be assumed".

Classical realism as propounded by Hans Morgenthau came under criticism in the 1970s which led to the development of neo-realism by Kenneth Waltz. According to Farer (2004:72) "While they differ in their assumptions about the ultimate determinants of state behavior, they

share key premises and the conclusion that power is the exclusive currency of international relations, and its pursuit together with its allocation at any given time determine their content and shape”.

In recent years John Mearsheimer developed the theory of offensive realism as a challenge to the Waltzian realist approach (Peterson 2006). According to Mearsheimer (2006: 112) the theory of offensive realism is based on five assumptions that “the system is anarchic, (2) all great powers have some offensive military capability, (3) states can never be certain about other states’ intentions, (4) states seek to survive, and (5) great powers are rational actors or strategic calculators”.

Within the context of cooperation, realism argues that states pursue cooperative arrangements in order to increase their relative gains. According to Grieco (1988:499) “a state will decline to join, will leave, or will sharply limit its commitment to a cooperative arrangement if it believes that partners are achieving, or are likely to achieve, relatively greater gains. In essence, cooperation among states is only necessary if it leads to the maintenance of the status quo in the arrangement. Power relations are therefore an integral part of the process. In addition, the rational actor model emphasises on the primacy of state survival (Krasner 1999). According to rational analysis, states are viewed as unitary rational actors whose ultimate goal is to advance foreign policies that guarantee their survival in a competitive international system.

It should be pointed out that regardless of whatever version of realism, the concept of power has been at the centre of the theoretical debate. However, there is no agreement on what constitutes power in international politics. Even though scholars agree that power is an important concept in international relations, its ambiguity presents a challenge to any researcher using realism in order to explain foreign policy behaviour (Holsti 1964). Scholarly research suggests

that power has two aspects, influence and capabilities. This categorization which falls within the framework of hard and soft power as conceptualized by Joseph Nye offers further insight into situations of power relations between states in the game of international politics. According to Coronado (2005:322) “Soft power refers to the use of non-traditional, non-military capabilities, like cultural appeal, political ideology, or the ability to manipulate other countries’ political agendas. Its objective is the creation of allies, fostering the credibility of one’s moral authority to exert power, and thus gaining foreign policy legitimacy”. In addition Russet et al (2004) conceptualization of structural power is an important aspect in the understanding of foreign policy particularly in situations where the analysis of hard power (military capability) presents a challenge to a researcher. Russet et al (2004) posit that states exercise soft or structural power by determining the order within which foreign relations are conducted at the bilateral or multilateral levels. In this regard agenda setting is of paramount importance in the relations between states. Holsti (1964) offers a comprehensive categorization in the understanding of the concept of power (influence and capabilities) and how it can be applied to particular situations.

**Figure 1 Power relations between states**

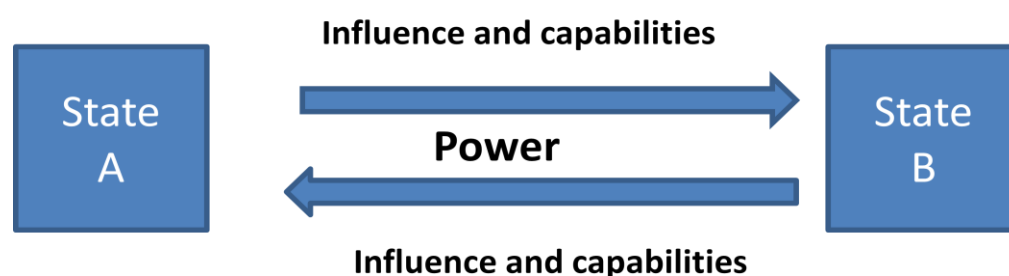


Diagram: developed from Holsti (1964) analysis of power in international relations

From the above diagram, it can be observed that State A has more power than State B if A uses its influence and capabilities to force B to carry out a particular decision and vice versa. However, what is critical is the understanding of what constitutes influence and capabilities in the overall game of power politics. A state's capabilities are viewed in terms of elements such as GDP per capita, size of territory, population and the size of the military. On the other hand Holsti (1964) basing on the works of A. F. K. Organski (1958), Charles Schleicher (1962), and Quincy Wright (1951) analyses several aspects of influence in international relations and categorizes them as persuasion, rewards, threats and the actual use of force. All these factors are used by states to suit particular situations. The above categorization was also adopted by Treverton and Jones (2005) in their analysis of US foreign policy. From the general to the particular, the rational actor model offers further insight into the analysis of foreign policy decisions within the realist framework.

### **2.5.3.1 Limitations of Theory**

Realism is limited in that it does not clearly state what is the national interest. For instance Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:39) argue whether any policy that a state pursues is in the national interest. They further observe that realism fails to account for the cooperative arrangements that exist between states for instance regional cooperation blocs where the pursuit of collective regional interests supersedes national interests. However, despite these limitations, realism continues to be an appealing theory in international relations especially in cases where power politics is the dominant aspect in relations

## **2.6. Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of Malawi's Foreign Policy**

The literature review and theoretical discussion provides insights into the conceptual framework for the analysis of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa. Realism and dependency theories are relevant to this study as they offer insights into Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa. Furthermore, a combination of the realist and dependency theories would offer further insights into the interface between domestic and international factors in foreign policy. Matsanduno et al (1999) adopt an integrated framework in the analysis of foreign policy by combining the different postulates of realism and dependency theories in order to explain the interface between domestic and international factors.

According to realism, power politics is the main determinant of international relations and that relations between states are based on power politics whereby states aim at increasing their power defined as the ability of a state to influence the behaviour of other states through hard or soft power. In addition, the acquisition of political power is a means to an end, an end that involves the promotion of the national interests. In order to acquire and maintain power states develop offensive capabilities (Mearsheimer 2006). International anarchy therefore determines state's behaviour and economic development is a means to an end, (Kegley and Wittkopf 2004). On the other hand, states at the periphery of economic development promote foreign policies that aim at reducing dependency and promoting economic development. Small states within subordinate state systems are more likely to exhibit dependent foreign policy behaviour (Pardesi 1976, Shaw 1976).

The conceptual model for the study of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa postulates that the state is the most important actor in international relations and is at the centre of foreign policy. Because of the anarchy in the international system due to the absence of a

“global policeman”, states seek to survive by protecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity. The acquisition of power and its use is critical to the survival of the state. Therefore, states endeavour to reduce economic dependence in order to acquire power and increase their international leverage hence promoting the national interests. The pursuance of cooperative arrangements by states within a regional or multilateral framework is only necessary in advancing and promoting national interests. States that depend on militarily and economically stronger states do so to promote and protect economic and security interests. In addition, states in a regional system are likely to exemplify elements of political dependence hence pursue by extension the policies of the actors within the larger international system to which they are subordinate to. Rational choice decision making is critical to the promotion and protection of the national interests. States respond to both international and domestic factors in promoting foreign policies and that stability in the international system can only be achieved through a balance of power.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has assessed the critical aspects of international relations in general and foreign policy in particular. It has analysed the conception of foreign policy and the national interest. Furthermore, the chapter has assessed the domestic and international factors that affect foreign policy including the role of the bureaucracy in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. It has been observed in the analysis that foreign policy entails the promotion and protection of national interests. These interests are mainly economic and military or security in nature. The overall objective for states is to safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity in an international system where conflict is inevitable. In addition, the chapter has reviewed the main

theories that influence the foreign policies of states. The study is guided by the theoretical postulates of realism and dependency theories. Chapter three provides the research methodology for the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

This chapter provides a detailed methodological design for the study. The study utilised the qualitative approach in the analysis of foreign policy from 1964-2007. In addition, it provides the sampling methods used in the collection of data. The chapter also discusses the methods of data analysis that were employed. It also provides the limitations faced during the research.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

According to Chan (2002), international relations in general and foreign policy in particular are not only plagued by the theoretical debates between realism and idealism but also contentious discourse on the appropriate methodologies for research and analysis. With regard to methodologies in foreign policy analysis, scholars have either utilised qualitative or quantitative approaches.

This research was qualitative and utilised both primary and secondary sources of information. According to Bennett and Elman (2007:170) “qualitative methods have for many decades played a key role in the study of international relations (IR) in the United States. In sharp contrast to the analysis of American politics, they have been at least as important to the IR subfield as quantitative approaches”.

This study utilised the qualitative research approach due to two main factors. First, the historical nature of the study necessitated the need to collect information on past events. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995:89) “historical analysis is a method of discovering, from records and accounts, what happened in the past. Historical analysis is particularly useful in

qualitative studies”. Second, the nature of the subject matter and the period under study necessitated that data should be collected through in-depth interviews and review of secondary data such as documents. It was envisaged that through in depth interviews, the respondents would give a comprehensive account or in-depth insight into Malawi’s foreign policy pursuits and the nature of relations between Malawi and her Southern African neighbours. This approach was imperative to ensure that respondents were free to express their thoughts on the issue so that the research could benefit from the insights provided by the respondents. In so doing, the research responded critically to the research assumptions raised. Through the qualitative method, the research collected data through interviews. In addition, the research analysed with permission, relevant documentation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, the research analysed newspapers, academic journals and other relevant documents.

In addition, the sensitivity of foreign policy issues within the Malawi context necessitated the need to adopt this research methodology. This is based on the fact that foreign policy issues are deemed to be state sensitive and information is not readily available for scrutiny. Therefore, by targeting information rich cases, the research identified and conducted interviews on key people who had the relevant information.

Ideally, the historical nature of the study would have necessitated the need for the researcher to travel to other countries in the region for further data collection. However, due to time and financial limitations, this methodology was comprehensive enough to meet the objectives of the study.

### **3.1.1. Sampling**

The sampling of interviewees was based on two methods. Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, purposive sampling was used. This enabled the researcher to target individuals at the top

of the foreign policy hierarchy. The process involved identifying information rich cases or individuals within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who could be useful in providing information for the research. With regard to former and present government officials outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the snowballing method was used. This approach was necessary in identifying individuals who could provide relevant information for the study but who had long retired or were working in other institutions within the public or private sectors. In addition, because of memory loss or lack of knowledge on issues of interest to the research, it was necessary that the research identifies other individuals who could provide further insight on Malawi's foreign policy particularly from 1964-2004. These included officials in other institutions such as the Malawi Confederations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI), members of the executive in the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). In total, 18 key informants were interviewed; 5 officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 DPP officials, 1 UDF official, 4 senior government officials, 1 MCCCI official, 3 former senior diplomats/civil servants, 2 Members of Parliament.

## **3.2. Sources of Data Collection**

Data was collected through primary and secondary sources.

### **3.2.1. Primary Sources**

#### **In-depth Interviews**

This was the main source of data collection. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), in-depth interviewing is the main method of data collection in qualitative studies and that the

process yields a lot of data. The researcher interviewed officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other senior government officials. In addition, the researcher also interviewed former diplomats and senior civil servants. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with Members of Parliament, party officials and also an official from the MCCC.

### **Document Review**

The research also reviewed with permission official documentation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995:85) “researchers supplement...interviewing with the gathering and analysing of documents produced in the course of everyday events”. Through document review, detailed information on foreign policy issues related to Southern Africa in general and Malawi in particular was collected. The data supplemented information collected through the in-depth interviews. According to Creswell (1994:151) document review “represents data that are thoughtful in that informants have given attention to compiling...it saves the researcher the time and expense of transcribing”.

### **3.2.2 Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources of information included a review of newspaper articles at the Daily Times and Nations Newspapers. In addition, journal articles, magazines and reports obtained in the course of the study were reviewed.

### **3.3. Methods of Data Analysis**

The qualitative data obtained through the key informant interviews and the document review was analysed using content analysis. “ The term content analysis refers to any technique

for making inferences by objectively and systematically indentifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti in Pennings et al 2006:58). According to Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 68) content analysis involves “the examination of prior writings and a frequency count of nouns or commonly occurring words to help determine the probability of authorship”. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995: 112) the researcher uses “the guiding hypotheses and the related literature developed earlier on.

The process involves developing themes for the analysis of data and arranging the data into categories. According to Creswell (1994:154) “the researcher takes a voluminous amount of information and reduces it to certain patterns, categories, or themes and interprets this information by using some schema”. During the research, the primary and secondary data was analysed by categorizing the different emerging themes. During the process, the researcher was guided by reviewed literature and conceptual framework. Similar topics or themes emerging from the different data categories were clustered together chronologically and analysed. Categorising the data chronologically was critical because of the historical nature of the study .A narrative presentation of the data was developed from the ensuing data analysis procedure.

Data from key informants was cross checked with official documentation and records including newspaper analysis. Validity and reliability were ensured in the research through the use of multiple sources of information.

### **3.4. Limitations of the Study**

The ability for the study to achieve its stated objectives had several limitations. However, the most important limitation was memory loss from the interviewees. However, the availability of documentation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also document analysis at the Daily

Times and the Nation Newspaper was able to cover this shortfall. Another limitation was sensitivity. Issues of foreign policy are treated with sensitivity and as such the research came across a lot of useful information which was analysed but could not be included in the paper due to its sensitive nature. In addition, the research took into account ethical considerations and in addition to issues of sensitivity, the names of key informants do not appear in the thesis. In addition, inadequate financial resources was another limitation to the study due to the fact that other respondents were willing to provide relevant information but had long retired and were living in far away districts. This made it difficult for the research to travel to those areas to collect the information.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the research methodology for the study. It has discussed the sampling method used and the methods of data collection employed. It has also discussed the research limitations. Chapter four discusses the study findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

This chapter provides a narrative analysis of the findings of the study. The study findings are presented in two sections.

The first section focuses on Malawi's foreign policy conception and strategy during the era of Kamuzu Banda from 1964-1994. During this period, Malawi's foreign policy was an outcome of competing factors from power politics embedded within the conception and definition of the national interest, ideology, geo-political position, bureaucratic factors and the interface between domestic and international politics. By focusing on specific issues and cases, the findings demonstrate that Malawi's foreign policy was interplay of competing foreign policy variables interacting in a complex interdependent environment.

The second section examines the dynamics of political change at the local, regional and global levels and their impact on foreign policy from 1994-2007. The section scrutinizes whether there has been continuity or change in Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa. In addition, it examines the impact of democratic change in Malawi and the Southern African region on Malawi's foreign policy.

Both sections address simple but crucial issues such as what is foreign policy? What impact does the definition of the national interest have in the conceptualization of a foreign policy? Both sections are discussed within the conceptual framework of the study.

## **SECTION 1**

### **MALAWI'S FOREIGN POLICY, 1964-1994**

#### **4.1. Power Politics and Dependency**

##### **4.1.1. International and Domestic Factors in Foreign Policy**

The interface between domestic politics and international politics is critical to the understanding of foreign policy (Matsanduno et al 1999). According to realism, domestic factors are not too important to a rational unitary actor. "The leaders who make foreign policy, the types of government they head, the characteristics of their societies, and the internal economic and political conditions of the political conditions of the states they lead are unimportant" (Kegley and Wittkopf 2004:74). However, one critical weakness of realism is that by wholly focusing on the international system in the analysis of Malawi's foreign policy, we would ignore the domestic factors that were critical in the shaping of foreign policy. By focusing on both international and domestic factors, this analysis provides a critical understanding to Malawi's foreign policy at the onset of independence.

#### **4.2. Defining National Interest and Shaping Foreign Policy**

The definition of the national interest and foreign policy have an impact on how a country conducts its relations in the international system. The definition of the national interest is critical in that in realist terms the state is a rational actor in an anarchical international system. The role of the state is to advance national interests, that is policies that ensure its survival in a system with zero-sum games. National interest includes "survival, security, power and relative

capabilities” (Holsti 1999). In retrospect, the definition of the national interest by Dr. Banda was an all embracing concept defined from a realist strategic perspective thus national security and economic independence. National interest encompassed principles such as good neighborliness, capitalist orientation for economic and security gain, non association with armed revolutionary groups, protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity and overall, contact and dialogue, the cardinal principle of foreign policy during the Banda presidency. All these factors had an impact on the consolidation of the political regime under Dr. Banda hence the interface between international and domestic factors. In essence, therefore, foreign policy was defined as the conduct of relations between Malawi and other states in the international system including international organizations<sup>5</sup>.

The conceptualization and strategic orientation of foreign policy in the period after independence became an important factor to which Dr. Banda was to personally direct and oversee in terms of implementation and outcomes. The importance of presidential dominance in foreign policy making thus became an important driving force in ensuring that the agenda which had been set in 1964 at the OAU Summit in Cairo was fully carried out for the survival of Malawi (McMaster 1974, Hedges 1989, Shaw 1976). This analysis corresponds to Peterson (1994) observations hence the survival of Malawi as a nation within the Southern African regional sub-system lay on a strong foundation of national security and economic development which was to be based on Malawi’s traditional economic and security links. It has been observed that:

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<sup>5</sup> This description of the national interest and foreign policy defined by Dr. Banda is based on the Speech which he delivered at the OAU Summit in July 1964 and also through interviews conducted with three former and present senior government officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (External Affairs during Dr. Banda’s presidency) and the Office of the President and Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 12<sup>th</sup> May and 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008.

*Because of reality at independence particularly Malawi's poor economy and land locked status, we could not afford to pursue an anti white policy* (Interview with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Senior official, Lilongwe, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2008).

Economically, the pursuit of an Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) policy relied on Malawi's trade and transport links with Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) and South Africa and to some extent Southern Rhodesia. As one Foreign Affairs official observed:

*Kamuzu was pragmatic in maintaining and consolidating relations with the Portuguese in Mozambique and South Africa because had we cut off these economic links there was nothing we were going to gain from our Marxist oriented neighbouring states... they had nothing to offer Malawi* (Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Senior official, Lilongwe, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2008).

This notion of economics, geo-politics and dependency in the conceptualization of Malawi's foreign policy which corresponds with observations by McMaster (1974), Pardesi (1976) and Patel and Hajat (2007) can be viewed from two angles. Firstly, maintenance of relations with the Portuguese and the Apartheid regime in South Africa for economic gain was an attempt to build the country's industrial base thus making it competitive on the global economic stage hence reducing dependency. Secondly, by maintaining relations with these countries, it was a recognition that Malawi's levels of dependence on these two economies were very strong to the point that an attempt to cut off these links would have resulted in the

crumbling of the political and economic system leading to the loss of Malawi's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Malawi's foreign policy towards the white dominated regimes of Southern Africa was pursued based on principle for the purposes of state survival and not mere idiosyncratic sympathy towards white rule or western countries<sup>6</sup>. For instance, by engaging the Portuguese, Malawi sought to secure a cheap transportation route to the sea for the promotion of import and export trade and hoped that by constructing the Nacala railway line and extending it to border district of Mchinji, Zambia would be attracted to transport its goods through Malawi allowing the country to boost its revenue base hence increasing its leverage vis-à-vis other countries in the region. Encompassing all these factors was state survival, thus national interest defined as power. This conceptualization of foreign policy falls within the realist approach. According to Waltz (1999:69) “ in a self-help system each of the units spends a portion of its efforts, not in forwarding its own good but in providing the means of protecting itself against others”.

### **4.3. Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics**

The pursuance of an “independent foreign policy” by Malawi at the onset of independence was carried out within a framework that recognized the importance of maintaining good friendly relations with the neighbouring states because of their geo-strategic position. However, the struggle for the liberation of African countries from colonial rule advocated by the OAU and the ensuing support for armed revolutionary groups against the colonial regimes in

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<sup>6</sup> See Malawi News, Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1967, “Policy of boycotts and threats has failed, President tells Parliament”. In the article, Dr. Banda had argued that the problems that were facing Southern Africa could only be solved through contact and dialogue and not the policy of isolation advocated by the Organisation of African Unity.

Also see Malawi News, 19 September, 1967

Also see Malawi News, 4 April, 1967

Also see Malawi News, 7 April, 1967

Southern Africa on the one hand and the disagreement over foreign policy in the 1964 Cabinet Crisis on the other became a defining factor in shaping Malawi's foreign strategic thinking from 1964 onwards. The Cabinet Crisis resulted in several ministers taking refuge in the Marxist oriented states of Tanzania and Zambia. This led to the emergence of a power political game exacerbated by Tanzania's support for Marxist oriented armed revolutionary groups such as Frelimo. Local politics became a determinant of foreign policy at the time of independence. Domestically, the consolidation of state power by Dr. Banda became an important factor in Malawi's foreign policy. Malawi viewed any state that hosted the dissident ministers with suspicion. This was based on the understanding that the neighbouring states of Tanzanian and Zambia would support the dissident ministers in overthrowing the Malawi government.

By linking domestic politics particularly the cabinet crisis on the one hand and support for liberation groups by neighbouring states on the other, Malawi's foreign policy was based on the understanding that armed revolution was not a feasible way through which change could be brought to the white dominated states of Southern Africa. The main strategic factor was that liberation groups were a threat to state survival. The policy pursued by Dr. Banda was to disassociate Malawi with the policy of revolution advocated by the Marxist oriented armed revolutionary groups and the countries that supported them. This was done through the promotion of a policy of contact and dialogue. This policy emphasised on moral non- military support for liberation groups and advocating for a diplomatic negotiated settlement to the problems of Southern Africa. Contact and dialogue was a policy pursued with the sole aim of promoting and safeguarding Malawi's security and economic interests by ensuring peaceful co-existence with state and non-state actors in the region.

### 4.3. Power Politics, 1967-1975

The socio-political and socio-economic environment which Malawi had found herself at the onset of independence had necessitated a realist approach to international relations. This led to power politics between Malawi and her black Southern African neighbours. Power politics became more pronounced in Malawi's foreign policy towards Tanzania in 1967 when the latter began to pursue an expansionist foreign policy by claiming the North Eastern part of Lake Malawi<sup>7</sup>.

In reaction to Tanzania's approach, Malawi's foreign policy towards Tanzania became more militaristic threatening a preemptive military invasion. Dr Banda justified this militaristic approach on the premise of realism<sup>8</sup>. As a deterrent measure, Malawi purchased from South Africa military hardware. In response to Nyerere's territorial claims, Dr. Banda proclaimed that Part of the old Maravi Empire had extended into Tanzanian territory, hence a part of Malawi. This was a deliberate attempt by Dr. Banda to deter Tanzania's territorial claims.<sup>9</sup> When Tanzania had made the lake claims in 1967, the Ministry of External Affairs had wanted to diplomatically resolve the issue in the hope of establishing cordial relations between the two countries. However, they considered that the claim Tanzania had made did not take into

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<sup>7</sup> The problem of the Malawi-Tanzania boundary dispute is well analysed by Mayall (1973). In the article, Mayall J, traces the attempts by Tanzania to claim part of Lake Malawi by referring to pre-colonial agreements between the British and the Portuguese. Furthermore, the article provides an overview of the measures taken by Malawi to thwart the claims by Tanzania under Dr. Banda's leadership. See Mayall J. The Malawi-Tanzania Boundary Dispute, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 4. (Dec., 1973), pp. 611-628.

<sup>8</sup> See Malawi News, 19th May, 1967. The newspaper reported that Dr. Banda had threatened Tanzania with a military response in the event that Tanzanian declared that part of the North Eastern part of Lake Malawi was part of its territory.

Also see Malawi News, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1971 reported under the headline "Ngwazi supports Heath on sale of arms to SA".

<sup>9</sup> The Maravi empire was a Kingdom in pre-colonial Malawi. It is widely believed that the name Malawi is derived from the name Maravi.

Interview with Foreign Affairs Official, Lilongwe, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008.

Also see, the New York Times, Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1967, "Nyerere Raises Malawi Border Issue".

Also see Malawi News, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1967, "Claiming our Lake is Playing with Fire".

consideration Malawi's interests for a negotiated settlement. Responding to Tanzania's claims, Dr. Banda advised External Affairs that Malawi would not give up an inch of her territory and further publicly threatened Tanzania that anyone who claimed Lake Malawi was "playing with fire".

Tanzania had been trying to put pressure on Malawi to force a change in policy towards the Portuguese and South Africa by using dissidents and training them in subversive activities and claiming part of Lake Malawi. According to Mearsheimer (2006), the anarchical nature of the system is a recipe for states to use offensive military capabilities in order to force other states within the system to comply with their policies. Despite, the struggle for power and influence between Malawi and Tanzania, official foreign policy stance was to help revolutionary groups such as Frelimo by giving them a controlled safe passage from Tanzania through Malawi to districts bordering Mozambique. This was done by providing Frelimo fighting cadres with Malawi Young Pioneer uniforms under the control of the special branch. The policy shift by Dr. Banda was deliberately pursued as a move towards the emancipation of the black man in reaffirmation of Malawi's pragmatic policy of contact and dialogue. This policy direction was an important element aimed at ensuring that national interests were promoted in unison with the policy of peaceful support for African liberation efforts.

#### **4.4. Balance of Power**

Waltz (1999: 81) argues that "a self help system is one in which those who do not help themselves or who do so less effectively than others will fail to prosper, will suffer and fear of such unwanted consequences stimulates states to behave in ways that tend towards the creation of balances of power". According to Chatterjee (2003) states seeking to survive in a system

where conflict is inevitable have no choice but to engage in power politics which according to Waltzian structural realism brings about balance of power in the system. During late 1969 to early 1970, a balance of power existed between Malawi and Tanzania and relations between the two countries became stable. Malawi began to allow Frelimo to pass through her territory on its way to undertake military operations in Mozambique against the Portuguese administration. The decision to assist Frelimo led to a decrease in tensions between Malawi and the rest of black Africa, however, relations with Portugal began to sour.

During this period, relations with South Africa blossomed with the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1968. It should be noted that despite the existence of cold but stable relations with Tanzania, the country was still viewed as a possible threat to Malawi hence the need to boost the country's security through the strategic positioning of Malawi's economic and security relations with Pretoria. Dependency factors in Malawi's relations with South Africa vis-à-vis black Southern African countries cannot be overemphasized. For security and economic reasons that fall within the context of promoting and protecting national interests, Malawi was dependent on South Africa. According to McGowan and Gottwald (1975) small states exhibit both political and economic dependence particularly in military and economic aid and in also in trade and investment.

#### **4.5. From Cooperation to Conflict, 1970-1975**

The souring of relations with Portugal resulted not only from Malawi's complicity with Frelimo by providing them a safe passage to attack Portuguese installations in Mozambique but also from the fact that the Malawi government had dealings with private capitalist entities particularly Jorge Jardim, a Portuguese millionaire and close confidant of Dr. Banda. Malawi's

strategy towards Portugal changed when Dr. Banda viewed as declining, Portuguese influence in the region and around the globe. In addition, Portugal's usefulness in protecting Malawi from Tanzania had waned, as Pretoria had assumed this role.

Expansionist tendencies in Malawi's foreign policy became more apparent in the relationship between Dr. Banda and Jorge Jardim who had been accused by Portugal of running a private army against the Portuguese government. Dr. Banda had hoped that Jorge Jardim would be a worthy ally of Malawi to protect her interests in Mozambique particularly the transportation routes as this was at the centre of Malawi's economic development. The Malawi government had anticipated a power vacuum in the Portuguese territory due to the guerrilla struggle by Frelimo and had hoped to use Jorge Jardim to protect Malawi's trade and transport interests.

Following the coup d'état in Portugal and the end of the Caetano government, Malawi saw an opportunity within which its agenda of securing her interests in the Portuguese territory would be carried out and implemented. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1974, the Embassy of Portugal withdrew diplomatic representation from Malawi accusing the government of political interference in its African territories.<sup>10</sup> In response to the ending of diplomatic relations between Malawi and Portugal, the Ministry of External Affairs noted:

*As regards the allegation that Mr. Jardim is mounting military operations against Mozambique from Malawi, we can only say that this is the type of cheap propaganda which is both sad and disgusting. Sad because of the high hopes of decolonization we had placed on the new government. Disgusting because of the realization that a government*

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<sup>10</sup> The Rhodesian radio and Radio RSA and had reported that the reason for the withdrawal of diplomatic representation in Malawi was because of Malawi's support for Jorge Jardim's attempts to raise a private army inside Mozambique to protect his business interests and those of Malawi- Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives- July 1974. The New York Times and the Washington Post-5<sup>th</sup> August 1974 also reported that Malawi was organizing a mercenary force to destabilize Portuguese efforts aimed at decolonization.

*headed by a straight forward soldier can stoop to such blatant lying* (Ministry of External Affairs Document, July 1974, unpublished)

The coup in Portugal had affected Malawi's foreign interests in Mozambique as the government foresaw her independence in the hands of a Marxist government. The approach by Malawi towards the problems in Mozambique set it on a collision course with Frelimo as it served to confirm Portuguese suspicion that Malawi was not interested in the independence of Mozambique under Frelimo. Malawi had been playing a double sided foreign policy of contact and dialogue and power politics whenever it felt its interests threatened. During this period the officials in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Office of the President and Cabinet began to take an active decisive role in the conduct of foreign policy as one former External Affairs official observed:

*The Ministry of Foreign affairs used to carryout Political analysis of the globe, they used to advise the Head of State. For instance when the Shah of Iran was deposed in (1979) relations did not break but the Ministry advised Kamuzu to maintain diplomatic silence with the regime in Tehran. The decision was undertaken because the Shah's government was deposed in a revolutionary way and that the background of Malawi was not revolutionary. In the same vein, Kamuzu did not agree with the Mengistu regime after its overthrow of Haile Selassie because Kamuzu viewed Salassie as a leader of an independent free Africa. In other words Mengistu was a Marxist and Kamuzu never sent an ambassador for some time* (Interview with former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).

Even though Dr. Banda was influential and having the final say on the major foreign policy decisions he took a behind the scenes role. With regard to the situation in Mozambique, officials in the External Affairs Ministry were anticipating a situation whereby independent Frelimo would threaten Malawi's security and economic interests because of its Marxist orientation and possibly because of the fact that Malawi had colluded with the Portuguese regime at the time of independence in 1964 including allegations of supporting Jardim's mercenary ambitions<sup>11</sup>.

#### **4.6. The Cold War and a Reactive and Proactive Foreign Policy**

As the cold war progressed in 1975, Malawi's foreign policy became both reactionary and pro-active responding to developments in the neighbouring countries and creating an image that Malawi though small was a powerful state. However, contact and dialogue was to be pursued only with favourable non militant states and pragmatic leaders. In addition, Malawi's foreign policy became affected by the cold war as observed:

*Malawi's foreign policy was shaped by the prevailing East/West relationship, balance of power politics between the US and Soviet Union....At the OAU/UN General Assembly Kamuzu made it clear that we were anti-communist. By extension any country that supported the Soviet Union Dr. Banda didn't want any relations (Interview with former Malawi diplomats, Lilongwe, on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).*

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<sup>11</sup>The Times of 27<sup>th</sup> August 1974 reported that Malawi, Zambia and Swaziland had planned to divide Mozambique in order to secure their access to the sea. Also see the New York Times of 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1974

By pursuing a policy of discretionary alignment during the cold war, foreign policy was politically dependent on Western capitalist ideology as opposed to Marxism as advanced by the Soviet Union and its allies. This aspect of political dependence is typical of small developing states (Shaw 1976). However, it should be noted that an independent foreign policy for small states is a recipe for isolation. African countries at the onset of independence in the 1960s preferred to cooperate in order to promote their political and economic agendas. In realist terms, this approach is an aspect of political weakness in the international system based on the understanding that what you can't make up in weapons you make up in numbers.

In view of the ideological differences between Malawi and Marxist Frelimo, there was no immediate establishment of diplomatic relations between Malawi and Mozambique after the latter's independence in 1975. Nevertheless, the independence of Mozambique had shifted the balance of power in Southern Africa and Malawi became surrounded by countries with which it did not share any ideological inclinations.

According to Kegley and Wittkopf (2004) realism offers a critical understanding of the relations during the cold war. During this period, South Africa began to fear increased insurgency attacks from the African National Congress which was supported by Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique. In response, the South African government developed the total strategy which brought into existence the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR). This period also correlates with the period leading to the end of the détente between the Soviet Union and the United States from 1975 onwards. South Africa had tried to propagate a foreign policy of containment fearing Soviet Penetration and convincing western interests to counter-balance its influence. The South African Information Minister- Connie Mulder observed "There is a duty for

the western powers to counter-balance Soviet Action in Africa so as to enable Africa to solve the continents own problems according to its own ideals”<sup>12</sup>.

The protection of the national interest gave impetus to power politics based on the notion that communist states were hostile and would destabilize Malawi as observed:

*Frelimo was supported by Eastern-Marxist countries. As a result, Malawi had sympathy for Renamo. The sympathy was at the individual level because of Malawi's Western orientation. In addition, Kenya also supported Renamo. The cold war was at play* (Interview with former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).

Southern Africa became a centre of proxy wars between the United States and the Soviet Union supported by Cuba. The development of the total strategy in order to counter radical Marxist revolutionary governments and non-state actors in Southern Africa and Malawi's complicity in the policy by supporting Renamo can be viewed from several policy angles. Firstly, by supporting the total strategy, Malawi's foreign policy was responding to its ideological inclinations and dependence influenced by Dr, Banda's dislike for communism. Secondly, foreign policy makers viewed it as an opportunity through which a capitalist oriented

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<sup>12</sup> See Daily Times, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1978. The South African Information Minister had said “ South Africa is to launch a new drive to press its arguments on the future of the African continent in the face of Soviet and Cuban penetration”. The Minister was of the view that Western powers had an obligation to support South Africa's total strategy in a bid to counter increasing Soviet influence among the Marxist oriented Southern African countries.

A further analysis of the South African, Cold War nexus is provided by Guelke A, Southern Africa and the Super-Powers, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 56, No. 4. (Autumn, 1980), pp. 648-664.

On Soviet support for Marxist states see Somerville K, The U.S.S.R and Southern Africa since 1976, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 22, 1 (1984), pp 73-108.

Shepherd, Jr. G, Socialist State Strategy and Arms in Southern Africa *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 9, No. 1/2. (Spring - Summer, 1979), pp. 47-51.

government would support Malawi's economic interests in Mozambique, which was further augmented by multinational capitalist interests some of whom had close associations with Dr. Banda. Thus foreign policy was both a consequence of personality, national interest and a response to international and regional issues.

It should be pointed out that as noted earlier during this period, formulation, implementation and coordination of Foreign Policy became the discretion of the Ministry of External Affairs which was not only responsible for diplomatic engagement and protocol with other states but in conjunction with the Office of the President and Cabinet and Special Branch collected foreign intelligence critical for policy choices in Malawi's international relationships on the one hand and domestic politics on the other. Internationally, intelligence was crucial in the decision making process on national security and diplomatic endeavors. According to Russet et al (2004:113) "a state's intangible capabilities of power and influence is its ability to collect and analyse information-that is, the quality of its intelligence". Domestically, Dr. Banda's mistrust for the dissident ministers some of whom had been organizing insurgency operations against the government with purported support from neighboring governments particularly Tanzania became an issue of concern. Thus all major decision making process lay in the hands of the Secretary for External Affairs and who would directly advise the Head of State and would also consult and collaborate with the Secretary to the Office of the President and Cabinet. These two government officials would also consult the Inspector General of Police and occasionally the General of the Army.

The result was the development and pursuit of both an open and covert foreign policy to counter possible Marxist expansionist policies from Tanzania and Mozambique and by extension the Soviet Union. Through compellence, Malawi aimed at forcing the Mozambican government

to lean towards capitalism which would be in favor with Malawi's economic and security interests in the region.

Malawi's double sided foreign policy which has for a long time been viewed as contradictory by scholars such as Hedges (1989) and Patel and Hajat (2007) due to Malawi's covert support for the South African government and an insurgency group in the strategy of destabilization which was also destroying Malawi's transport infrastructure. Support for the latter was based on its pro-capitalist leanings and the strategy was seen as a force against communism.

Both Malawi and South Africa were using each other to promote their security and economic interests under the guise of the cold war as one former External Affairs official noted:

*Economically and militarily stronger South Africa used Malawi and this was construed as support. They thought we cast a blind eye....Malawi was never directly involved in the total strategy. A certain company here in Malawi.....worked for South Africa and shipped arms into Mozambique. The problem was compounded by the fact that Malawi was unable to police its borders. The Heritage Foundation a right wing Anti Communist organization in the United States supported Renamo through Malawi. Malawi exchanged intelligence with the MI6/CIA and South African intelligence. We had to deal with both camps at the intelligence level and Dhlakama talked to MCP. Malawi had to understand the intentions of both Machel and Dhlakama and cultivate some relationship with both so that we could engage them (Interview with former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2008).*

By 1980, power politics reminiscent of the cold war determined relations between Malawi and Mozambique on the one hand and Malawi and the rest of Southern Africa on the other. Malawi's policy became antagonistic with the Machel regime. Following the establishment of relations with Mozambique in 1980, Malawi and Mozambique through joint commission meetings. The aim of the meetings was to explore ways through which tensions between the two countries could be diffused because of the inter-state tensions and problems brought about by the MNR's insurgency. Diplomatic efforts aimed at diffusing tensions included the handing over of 8,000 Mozambican dissidents contrary to International Humanitarian Law in return for the handing over of Attati Mpakati who was purportedly hiding in Mozambique<sup>13</sup>. Thus foreign policy continued to be guided by both domestic and international factors.

#### **4.7. Regional Cooperation, Power Politics and the Cold War**

In order to diffuse tensions further and under pressure to participate in regional solidarity, Malawi joined the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) established in Zambia in 1980. The main objective of SADCC was to reduce dependence on South Africa. However, a critical analysis of Malawi's participation in SADCC though corresponding to Kibble and Bush theory of dependency (sub-imperialism) on the one hand and Leys and Tostensen theory of compellence in Southern Africa's political economy on the other, fails to account for Malawi's independent behavior in her participation in SADCC. Officials in the Ministry of External Affairs persuaded Dr. Banda that Malawi's participation in SADCC was one way of showing the frontline states that it was committed to the plight of black Southern

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<sup>13</sup> According to an Interview with a former senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, conducted in Lilongwe, on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2008, the Malawi Congress Party led government was trying to negotiate with Mozambique with the hope that the latter would hand over to Malawi, Attati Mpakati, leader of the Socialist league of Malawi (LESOMA) and was fighting Dr. Banda's one party system with support from Tanzania, Mozambique and Zimbabwe

Africa. Regional cooperation was pursued for solidarity purposes with the sole aim of changing the frontline states attitude towards Malawi. Even though Malawi participated in the meetings of the SADCC, her participation was sluggish. This approach can be viewed from the realist perspective which posits that states should desist from fully entrusting their national interests in an international organization and regulating state behavior through them (Kegley and Wittkopf (2004).

However, it was relations with Mozambique that were pivotal in the conduct of Malawi's foreign policy. From 1982 to 1986, Mozambique continued to accuse Malawi of aiding the MNR. These allegations were diplomatically denied by Malawi emphasizing that as a member of SADCC Malawi was committed not to destabilize other regional states. Despite the signing of the Nkomati accord in 1984, which had compelled South Africa to provide economic assistance to Mozambique worth R10 million, the Soviet Union continued to influence events in Mozambique following its dismay with Mozambique's signing of the accord. According to Somerville (1984) the Mozambican government continued to receive military assistance from the Soviets in the form of Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs) and MI 24-25 combat helicopters among others.

Despite continued Soviet military assistance to Mozambique, the balance of structural or soft power with Mozambique was in Malawi's favor. External Affairs officials had an upper hand in setting the agenda of the meetings of the Joint Commission with the aim of influencing Mozambique to desist from using arms against Malawi. The rational analysis of the situation in Mozambique, its relationship with Malawi and the region as a whole was based on the understanding that a war between the two countries would negatively affect Malawi's economy

even though during this period, the re-routing of goods through Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana had negatively affected Malawi's economy.

In the period beginning 1985, the CIA had estimated that the Soviet Union would continue to influence events in Mozambique and Angola. The CIA observed "to ensure its continued influence with the governments of Angola and Mozambique.....military and economic assistance accords also have enabled Moscow, its East European allies, and Cuba to establish a large advisory presence in the region, including some 2500 military advisors and 13,000 economic technicians, most of whom are in Angola and Mozambique" (CIA: 1998: 3, 4).

The Soviet Union was building up its military capability in Southern Africa from 1985 and was thus influencing Mozambique to put pressure on Malawi with the aim of isolating the U.S. and South Africa from the rest of Southern Africa. The Soviet Union had provided aid amounting to US\$1.4 billion with US\$430 million for economic activities and ideological and political cooperation to Frelimo and MPLA. South Africa and Malawi became the frontline states for containment militarism against Soviet expansionism and influence in the region. This policy had the backing of the U.S. even though there is no official evidence of extended deterrence with regard to Mozambique as compared to Angola whereby the U.S. supplied Jonas Savimbi with Stinger missiles and other weapons in order to counter Soviet and Cuban expansionism<sup>14</sup>.

The frontline states (Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) continued to intensify their efforts of diplomatically pressuring Malawi to re-orient its foreign policy towards South Africa and the MNR. It had been envisaged by these countries that by changing Malawi's course in the region, South Africa would not have backing for its total strategy. At a meeting of

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<sup>14</sup> Extended deterrence refers to the measures undertaken by the US government to provide sophisticated weapons to anti-Soviet guerilla movements around the world. See for instance, Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:117). On US support for UNITA under the Reagan Doctrine see Wright V.G, *US Foreign Policy and Destabilisation in Southern Africa, Review of African Political Economy*, No. 45/46, Militarism, Warlords & the Problems of Democracy. (1989), pp. 159-168.

frontline states and SADCC held in Luanda, Angola in August 1986, the frontline states decided to use coercive diplomacy against Malawi after the 8<sup>th</sup> Non-Aligned Movement Summit. The 8<sup>th</sup> NAM Summit had passed resolutions towards the imposition of sanctions against South Africa. The frontline states had agreed that by persuading Dr. Banda as an elder statesman to take the leadership of SADCC there would be an automatic change of policy by Malawi towards the region particularly on South Africa's destabilization which had greatly affected the region's economy. In addition, the frontline states had agreed that sanctions be imposed on South Africa whose total strategy had exacerbated dependency on its economy and had cost the region an estimated US\$ 10 billion. Though proportionately Malawi's links with South Africa were minimal compared to the frontline line states in total, however, according to Davies (1986:47) "the greatest problems for Malawi would be to re-orient trade and transportation. There would be a small increase in unemployment due to the return of 30,000 migrant laborers and a net loss of some US\$ 30 million annually".

In 1986, in an attempt to force a re-orientation of Malawi's foreign policy, Presidents Kaunda, Machel and Prime Minister Mugabe visited Malawi to which one former official described as a "War Meeting"<sup>15</sup>. According to one former External Affairs Official the agenda of the meeting changed when President Machel made a blatant accusation against Malawi and Dr. Banda. By referring to the 1984 Joint Commission, he accused Malawi of abrogating the agreement and supporting Renamo in its operations in Niassa, Tete, and Zambesia provinces. Dr. Banda responded by reaffirming the cardinal principle of Malawi's foreign policy of contact and dialogue by advising the leaders that sanctions would not solve the situation in Southern Africa but that talks should be initiated with the South African government. It was at this meeting that a

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<sup>15</sup> See the Daily Times, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1986. "Big Welcome for Three Heads of Government".

Joint Defence and Security Commission between Malawi and Mozambique was suggested in order to complement the Joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation (JPCC) created in 1984.

According to Keohane and Nye (2001b) as observed in Kegley and Wittkopf (2004) soft power is an option pursued by states to persuade other states from using coercion in solving problems thereby producing behavior that is favourable. There is evidence to suggest that Malawi's continued use of soft power through contact and dialogue had influenced the front line states to momentarily consider Dr. Banda's proposals. Following the meeting between Dr. Banda and the three frontline leaders, the Ministry of External Affairs was of the view that international and regional opinion on Malawi's support for the MNR had changed despite Machel threatening to place Russian Surface to Air Missiles on the common border with Malawi<sup>16</sup>. It was observed:

*“after that many people did not believe Malawi supported MNR – Tanzania was happy with Malawi's peaceful co-existence and the Chinese were sympathetic towards Malawi”. Many people didn't believe Machel could carry out the missile threat. The argument was that Machel was trying to find a scapegoat for his problems at home”* (Interview with former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).

Foreign policy and intelligence officials had observed that at the time of the crisis between Malawi and the frontline states, Kanyama Chiume had been in Mozambique and had met Presidents Machel and Mwinyi purportedly to discuss a possible takeover of the Malawi government. During this period, with advice from Soviet and Cuban military advisers,

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<sup>16</sup> See The Citizen Newspaper, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1986. Machel had not only threatened Malawi with Missiles and Landmines but had also threatened to close the common borders between the two countries.

Mozambique and the frontline states began to explore a military option against the Malawi government in order to overthrow the government of Dr. Banda. The frontline states at the invitation of Mozambique had met in Maputo on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1986 in order to solicit military support. However, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda disagreed with the military option instead opting for a diplomatic solution to the issue with possible sanctions against Malawi.<sup>17</sup> It can be argued that the desire by the frontline states to use force against Malawi resulted from their inability to influence a change in Malawi's foreign policy behavior. In anticipation for a possible military invasion by frontline states in 1986, the Current Affairs Committee (CAC) a policy analysis body of the Ministry of External Affairs began to analyze the possible impact of a volatile situation in Southern Africa particularly a military option by frontline states and the imposition of sanctions against South Africa and how it would affect Malawi. According to a former CAC member:

*The Committee used to analyze all developments world-wide.... In the past, the Committee would convene and analyse issues and if there were any developments that were not favourable to Malawi it would formulate a foreign policy direction for the consideration of the political leadership* (Interview with former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official in Lilongwe on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).

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<sup>17</sup> See The Washington Times, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1986. The paper reported that Mozambique and Zimbabwe had planned to attack Malawi's borders including government installations with Russian missiles and plan subversive activities against the Malawi government.

Also see The Washington Post, November 8, 1986. The paper reported that at a news conference, R.F. Pik Botha, South Africa's Foreign Minister presented a set of documents to the press purportedly found at the site of the Machel air crash which proved that the Frontline states were planning to overthrow the Malawi government militarily using Soviet combat helicopters and MIG fighter jets.

Also see, Washington Times, 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1986.

The CAC which had powers to advise Dr. Banda through the Secretary for External Affairs, planned to re-orientation Malawi's foreign policy by among others planning for "re-allocation of resources to develop the Northern Corridor combined with diplomatic pressure on Tanzania in case Tanzania sympathizes with frontline states; Use diplomatic tactics to pressure South Africa to leave Nacala line alone and to caution South Africa on continued support for the MNR. And for Malawi to get prepared for any military attack against it from the Frontline states taking into account that Mozambique may use commandos to raid alleged Renamo bases. To consider possible threats by South Africa to repatriate migrant workers".<sup>18</sup>.

Even though Dr. Banda, had accepted the advice by External affairs and had responded to the allegations made by Machel through a special envoy, the decisions by the CAC reflect the desperate situation within which Malawi's foreign policy found itself during this period. It further reflects the conflict between those advocating for constructive engagement on the one hand and hard power options on the other. This aspect of bureaucratic politics is inevitable in any state with regard to foreign policy "because the players in the game of governmental politics are responsible for protecting the nations security, they are obliged to fight for what they are convinced is right" (Kegley and Wittkopf (2004:82)

#### **4.8. Rapprochement towards Southern Africa**

The change of leadership in Mozambique following the death of President Machel and the ascendency of President Chissano became a turning point in the relations between Malawi, Mozambique and Southern Africa in general as Chissano had lived in Malawi in the early years of independence. According to a former senior government official:

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<sup>18</sup> This is based on the Minutes of the Current Affairs Committee (CAC) meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1986, reviewed during an interview with a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2008.

*Chissano had a soft spot for Malawi. He was helped by Malawi officials to flee to Tanzania when the Portuguese wanted to arrest him for running Frelimo operations in the country* (Interview with a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).

The policy of contact and dialogue advocated by Dr. Banda became more prominent when President Chissano was more interested in establishing a balance of power between Malawi and Mozambique hence a rapprochement that led to the “normalization” of relations between the two countries. The Joint Defence and Security Meeting held in December 1986, led to an agreement whereby Malawi began to participate in the protection of the Nacala railway line by sending a military contingent.<sup>19</sup> In essence, it can be argued that dependence on South Africa’s economic infrastructure had weakened Malawi’s status hence constructive engagement with Mozambique.

During this period, Malawi’s power vis-à-vis the frontline states began to decline and foreign policy experts began to make concessions in order to maintain the status quo. Classical realism views power in military and economic terms, thus a large military, and a large expenditure on a country’s military is a clear indication of a country’s hard power hence leverage in international politics. Even though Malawi did not have a large military and strategic air power to protect its territory, it is clear that Malawi had the capability and influence to deter the frontline states from forcing Malawi to adhere to the policies of confrontation in support of diplomatic engagement. The policy of contact and dialogue can be viewed as an aspect of soft

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<sup>19</sup> See the Herald, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1987. The paper reported “ An agreement reached recently with Malawi means that security forces from that country will now physically be involved in protecting the land-locked state’s route to the port of Nacala”.

power in Malawi's foreign policy. According to Treverton and Jones (2007) and Kegley and Wittkopf (2004) State power in international relations can be viewed from three interrelated levels such as capabilities, resources and results or outcomes.

#### **4.9. Democratization, the End of the Cold War and its Impact on Foreign Policy**

The domestic and international nexus in the foreign policy of Malawi began to take a new twist towards the end of the cold war in 1989, when it became clear that western countries were no longer going to support regimes based on mere ideology. The call for democratic change in Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa in general and Malawi in particular gave new impetus to pressure groups outside Malawi particularly those in South Africa to mount pressure against the government of Dr. Banda. The Ministry of External Affairs and its affiliate institutions began once more to intensify their efforts of trying to monitor the activities of these political groupings. Foreign policy became dictated by domestic power politics between the MCP and pressure groups that were calling for democratic change in Malawi. In pursuit of this domestic objective, Malawi's relations with South Africa became restrained in a web of domestic politics in both countries as Malawi began to accuse South Africa of supporting the democratic movements while on the other hand, South Africa accused Malawi of political support for the ANC.

During this period, Malawi had suspected South Africa and the United States of America of supporting the pro democracy movements and had accused South Africa of allowing Chakufwa Chihana, a pro democracy activist, to meet and hold discussions with Nelson

Mandela, Cyril Ramaphosa and Jay Naidoo, the Secretary General of COSATU<sup>20</sup>. In reaction to South Africa's support for the pressure groups, Malawi intensified its efforts aimed at establishing friendly relations with the ANC as observed:

*Regardless of how the SA government is likely to interpret the ANC gesture, this development is in line with..... policy of contact and dialogue and the desirability of keeping our options open. Indeed a positive response to the ANC request would augur well with the rapprochement and good neighborliness that the Malawi government is currently re-asserting in the politics of the sub-region (Document analysis, Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, July, 2008)*

Further attempts to enhance relations with the ANC came in April 1990, when a cheque of US\$ 250,000.00 was presented to Nelson Mandela upon his election as the ANC's Deputy President<sup>21</sup>. In 1992, Nelson Mandela visited Malawi and met Dr. Banda. In addition to providing financial support to the ANC, the Malawi government also contributed funds amounting to US\$ 100, 000.00 to SWAPO. In October, 1989, a special envoy of Dr. Banda succeeded in meeting Dr. Sam Nujoma who acknowledged the role Dr. Banda had played in the fight against colonial domination in the region. However due to the intensification of efforts aimed at forcing the Malawi government to change towards democracy and the resulting arrest of

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<sup>20</sup> On mounting international pressure against the Banda regime viewed from the United States please see, The New York Times, "Malawi Criticized by a Rights Group". 21 October, 1990. Accessed at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0CE7D91430F932A15753C1A966958260&scp=15&sq=Malawi&st=cse> on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> See the Star, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1990, "Malawi Donates Over R600, 000.00 to ANC". The paper reported that in an attempt to win over the support of the ANC and Frontline States, the Malawi Government had made the donation to Nelson Mandela upon his release from prison.

Chakufwa Chihana, western governments pressured South Africa to denounce Malawi as it was no longer strategically important following the end of the cold war.

In 1994, before the first multiparty general elections, Malawi had endeavoured to show further support for the ANC and had tried to consolidate relations with Nelson Mandela. The Ministry of External Affairs had anticipated that the ANC headed by Nelson Mandela would replace the apartheid government hence the need to cultivate a new relationship with the ANC government in order to protect Malawi's national interests particularly in the realm of trade and transportation. The end of cold war brought about a dynamic change to the relations in the region with an ad hoc change in foreign policy which became more reactive than proactive.

Even though the cold war had come to an end, the overall scope of relations between Malawi and Mozambique particularly on the issues of Renamo continued to be the basis of mutual mistrust between the two countries. The onset of change in Malawi particularly the tensions between the Malawi army and the MYP had an impact on the relations between Malawi and Mozambique in the period leading to the first multiparty elections. Even though Operation Bwezani was an internal matter, Mozambique had suspected Malawi of using the operation as a ploy to deliberately destabilize Mozambique by providing assistance to Renamo<sup>22</sup>.

A clear lack of direction in foreign policy became more pronounced during the campaign period as focus was on domestic issues. Foreign policy continued to be the domain of a few actors not for public debate as it was observed:

*“As far as the MCP was concerned they never reviewed policy. It was contact and dialogue. In their campaign manifestos all parties didn't have any foreign policy*

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<sup>22</sup> See NOTICIAS, 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1994. The Mozambican paper had reported that Dr. Pascoal Mocumbi had accused the Malawi government of deliberately allowing MYP to cross over into Renamo camps under the guise of operation Bwezani with the aim of destabilizing Mozambique.

*changes or pronouncements* (Interview with former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official,  
Lilongwe, on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008)

## **SECTION 2**

### **MALAWI'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE ATTAINMENT OF DEMOCRACY, 1994-2007**

#### **4.10 The Muluzi Administration, 1994-2004: Change and Continuity in Foreign Policy**

The contrast between the Banda era and the era of democracy in Malawi is that in the former, international and sub-systemic relations were determined by the cold war and the struggle for the liberation of African states. In addition to these factors, personality, national interests and bureaucratic factors led to a foreign policy that was characterized by high politics as Malawi endeavored to consolidate her sovereignty and advance her national interests within the Southern African regional sub-system.

The end of the cold war and the democratization of Malawi necessitated a foreign policy shift as Malawi tried to garner support and acceptance from the new democratic regimes that were emerging in Southern Africa particularly South Africa on the one hand and Tanzania and Mozambique on the other (Patel and Hajat 2007). Even though the Banda regime had tried to cultivate a pragmatic relationship, for instance, with Nelson Mandela's ANC as the cold war came to an end by among others giving cash donations totaling US\$ 1.5 million, the new democratic administration of Bakili Muluzi decided to pragmatically re-orient Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa in order to safeguard her economic interests. The new administration had feared that the foreign policies of the frontline states and the ANC administration in South Africa would continue to be dictated by the events that had characterized

the region's political landscape from the 1960s up to the end of the cold war, a situation which would put Malawi in a precarious situation. Foreign policy maneuvers by states are an essential part of their desire to survive by maintaining the status quo and increasing their power in an anarchical system. According to Waltz (1999:76) states in the international system "seek to maintain or improve their positions by maneuvering, by bargaining, or by fighting. Whether or not by force, each state plots the course it thinks will best serve its interests". The change of foreign policy is, therefore, a rational calculation.

#### **4.11. Democracy, Solidarity Diplomacy and Power**

As noted earlier, the transition from one party to multiparty politics in Malawi happened at a time when western ideology had triumphed over Communism, hence the "end of history" and the genesis of "perpetual peace", the envisaged end of power politics due to the entrenchment of democratic values and principles<sup>23</sup>. According to Talbott (1999), democratic countries are more interested in fostering trade and diplomacy and avoid relations that threaten international peace.

The Muluzi regime therefore came to power when competing ideologies were no longer a critical determinant of foreign policy. In the absence of competing ideologies and bipolarity under the cold war, Malawi's foreign policy continued to be determined by both domestic and international factors. The new administration sought to disassociate itself with Malawi's regional endeavors under the one party era.

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<sup>23</sup> See Kegley and Wittkopf (2004), according to Francis Fukuyama and Immanuel Kant, the triumph of liberal democracy would bring a profound change in foreign relations which would be devoid of conflict since democracies cannot fight each other because they share democratic values.

Kegley and Wittkopf (2004) suggest that democracies are likely to have a coherent foreign policy than autocracies because they allow for the inclusion of various opinions. This notion supposes that democracies are more accommodating in decision making allowing for diverse opinions. On the other hand, Matsanduno (1999) and Krasner (1999), in the analysis of America's foreign policy, have observed that the existence of competing interests in the foreign policy making process in democracies leads to concessions that create ineffectiveness.

Despite Malawi being a democracy, the inclusion of various opinions in foreign policy was unviable in the case of Malawi as domestic power politics and executive control of foreign policy determined Malawi's approach to regional and international issues. The antagonistic nature within which the new democratic administration had approached the deposed Banda regime began to affect Malawi's foreign policy towards the globe in general and Southern Africa in particular as observed by one senior civil servant:

*The Muluzi regime lacked ideological backup....The new government was just highlighting failures of the one party state....We did very little to understand the international arena, looking at geographical reality.....We looked at Kamuzu's foreign policy as isolationist....not understanding that the Banda regime had a passive role in international issues unless Britain and the US took sides (Interview with former senior civil servant, Lilongwe, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2008)*

Continued presidential dominance in foreign policy thus necessitated a dynamic change of policy from confrontational diplomacy to peaceful diplomacy through constructive engagement in an attempt to promote Malawi's national interests reaffirming Malawi's

pragmatic approach to regional issues. Foreign policy continued to respond to regional developments, in anticipation for a softer stance from Southern African countries including South Africa's new government. This was an attempt by Malawi to promote and protect economic interests particularly in trade, aid and foreign direct investment.

Shuttle diplomacy which involved President Muluzi undertaking state and official visits to Southern African countries was aimed at cultivating an attitude of acceptance in the region and to assure them of Malawi's commitment to peaceful co-existence and regional cooperation. During the visits, President Muluzi disassociated his regime from the past "evils" of the Malawi government's regional approach under Dr. Banda. According to a diplomatic source:

*The approach wasn't incremental. They tried to disassociate themselves with the past regime without building on the pros of the Kamuzu era. When he came to power he made solidarity visits. He became more active in Southern Africa. Some countries understood why Malawi had taken that stance. He tried to repair relations through conference diplomacy in order to show a changed Malawi.....However there was continued lack of trust from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa (Interview with former senior civil servant, Lilongwe, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2008).*

At the onset of assuming the presidency in 1994, foreign affairs officials had advised Muluzi on the nature and state of relations between Malawi and her Southern African neighbors which according to policy analysts were marred by isolation, tensions and confrontation particularly with Mozambique because of Malawi's regional approach from 1964 to 1994 and

also following Operation Bwezani<sup>24</sup>. Ironically, the Muluzi regime had accused the MCP of sending its MYP paramilitary wing to Mozambique to hide in Renamo camps in an attempt to destabilize his government. The MYP issue had a twofold impact on Malawi's foreign policy.

Firstly, Malawi began to put pressure on Mozambique to repatriate the MYP's back to Malawi. Secondly, the Mozambican government denied any presence of MYP's on her territory and suspected Malawi of trying to re-organize a Renamo re-insurgence by deliberately sending the MYPs into Renamo camps allegedly in support of an armed group operating in the Rombezia province. Even though the incidents which were remnants of "old southern Africa", the politics of democratic change in Malawi had threatened the existing balance of power between Malawi and Mozambique, Muluzi's pragmatic approach to bilateral politics in an era of democracy led to a meeting with Chissano in March, 1995, where the two presidents directed that the instruments of cooperation between the two countries be reviewed to reflect the democratic dispensation and that the two countries discuss the issue of MYPs in Mozambique in order to find a diplomatic settlement. The approach by both Muluzi and Chissano reflects the "perpetual peace" character of relations whereby constructive engagement between two newly democratic states had surpassed the confrontational politics that had previously characterized relations between Malawi and Mozambique prior to the end of the cold war hence creating a balance of power between the two countries.

Malawi's new rapprochement under multiparty democracy had also been an attempt by the Muluzi regime to fulfill some of the campaign promises made to Malawians at the onset of democracy in 1994. This included the resumption of migrant labor to South Africa's mines popularly known as TEBA. In March 1995, when Muluzi as part of his solidarity visits had gone

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<sup>24</sup> According to a former diplomatic source, Muluzi had been advised that relations with Mozambique were characterized by tensions due to years of mistrust, while relations with Tanzania had improved during the presidency of Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

to South Africa to meet Mandela, he had hoped for a softer approach from South Africa. The anticipation by Malawi was that the Mandela government would consider Malawi's proposal for a new trade agreement replacing the agreement signed between the Banda government and the apartheid regime in addition to the TEBA issue<sup>25</sup>. The failure by Muluzi to convince Mandela on the TEBA issue became the borderline between domestic and international politics which had characterized Malawi's foreign policy under one party rule. In reaction to South Africa's unwillingness to accommodate Malawi's agenda, Muluzi began to accuse opposition parties of conniving with the South African government to stop TEBA in an attempt to discredit his government's commitment to reducing poverty through employment in the TEBA scheme.

#### **4.12. Foreign Policy Concessions and the Decline of Power**

Malawi's attempts to co-exist in the region led to attempts to compromise on issues of national interest which threatened Malawi's territorial integrity. One issue which had involved Lake Malawi had been an attempt by Malawi to build closer ties with Tanzania in 1994 by reaching a concessionary agreement with regard to Lake Malawi. This approach had been plagued by competing bureaucratic interests between officials in the Ministry of Transport on the one hand and the Ministries of External Affairs and Justice on the other. The Ministry of Transport had advocated for a concession without understanding the critical issues of national interest which lay behind the boundary issue which under Dr. Banda's rule had led to military confrontation with Tanzania. Transport officials argued that the Malawi government under Dr. Banda had built a brick wall on the lake and that territorial concessions under the Muluzi

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<sup>25</sup> See Malawi News, June 4-10 1994  
Also see Daily Times, August 15<sup>th</sup> 1994

administration would be a reflection of the new government's constructive engagement<sup>26</sup>. However, concerted pressure from Ministry Foreign Affairs with legal advice from Ministry of Justice eventually led to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to advise President Muluzi for a change in Malawi's position noting that any agreement reached on the issue would affect Malawi's territorial integrity hence a suspension of negotiations on the issue.

Despite the hiccups in foreign policy in the early years of the Muluzi administration which on occasions had threatened national interests, Malawi's image in the region became more acceptable because of Muluzi's personality which managed to win the hearts and minds of most regional leaders. Solidarity politics had yielded results noting from the frequency in Heads of State visits because "Bakili didn't pose a threat with anybody"<sup>27</sup>. However, Malawi's regional approach in relation to domestic politics began to threaten relations between Malawi and Mozambique when in 1998 a year before the Presidential and Parliamentary elections, President Muluzi accused the MCP of having knowledge on the whereabouts of MYP's in Mozambique an allegation refuted by MCP's leader John Tembo. Further attempts by the Muluzi' administration to reduce MCP's political clout and to get acceptance from her Southern African neighbours came during the same year when President Muluzi on a visit to Mozambique pointed out that he would assist Nelson Mandela's Commission of Inquiry into the death of President Samora Machel because he believed that some Malawian officials were involved. According to a diplomatic source:

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<sup>26</sup> Document review, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2008, Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, unpublished.

<sup>27</sup> For instance in addition to Chissano and Chiluba visiting Malawi, Namibia's President Sam Nujoma who had failed to come to Malawi following failed attempts by the MCP came opened Malawi's 10<sup>th</sup> International Trade Fair in Blantyre. See Daily Times, May 27<sup>th</sup> 1998. According to a diplomatic source most countries were willing to accept Malawi because they felt it no longer had the political clout reminiscent of the cold war period.

*Following Muluzi's remarks, the Mozambican government was infuriated because they thought that all along the Malawi government had information on the incident (Interview with former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).*

According to Colaresi and Thompson (2002: 263) “Rivals have a history of conflict, often over the same issues..... vengeance for past defeats and worries about the probability of future defeats intrude into the decision-making processes”. Muluzi’s miscalculation had threatened to derail the pragmatic relations between Malawi and Mozambique on the one hand and Muluzi’s relationship with Chissano on the other. Muluzi’s regional behavior had also exposed the dominance of the executive in foreign policy making without technical input and advice unlike in the Banda era when External Affairs virtually controlled policy and advised the executive accordingly. This issue reflects the irrational character of Malawi’s foreign policy and exposes Malawi’s diminishing leverage through trade-offs in Southern Africa as the Muluzi administration had hoped that by bringing up the Machel issue, the Mandela and Chissano administrations would advance policies that were more favourable towards Malawi<sup>28</sup> .

#### **4.13. Trade-Transport Interests and Regional Integration**

Trade and transport interests continued to be the hallmark of Malawi’s foreign policy in the post-democratic period. In 1999, foreign policy officials had made attempts to promote

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<sup>28</sup> See Daily Times, July 3 1998. Despite attempts by the Muluzi regime to build a solid relationship with South Africa, the Mandela administration continued to sideline Malawi hence attempts by Muluzi to get favourable treatment from the ANC government by insisting on participating in the Commission of Inquiry. One notable feature was that when Muluzi had visited South Africa purportedly at the invitation of Nelson Mandela he was received by a deputy minister reaffirming South Africa’s cold diplomacy toward Malawi. In addition, following the visit to South Africa Muluzi agreed that TEBA was a non-starter.

Malawi's transport and trade interests through Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI) such as the Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique (ZMM) Growth Triangle which among others reviewed the extension of the Lilongwe-Mchinji railway line to Chipata, a project which had stalled in the 1970's<sup>29</sup>. Attempts to improve Malawi's transport infrastructure stemmed from the realization that transportation was core to Malawi's interests in southern Africa. It was realized that without an effective transport route to and from Malawi, the country could not realize its national interests particularly in trade and investment. According to a diplomatic source:

*All SADC countries are critical to Malawi. We are land locked. That is why we have to promote Malawi's transport interests through the Spatial Development Initiatives*  
(Interview with senior government official, Lilongwe, on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2008)

The high transportation costs which were affecting Malawi's import and export trade were rendering it uncompetitive vis-à-vis other SADC countries. However, Malawi's pursuit of numerous SDI's such as the Mtwara Corridor, the ZMM Growth Triangle and the Nacala Development Corridor and bilateral transport initiatives with Tanzania created a conflict of interest particularly on choosing the most effective transport corridor for Malawi.

This was further exacerbated by fears that by developing the Mtwara corridor, Tanzania would use the project as leverage over Lake Malawi. Despite Nacala being a longer route for Malawi to the Indian ocean, Malawi had planned to transport 75% of her goods on the line which would reduce Malawi's transport costs by 30%<sup>30</sup>. When the corridor was launched in 2000 it was realized:

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<sup>29</sup> Official Brief on the ZMM Growth Triangle, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. unpublished

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

*The Nacala corridor is the lifeline of the economy of Malawi... 60% of the cargo through Nacala port is from Malawi and Malawi is to increase its import and exports through the corridor by 70%* (Brief on the Nacala Development Corridor, Ministry of Transport. Unpublished, July, 2008).

However, despite Malawi's failure to fully promote her transport interests through regional frameworks and to make tradeoffs between acceptance on the one hand and influence and capability on the other, Malawi's policy of regional solidarity had led to Malawi being accepted as a regional player. Apart from hosting the COMESA Summit in 1994, Malawi hosted the SADC Heads of State and Government Summit in 1998. At the SADC Summit, leaders discussed the establishment of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security to replace the framework constituted by the Frontline States which did not have Malawi, South Africa, DRC, Mauritius, Seychelles, Lesotho and Botswana as members.

#### **4.14. Malawi's Role in Regional Cooperation**

Malawi's participation in SADC became more apparent in her attempts to solve regional problems and also to benefit from regional development initiatives supported by international development partners. This approach was in line with the new written foreign policy which emphasized on Malawi's "commitment to the promotion of economic co-operation and regional integration, particularly among countries of the Southern Africa region" (Foreign Policy of the Government of the Republic of Malawi 2000: 1). At the regional level, the policy of integration pursued by Malawi had become more successful but had failed to balance the initiative with

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Also see Daily Times, December 22, 2000  
See Daily Times, Friday December 8, 2000  
Daily Times, December 6, 2000

national interests particularly trade and transportation. Malawi's pursuit of regional cooperation corresponds to the fact that within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department responsible for SADC affairs, International Cooperation was more inclined towards Regionalism-multilateralism and had failed to balance this initiative with bilateral issues under the JPCC frameworks.

Under the framework of SADC, when Malawi chaired the organization in 2001, Malawi's foreign policy became more inclined towards solving regional problems. The approach by Malawi was viewed with suspicion from Mozambique and Tanzania. During the SADC Summit in Blantyre, Muluzi reiterated "Southern Africa must stand out as one part of the continent where wars have become unfashionable. Our people are fed up with these endless wars. They want their leaders to be all peacemakers rather than war mongers"<sup>31</sup>. The stand taken by Muluzi was an attempt to solve the land issue in Zimbabwe by openly critiquing Mugabe in an attempt to win western sympathy at a time when donors were putting pressure on the Malawi government's lack of fiscal discipline. Muluzi's peace diplomacy reflects the continuity of Malawi's policy where dialogue was emphasized in solving regional problems and where armed conflict was viewed as an unfeasible option. The Muluzi regime had also feared that Zimbabwe's economic downfall would affect the region's economy including Malawi's economy because of her over-dependence on Zimbabwe in terms of trade and transportation.

The approach taken by Muluzi's towards Zimbabwe and his open association with Morgan Tsangirai leader of Zimbabwe's political opposition did not please Mugabe and his allies in Mozambique and South Africa. According to a diplomatic source:

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<sup>31</sup> When Malawi hosted the SADC Summit in 2001, President Bakili Muluzi had been playing the role of peace negotiator for war ton countries such as Burundi, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. By chairing SADC, President Muluzi saw this as opportunity for Malawi to play a role in negotiating for a peaceful settlement to the problems affecting Zimbabwe. See the Daily Times supplement, August 2, 2001

*During the Bakili era we stepped on Mugabe's toes because Muluzi would criticize Mugabe openly and in closed SADC meetings (Interview with government official, Lilongwe, on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2008).*

When Muluzi had travelled to Zimbabwe as Chairperson of SADC he had openly criticized Mugabe's government by pointing out that "of great concern to all of us is that, if the land issue is not urgently resolved amicably and peacefully, the economic and political problems Zimbabwe is facing now could easily snowball across the entire Southern African region"<sup>32</sup>

The policy pursued by Muluzi towards Zimbabwe which reflected Malawi's attitude towards Southern Africa as a region fixated on the philosophy of the frontline states and lacking a pragmatic approach to regional relations did not please South Africa's Mbeki. In reaction, South Africa and Mozambique began a battle for influence on the Zimbabwe issue when Mbeki called for quiet diplomacy hence critiquing Muluzi's open approach to the Zimbabwe land problem<sup>33</sup>.

#### **4.15. The Bingu Administration: New Southern Africa vis-à-vis Old Southern Africa, 2004-2007**

One underlying factor in Malawi's foreign policy continuity has been the view of Southern Africa as a region obsessed with liberation ideology as opposed to pragmatism. At the onset in 2004, the newly elected administration of Bingu wa Mutharika continued with attempts to restore Malawi's influence and capability in the region by emphasizing on the importance of

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<sup>32</sup> See Daily Times, September 11, 2001

<sup>33</sup> Daily Times, March 19, 2002. During the Summit to discuss Zimbabwe's problems, President Mbeki of South Africa ruled out the possibility of SADC imposing sanctions against South Africa and further advised that the Zimbabwe issue could only be solved through quiet diplomacy.

building an export-manufacturing oriented economy in order to reduce high levels of dependency<sup>34</sup>. The approach was a continuation of the foreign policy set out in 2000. The policy objectives included “the maintenance of Malawi’s territorial integrity, security and sovereignty; the pursuit of socio-economic development, prosperity..... and the well being of all the people of Malawi” (The Foreign Policy of the Republic of Malawi(2000:3). As noted earlier on in the thesis, states use economic development in order to increase their power in the international system. The output of Malawi’s policy during the early years of the Bingu presidency falls within the realist paradigm of proactive state action to promote national interests and the understanding that stability in the regional system would only be achieved through a balance of power. The new administration proactively pursued a foreign policy which viewed any country in the international system as an equal partner and would not entertain any country that looked down on Malawi.

Comparatively, Malawi’s foreign policy under the Bingu administration bears close resemblance to foreign policy under Dr. Banda’s individualistic, pro-western, pro-development agenda and to Bakili Muluzi’s paradoxical regional solidarity approach on the one hand and pragmatic-individualistic policy on the other. However, despite Malawi’s attempts to develop closer ties with the region based on its economic interests, Southern Africa’s obsessions with liberation politics continued to negatively affect Malawi’s foreign policy. According to a diplomatic source, “In SADC, countries don’t look at Malawi as a member. Malawi never fought white Domination”<sup>35</sup>. In a reversal of Muluzi’s successful regional solidarity policy, the Bingu

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<sup>34</sup> At his inauguration, President Bingu wa Mutharika had made a point to transform Malawi’s economy from a predominantly importing and consuming economy to a manufacturing and export economy. Also see Daily Times, Wednesday July 7, 2004

<sup>35</sup> According to a diplomatic source SADC was altering rules when it came to Malawi’s turn to chair the organ on Politics, Defence and Security. They changed the rules even though it was supposed to be alphabetical. Since 2009 was an election year, Malawi decided not to chair the organ..

administration did not engage in shuttle diplomacy or solidarity visits to the dismay of regional neighbouring countries. However, this scenario also exposes the weakness of the Foreign Policy ministry in the post 2004 period to advise the new Head of State on customary international practice.

#### **4.16. Domestic and International Factors**

The interface between domestic and international politics became more apparent when Bingu wa Mutharika ditched the United Democratic Front (UDF) to form the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The decision by President Mutharika did not please regional leaders particularly in Mozambique whose political viewpoint within the doctrine of the liberation struggle necessitated that party cadres remain loyal to the party and its leadership despite political differences. As a consequence, Malawi's bilateral and regional cooperation became affected by the local political impasse which ensued between Mutharika and Muluzi as the former president had been viewed in a more positive light by regional leaders because of Malawi's regional solidarity diplomacy. In February, 2006, the Namibian Foreign Minister, Manco Hausiku whose country was chairing the SADC organ on Politics, Defence and Security paid a courtesy call on President Mutharika in order to assess the political situation in Malawi which according to SADC's early warning system had reached alarming levels<sup>36</sup>. This factor was compounded by the inability of Malawi's diplomatic missions to assure the region and the globe that there was no critical political crisis in the country which could lead to civil strife.

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<sup>36</sup> See The Nation, 16 Feb, 2006

#### **4.17. Cooperation and Conflict**

One critical factor of Malawi's foreign policy in the Bingu era has been its response to attempts by Tanzania to use regional developmental in order to advance its expansionist foreign policy with regard to its claim on Lake Malawi. Sensing a decline of the new administration's power due to the political impasse, the Tanzanian National Assembly began to pursue the claim on Lake Malawi by ordering a ban of maps which showed the correct boundary. In 2005, during the signing ceremony of the Mtwara Development Corridor in Malawi, the Tanzanian delegation had protested over the maps showing the correct lake boundary. However, the protests did not yield any results since Tanzania has no legal basis for claiming Malawi's territorial waters. The claims by Tanzania reflect attempts to influence Malawi's stance on the issue hoping that through compellence, Malawi would eventually concede to Tanzania's demands through acquiescence . Malawi's silence on the attempts on Lake Malawi by Tanzania reflect a foreign policy shift from military deterrence to diplomatic engagement to solve territorial issues. An analysis of this case within the realist paradigm reflects the inability for Malawi to use offensive military capabilities or hard power opting for soft power through diplomatic efforts.

#### **4.18. Dependency and Foreign Policy**

Malawi's attempts to engage South Africa, a regional power is a consequence of dependence for economic and security reasons. According to Moon (1983:317) "the common conception of the influence relationship suggests that powerful nations secure the cooperation of weaker states chiefly through the use of reward and punishment behavior". Policy officials had viewed South Africa's continued sidelining of Malawi as a factor which could have negative repercussions on Malawi's economic interests. According to foreign policy analysts, Malawi was

the only country in the region which did not have a JPCC with Pretoria. As a consequence, Malawi was not benefitting from huge foreign direct investment flows from South Africa unlike in other countries in the region. On Malawi's relations with South Africa, a diplomatic source observed:

*We want to be accommodated by South Africa..... With South Africa it was a one sided show. South Africa was cautious* (Interview with Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2008).

Continued attempts by Malawi to establishing new bilateral relations with South Africa bore fruits in 2007 when a bilateral agreement establishing a Joint Commission of Cooperation was signed. It is yet to be seen whether this agreement will facilitate an increase of exports to South Africa and FDI flows from South Africa into Malawi.

#### **4.19. Bureaucracy and Foreign Policy in Democratic Malawi**

Malawi's haphazard foreign policy in the democratic era did not only antagonize its relations with countries in the region but further led to academic discourse on whether Malawi had a foreign policy. Despite the fact that the Malawi written foreign policy document provides a comprehensive and strategic outline of Malawi's interests in the international arena, the role of the bureaucracy seems to be at the centre of the perceptions that Malawi lacks a coherent foreign policy. One compounding factor has been the role of the bureaucracy in analyzing international politics and formulating and implementing a strategic pragmatic foreign policy. The manner within which the public service operated under Kamuzu Banda in the one party era and Bakili

Muluzi and Bingu wa Mutharika in the democratic era differs greatly (Chinsinga 2007). The Muluzi administration reasserted its influence in the public service through executive control which affected the effectiveness of the foreign ministry which during the one party era was responsible for all foreign policy issues and was accountable to the Head of State:

*Dr. Banda run the country with the civil service. Dr. Muluzi's Ministers interfered with the working of the civil service. For instance, the SPC had powers similar to those of a Prime Minister. The SPC managed the civil service..... Each ministry was created to deliver. In those days it was not a political issue but a management issue if a ministry failed to deliver..... Instead of dealing with human rights issues in 1994 while maintaining discipline, corruption and ineffectiveness was brought into the civil service (Interview with former senior civil servant, Lilongwe, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008)*

Deliberate attempts were made to restructure the Ministry of External Affairs with transfers of professional personnel and the recall of technical diplomatic and security personnel who had worked in Malawi missions under Dr. Banda. Foreign policy became dominated by the executive with the Ministry of External Affairs taking a passive role. In a marked contrast to the Banda era when professional personnel were appointed as ambassadors and reported to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and not directly to the President and where technical staff came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, OPC, special branch and other government departments, the scenario in the post democratic period became dominated by political appointments some of whom did not have the requisite experience. One critical factor in a democracy is the issue of shared responsibilities in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Even though the

Ministry of External Affairs continued to be the principle foreign policy institution, other institutional players such as the Ministries responsible for Transport, Trade began to dominate the process as one official observed:

*With multiparty responsibilities have to be shared. Foreign Affairs or OPC is no longer a power house (Interview with government official. Lilongwe, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2008)*

The competition for dominance in foreign policy issues created problems of coordination and multiple advocacy according to Shaw (1976). In essence, bureaucratic competition masks rational foreign policy making and creates weak states (Krasner 1999)

Bureaucratic factors continue to affect Malawi's foreign policy in the Bingu era. The ad hoc approach to Malawi's foreign policy has been exacerbated by the continued executive dominance of the bureaucracy and the failure by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assert its influence in the strategic formulation and implementation of Malawi's regional approach. Presidential personality and dominance continues to affect Malawi's foreign policy decisions with State House directing the policy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other players reacting and implementing without proper coordination. The inability of the foreign ministry to be proactive and provide rational decision making has resulted in continued executive dominance.

Multiple advocacy compounded by intra party competition among cabinet ministers in the Bingu era affected foreign policy and the operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This mainly stemmed from the desire for a placement in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by some cabinet ministers. Two particular issues of evidence were the Shire-Zambezi Waterway project

and the severing of diplomatic relations with Taiwan in favor of Mainland China. The two issues were both bureaucratic and a response to global and regional politics. Bureaucratically, the problems of coordination and assertiveness on the one hand and inter departmental politics and competition between the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the former to advocate for the waterway project without regard for a concerted diplomatic approach towards Mozambique in order to soften its stance. Even though Policy officials argued that the project would give leverage to Malawi and would essentially increase its power in the region, they failed to strategically calculate on how Mozambique would be compelled to support the project considering that Malawi had been encouraged by Mozambique to fully use the Nacala railway line as a policy official observed:

*The project is viable as it would reduce transport costs for Malawi and would also generate income as Malawi would be used as transit point for other countries.....However, the Mozambicans don't believe it is worth it. We pursued the project without asking what is there for Mozambique.....over 95% of the project is in Mozambique and the World Bank is also funding the rehabilitation of the Sena rail line* (Interview with senior government official, Lilongwe, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2008).

It is on this basis that Mozambique's response to efforts towards the development of the waterway was lackluster.

With regard to the issue of Taiwan and Mainland China, the failure by the Foreign Ministry to make strategic decisions led to its sidelining and exposing its ineffectiveness in the switch of relations from Taiwan to Mainland China. In 1994, the Ministry of External Affairs

had made attempts to switch relations from Taiwan to Mainland China, a move thwarted by the Muluzi government. The switch of diplomatic relations from Taiwan to Mainland China had resulted from Chinese growing influence in the region particularly in Mozambique which threatened Malawi's interests particularly its fertilizer subsidy programme as the government had feared a deliberate delay in the movement of the commodity from the port of Nacala a move which could have discredited the Bingu administration. According to a diplomatic source:

*How the switch was done, there was no broad consultation no honesty. It was done because of world trends...China coming in as a "big boy" in the region in Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. China was increasing its sphere of influence in the region. We had to switch because of pressure and vulnerability from other African countries. A few people had fallen into hard times pushing for Beijing (Interview with Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Lilongwe, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2008).*

This scenario exposes the inability of the Foreign ministry to push forward a strategic policy which could be appreciated by the executive on the one hand and also exposes over control of foreign policy by the executive without due regard to expert opinion from the civil service. Furthermore, China's growing influence in Southern Africa brings to bear the subordinate regional system as it continues to respond to the politics of super powers in the international system. For instance, the attempts by the U.S. to establish Africa Command as a counter measure against Chinese influence in Africa.

## 4.20. The Role of other Actors in Foreign Policy Making

Since the attainment of independence by Malawi in 1964, foreign policy has suffered from chronic lack of participation by other branches of government and societal groups. Despite the change of government from one party to multiparty democracy, foreign policy continues to be dominated by the executive branch excluding other branches of government such as the legislature including civil society organizations. One compounding factor has been the “secrecy” under which diplomatic relations are held based on established international custom. In the post 2004 period, local power politics led to an atmosphere of suspicion particularly when a parliamentary committee headed by an opposition members attempted to probe foreign policy issues.

Malawi’s Parliamentary Committee on International Relations established under standing order 164(1) and having an oversight responsibility has failed to play its role of checks and balances even though it has among its objectives “ studying foreign policy objectives and programmes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and effectiveness for their implementation; reviewing Malawi’s Foreign Policy among others”<sup>37</sup> Where it has made attempts to link up with the ministry, foreign affairs officials have not been forthcoming<sup>38</sup>.

When the Committee had met for the first time from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2006 and interacted with former ambassadors and officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs several issues had been observed. For instance it had been noted that the Ministry was failing in its duty to execute a coherent foreign policy, it was observed that “there was lack of commitment on some

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<sup>37</sup> Report of the International Relations Committee on the Training of members on Issues of International Relations, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2007. National Assembly, 40<sup>th</sup> Session Report No1 September, 2007

<sup>38</sup> According to the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations in 2007, the Committee was interested in establishing a linkage with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that they could appreciate the work of the Ministry and its Diplomatic Missions including the challenges faced. However, the Ministry’s officials were not attending the meetings when summoned by the Parliamentary Committee.

of the persons entrusted with the implementation of Malawi's foreign policy and lack of oversight on the ministry by the International Relations Committee; the Committee was not aware nor updated on current international affairs which made it difficult for the committee to analyze issues and make recommendations"<sup>39</sup>. The absence of a proper network between the Ministry and the Committee has not only made it difficult for the committee to appreciate the ministry's role in the execution of foreign policy but has also led to Malawi engaging in multilateral initiatives without support or review from the legislature. This was further compounded by the failure of the Committee to organize itself in order to carryout its stated mandate.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed the scope and nature of Malawi's foreign policy from 1964 to 2004. The analysis has been presented under two main broad sections. The first section has focused on foreign policy in the one party era from 1964-1994. The second section has focused on foreign policy from 1994 to 2007 in the democratic era. From the analysis it has been observed that at the onset of independence, the promotion of national interests was the critical determinant of foreign policy decisions or direction. However, Malawi's foreign policy was not conducted in isolation. International factors such as the politics of liberation in Africa and the cold war were critical in shaping foreign policy. This led to the politics of cooperation and conflict between Malawi and countries in Southern Africa. Power politics became the critical determinant of foreign policy in the period between 1964-1994. In addition, bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts aimed at enhancing cooperation between Malawi and countries in

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<sup>39</sup> Report of the International Relations Committee on the Training of members on Issues of International Relations, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2007. National Assembly, 40<sup>th</sup> Session Report No1 September, 2007

Southern Africa were pursued in order to promote and protect national interests. Even though Dr. Banda's personality played a part in some of the foreign policy decisions, overall power politics and dependency factors were central in shaping Malawi's foreign policy. This was further influenced by the role of the bureaucracy in formulating and implementing foreign policy on the one hand and also the end of the cold war and the genesis of democracy in Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa on the other.

In the period between 1994-2007, there was continuity and change in Malawi's foreign policy stemming from a prolonged period of conflict and cooperation between Malawi and countries in Southern Africa from 1964-1994. In terms of change, the democratization of Malawi and other countries in Southern Africa had an impact in reducing power politics between Malawi and Southern African countries. This was further enhanced through new multilateral arrangements under SADC and COMESA which promoted regional cohesiveness. In addition, multiple advocacies in foreign policy formulation and implementation ensured that the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs was no longer the single most important institutions in the process. This scenario brought about coordination problems in foreign policy issues unlike under the one-party state. In terms of continuity, power politics between Malawi and Mozambique and Tanzania though minimal in magnitude continued to be the basis of relations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0. Introduction

In order to answer the question, what were the critical factors that shaped Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa apart from leadership cognition or psychological factors? The chapter reviews the plausibility of the research assumptions of the study in view of the research findings. The chapter also draws conclusions and recommendations on the study and provides areas for further research on issues affecting Malawi's foreign Policy.

Relations between Malawi and Southern Africa since the attainment of independence in 1964 to 2007 have been complex both at the policy and theoretical levels. As a result, this research is not a conclusive representation of Malawi's foreign policy as it gives further impetus for further research and the use of other methodologies whether qualitative, quantitative or both

#### 5.1. Research Assumptions and Study Findings

**Research Assumption 1:** Power politics and dependency have been the main determinants of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa and that the President's influence on foreign policy has resulted from these factors.

**Outcomes:** This assumption is more plausible in the period between 1964-1994 because of tensions emanating from threats on sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic and security interests. As noted earlier, at the onset of Malawi's independence in 1964, the promotion of the national interests was central to foreign policy formulation and implementation. According to realism, states in the promotion of national self interests engage in power politics. In essence,

power politics was central to Malawi's foreign policy as a means aimed at promoting and protecting national interests in an international environment where states competed for influence and resources. In part, power politics was further influenced by Malawi's attempts to reduce her economic dependence by promoting national development through economic and political relations with the white ruled states of Southern Africa.

By engaging in power politics particularly with Tanzania, Portuguese East Africa and also independent Mozambique, Malawi's foreign policy sought to safeguard her territorial integrity emanating from threats on her territory in 1967 and later on Portuguese East Africa in the early 1970s. From 1975 onwards, relations between Malawi and Mozambique became characterized by both conflict and cooperation as the two countries engaged each other for influence over bilateral as well as regional issues. In addition, power politics emanated from Malawi's political dependence by aligning its foreign policy with Western ideology during the cold war. Through the cold war, countries in Southern Africa engaged by extension the power political games of the two super powers. Within the Southern African regional sub-system, the cold war and the struggle for liberation of black African states and South Africa's countermeasure policy, "the total strategy", exacerbated power politics between Malawi and her Southern African neighbours. In addition, presidential personality and bureaucratic factors also played a part in policy formulation.

The end of the cold war in 1990 also reduced in magnitude power politics between Malawi and her Southern African neighbours. In the period between 1994-2007, foreign policy was determined by power-politics emanating from sporadic tensions between Malawi and Mozambique and Tanzania. However, Malawi's foreign policy continues to conform to realist assertions which view power politics as the first and foremost concern of the state in an

anarchical international system. The state throughout has been central to the promotion and protection of Malawi's national interests in the Southern African region.

**Research Assumption 2:** Malawi's foreign policy has pursued regional cooperation in order to avoid conflictual relations in Southern Africa and to advance national interests.

**Outcome:** This assumption is plausible in that when Malawi joined SADCC in 1980 it had hoped to create a favourable image from the frontline states and reducing the prospects for military confrontation. Within the realist tradition, states pursue cooperation only to advance their national interests. According to Davies (1986) there was no significant reduction in trade between SADCC countries and South Africa from 1980-1984 contrary to the mandate of the organisation. Table 1 below, shows a steady rise in import and export trade between SADCC countries and South Africa.

**Table 1: SADCC Trade with South Africa 1980-1984**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Export (as % of tot)</b>					<b>Imports (as % of tot)</b>				
	<b>1980</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>84</b>
Botswana	6.6	16.5	11.3	8.0	6.4	87.0	87.0	86.2	82.3	79.7
Lesotho	40.6	40.9	41.7	90.1	94.0	97.0	94.5	98.0	97.0	95.0
Swaziland	N/A	20.0	37.0	37.0	N/A	N/A	90.0	83.0	84.0	90.0
<b>Malawi</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Mozambique	N/A	5.0	2.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	14.0	8.0	N/A	12.0
Zambia	0.5	0.5	0.3	18.7	20.7	16.0	15.0	15.0	N/A	N/A
Zimbabwe	17.0	22.6	17.0	18.7	20.0	27.4	27.4	22.1	24.5	19.8
Angola	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: C.W. Davies (1986), Impact of Economic Sanctions against South Africa on the SADCC States, CIDA.

In a study conducted by CIDA, it had estimated that sanctions against South Africa would have negatively affected the SADCC countries which had already suffered an estimated loss of US\$ 10 billion due to South Africa's "Total Strategy".

In the democratic era under SADC, Malawi pursued regional cooperation for solidarity purposes and for promoting economic interests in trade and transportation. It should be noted that through regional cooperation frameworks, states increase their bargaining power in promoting national interests and avoiding conflict. Malawi hosted the COMESA and SADC Summits where President Muluzi was elected Chairman, an initiative that promoted Malawi's regional image. In addition, it was through the SADC framework where Malawi bargained for the inclusion into the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security which had previously only included Frontline States.

## 5.2. Lessons Drawn

Malawi's foreign policy can be said to have undergone through five successive periods which can be contextually viewed as follows;

- the era of national interests defined in economic and security terms particularly the protection of territory and the consolidation of state power by a new government from 1964-1975
- the era of the cold war and political dependence in foreign policy, and the genesis of strong bureaucratic control of foreign policy and Malawi's participation in regional cooperation initiatives from 1975-1986
- the era of rapprochement, the diminishing importance of the cold war on Malawi's relationships and the impact of democratization on foreign policy from 1986-1994
- The impact of democracy on foreign policy with continuity and change in Malawi's approach towards Southern Africa, the importance of regional integration and Malawi's decreasing capability and influence from 1994 2004
- The era of individualism and Malawi's passive approach towards regionalism, the importance of economic development in increasing Malawi's international leverage from 2004-2007.

The promotion of interests defined as power has been central to Malawi's foreign policy. Foreign policy has been influenced by power politics emanating from Malawi's individualism, its satisfaction with maintaining the status quo in Southern Africa and preventing other states from interfering with its sovereignty, territorial, economic and security interests. However in addition to interest defined as power, the pursuit of hard power hence power politics has been an

extension of Malawi’s dependent policy particularly during the cold war period. Nevertheless, during period of increasing threats from state actors, foreign policy managed to respond critically to threats through soft power. However, Malawi’s relative hard power has played second fiddle to soft power which has been pursued through contact and dialogue, constructive engagement, solidarity diplomacy and regionalism.

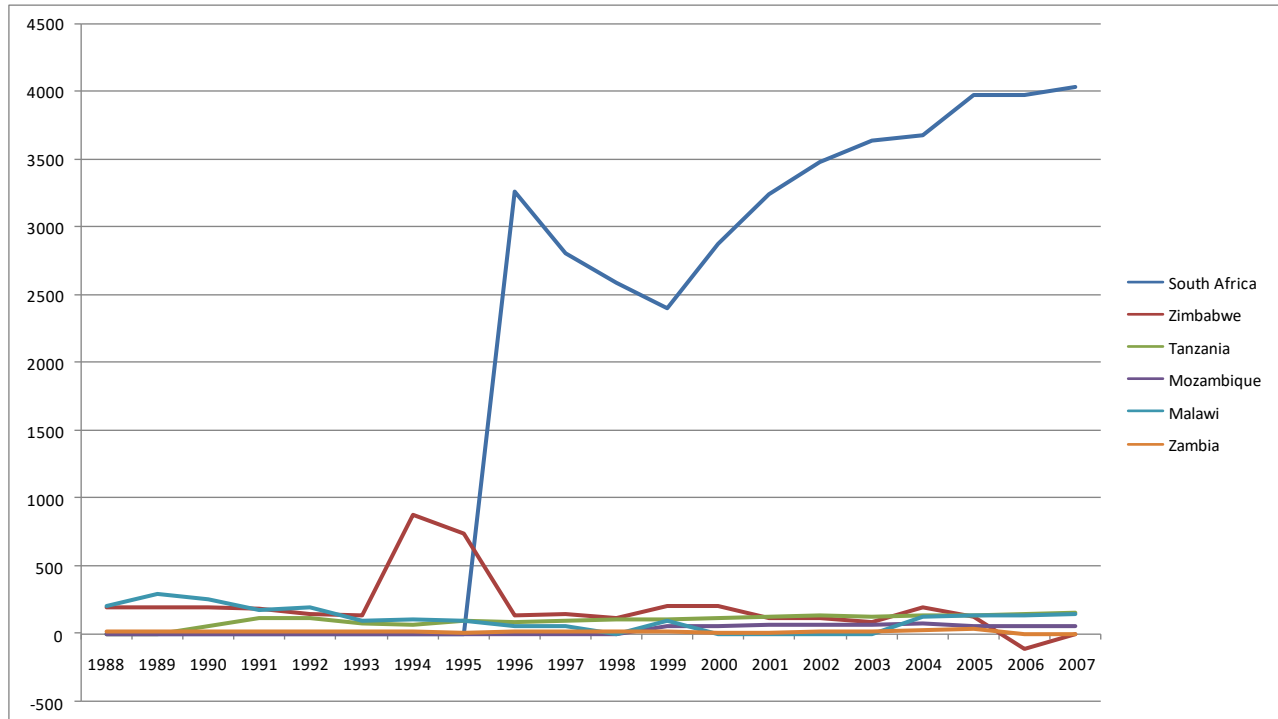
Statistics reveal that in the 1980s Malawi’s military capability vis-à-vis neighbouring country was minimal. There was lack of strategic airpower and minimal spending on defence. Malawi did not engage in an arms race. On the other hand, according to data on military expenditure by the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Malawi’s defence spending was above Zambia and Mozambique between 2000-2007.

**Table 2      Military Power in Southern Africa-1987**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Armed Forces</u>	<u>Combat Planes</u>
South Africa	106,400	372
Angola	50,000	136
Botswana	3,000	5
<b>Malawi</b>	<b>5,250</b>	<b>None</b>
Mozambique	15,800	69
Tanzania	40,350	29
Zambia	16,200	43
Zimbabwe	42,000	49

Source: Military Balance International Institute for Strategic Studies. Appeared in The Times, 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1987. “ Mugabe’s MIGs Alter the Balance”.

**Table 3 Military Expenditure in the SADC Region-1988-2007**



Source: [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org). Data on military expenditure in Southern Africa tabulated with permission

This factor provides an opportunity for further research as to why Malawi was pursuing a militaristic foreign policy in the 1980s when it was disadvantaged in terms of military capability. Was hard power a result of support from western allies including South Africa? In the post democratic period Malawi's military expenditure has remained constant from 2004 to 2007 above Mozambique and Zambia and at par with Tanzania. This would prompt for a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to correlate critical variables in the study of foreign policy

Overall, public perception of Malawi's foreign policy is that during Dr. Banda's presidency, foreign policy managed to promote national interests viewed in economic and

security terms. With regard to Malawi's relations with Mozambique, key informants were of the view that because of Mozambique's radical approach to regional issues, Malawi needed to take a bold stand on its relations with Mozambique. However, there is recognition that the disruption of the Nacala railway line which was a critical factor to Malawi's vibrant economy in the 1970s has greatly affected the economic development of Malawi. This has been exacerbated by the inability of both Malawi and Mozambique to engage each other diplomatically to rehabilitate the Nacala railway line.

At the time of writing this thesis, attempts had been made by the foreign ministry to cultivate a new relationship with the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations to enable them appreciate Malawi's diplomatic endeavors both at the policy and administrative levels.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

From the foregoing, this research has both academic and policy recommendations. Academically, there is need for further studies on foreign policy drawing from methodologies that use both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Such methodologies whether they draw for realist or rationalist and constructivist approaches would offer further insights into the dynamics of Malawi foreign policy and stimulate academic discourse on the issue. At the policy level, there is need for inclusiveness in foreign policy making particularly of non-state actors. Furthermore, there is need for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take a proactive role in providing the executive and the legislature with a clear foreign policy direction in order to further promote and protect Malawi's National interests.

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## APPENDIX

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### MA Political Science Research Thesis 2008

#### Power Politics, Dependency or Cooperation?

#### Examining Malawi's Foreign Policy towards Southern Africa 1964-2007

#### Proposed Respondents:

Former and present diplomats and government officials

Officials in the MCP, UDF and DPP

Officials from the MCCCCI

**General Information:** *As appropriate, complete this information prior to interview (for the researcher)*

1. Agency: \_\_\_\_\_(optional)

2. Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

**Good day, my name is Mukuse Sagawa. I am a student at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College studying for an MA in Political Science. I do not represent the**

**government or any political party. I am studying Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa and I would like to discuss with you some issues, which are pertinent to the study. All information gathered during the interview will be kept confidential.**

**Objective one:**

**To explore the aims of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa region**

1. What is your understanding of Foreign Policy?
2. How would you describe Malawi's foreign policy in general?
3. From 1964 to 2007, Malawi has been governed under the regimes of Kamuzu Banda, Bakili Muluzi and presently Bingu wa Mutharika. Could you please elucidate more on Malawi's foreign policy with particular reference to Southern Africa by focusing on the three regimes? (What was Malawi trying to achieve and why?)

**Objective two:**

**To explore the internal and external factors that influences Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa**

4. What do you think were the interests which Malawi was trying to protect or advance?
5. Were there primary internal and external factors that influenced Malawi's foreign policy?
6. What was the interface or linkage between the internal and external factors in Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa?

7. Do you remember any key events that are crucial in the understanding of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa?
8. What are these events? Can you be more specific?
9. How did these events affect or shape the foreign policy terrain?

**Objective three:**

**To explore the influence of political changes in Malawi and in the region on Malawi's foreign policy**

10. How did the transition from one party state to democracy affected Malawi's foreign policy towards her Southern African neighbours? (How has Malawi related with Southern African countries since the attainment of multipartyism?)
11. On the other hand, considering that Malawi was a staunch ally of Apartheid South Africa. Did the end of Apartheid in South Africa affect Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa? How was this change pronounced?
12. How did the coming has SADC impacted on Malawi's foreign policy?
13. What is your perception of Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa in the years to come?

**Objective four:**

**To assess the perceptions of the interviewees on the opportunities gained or lost in Malawi's relations with Southern Africa and the reasons behind.**

14. What do you think Malawi gained or lost in her relations with Southern Africa under the regimes of Kamuzu Banda, Bakili Muluzi and Bingu wa Mutharika?
15. What do you think were the limitations and what should have been the way forward?
16. Has Malawi's foreign policy addressed the key issues such as security, economic development and fostering regional cooperation?
17. Do you think there is need to reorient Malawi's foreign policy towards Southern Africa?  
How can this be done and what critical areas should be addressed?
18. How does Malawi stand to benefit from relations with China?
19. How do you think China's growing economic and military influence will impact upon Southern Africa's political and economic relations on the one hand and Malawi's relations with the United States on the other?