

# Defence Diplomacy's Multilateral Cooperation Strategies: Strengthening Mutual Trust amongst African States

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## ABSTRACT

In a globalized environment diplomacy is the peaceful means of relations between international actors. The post-Cold War era diplomacy conduct is mostly grounded by multilateralism on certain issues of common interest between states. In this respect the states interest to execute their foreign defence and security policies ground the emergence of defence diplomacy, particularly as the basis for addressing common cross-border security threats. The study's major objective is to investigate multilateral cooperation strategies for strengthening mutual trust between African states. The study adopted a mixed method research design. The target population comprised strategic senior staff in related security institutions and ministries in Kenya, three African region security mechanisms and the African Union Security Department. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 240 was reached, and through the purposive sampling techniques, participants with not less than twenty years in service or served and those with relevant knowledge in diplomacy and decision-making positions were identified. From security related institutions data was collected using questionnaire, key informant interviews and focus group discussion. Qualitative data analysis used categorised thematic coding, conversation and discourse analysis, while excel application was used on quantitative data to generated graphical interpretations. The article concluded that the application of cooperation strategies of defence diplomacy between African states would be key in strengthening mutual trust between them as a basis for fostering peace and security. The study applied the theory of peace, in which the concept of peace is found in aspects of power, security strategy and national interest. Peace in itself conjures peace-proactiveness that produces a common base between states to realize harmonious aspects of purpose for deeper ties. The study's key findings were that states multilateral defence strategies in cooperating in defence and security industries, sharing of information and intelligence, and conducting high-level defence and security diplomatic missions appeals meaningful relations that are bound to establish mutual trusts. The two key recommendations of the study include: The identified defence diplomacy cooperation strategies need only African states mutual agreement to cooperate by use of defence and security institutions; and that embracing these defence diplomacy strategies should be viewed as the basis of retracing the lost step of African-hood whose wedge was driven by the imperialists' scramble for Africa, and continues to be manifested in neo-capitalist ideologies.

**Keywords:** Cooperation, Defence diplomacy, Defence and security, Mutual trust, Strategy

## INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally, diplomacy is the peaceful means or approach to relations between international actors, at least one of which should be a government or a government agency. The post-Cold War era diplomacy conduct, in most cases, is underpinned by multilateralism. Multilateralism can be viewed as cooperation between states and organizing their diplomatic relations in groups of three or more around a particular issue of common interest, hence serving the national interest of the member states (Echle, C. *et. al.*, 2018). In a geopolitically competitive international system, multilateralism is viewed as a framework for democracies (Morland, 2019). Multilateralism appears in socio-political challenges and security crises, particularly in developing states in the Global South. However, powerful states like the United States (US) have become sceptical of the multilateralism order even though it is grounded in liberal principles that are manifested all over the Western world. A finger is pointed at the European Union (EU) as a regional multilateral body whose future capacity as

a global actor is likely to wane without the United Kingdom (UK). Nevertheless, assertive China and Russia have set foot on the stage seeking to reshape multilateralism by challenging the underpinning liberal principles that guided the post-Cold War multilateral order, which had become a norm in the international system (Moreland, 2019). Multilateral cooperation between states is diversified in conduct. According to Forster *et al.*, (2013), multilateralism does not only apply to state actors but also non-state actors, including influential personalities, government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and extremists, among others. Keohane (1990) defines multilateralism in terms of national policies and coordination customs in groups of three or more states, in which it may be conducted by institutions or through hard-core arrangements.

The prevailing diplomatic interactions and relations between the states' diplomats and 'experts' in defence and security issues generate aspects of 'diplomacy' that seek to execute the state's foreign defence and security policy, hence the emergence of 'defence diplomacy'. The genesis of defence diplomacy is associated with the post-Cold War dynamics of understanding international security and related national security policies (Drab, 2018). Although there is no single definition of defence diplomacy, Gregory (2019) observes that it is generally labelled as the non-violent use of state defence apparatus to advance the strategic aim of government through cooperation with other states. Forster & Cottey (2010) define defence diplomacy as 'the peaceful cooperation between defence forces and their use and as well as that of the related structures (primarily defence ministries) as tools or instruments of Foreign Defence and Security Policy (FDSP)'. Defence diplomacy has many references depending on the state, such as military diplomacy, soft power diplomacy, military public diplomacy or strategic communication (Emy, 2019).

## **Problem Statement**

Africa and Africans have been battered through historical challenges and circumstances of slavery, imperial West domination and colonisation, to current ideological capitalist suppression and oppression subjugating its people to poverty and conflicts due to her endorsement in natural resources. This begs the question, what strategic approach(es) could be the key to retracing the lost step of the Africa-hood? May be the answer could be in defence diplomacy cooperation strategies. Thus, the need to investigate the eight strategies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Defence Diplomacy in Multilateralism**

In the increasingly complex global security environment, defence diplomacy is proving its worth (Cooper *et al.* 2013, Leahy 2014, Muniruzzaman 2010, Drab 2018). Its application is underpinned by bilateral and multilateral aspects of addressing the emerging challenges of peace and security that transcend international borders. The United Nations (UN) has been a symbol of post-World War II multilateral order. The UN's major function is fostering international peace and security, although it is currently threatened by rising nationalism, protectionism and great power politics (Elena 2020). Despite this view, the war against the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic underpinned the greater need for multilateralism in the international system. The West continues to actively maintain multilateral cooperation bodies like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) whose security policy activities are conducted by the defence and security institutions (Giegerich, 2018, Jorgensen, 2009, Galbreath, 2007).

### **Managing Emerging Threats in South East Asia**

In Southeast Asia, various means and ways have emerged to address and manage the new emerging security threats with the goal of maintaining peace and security. Through research, it was found that defence diplomacy in this region began because of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) leaders' realization of a need for a new approach to address emerging threats in the region (Pedrason 2015). Thus, the implementation of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-plus (that includes China) forums established a defence cooperation programme. Likewise, China, a major power in Southeast Asia, is utilising defence diplomacy to deepen and broaden its bilateral relations in tandem with international trends despite maritime disputes in the South China Sea (Storey 2012). Evans (2012) argues that defence diplomacy in

Southeast Asia is underpinned by multilateral cooperation encapsulated in the ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Indonesia's bilateral defence diplomacy, with a view to addressing emerging security threats (Evans 2012).

### **Global North Multilateral Cooperation Strategies**

Cooperating in the security and defence sectors as part of a defence diplomacy strategy typically results in the establishment of diplomatic ties between partner states, as may be viewed from the many forms of European defence cooperation (Zandee, *et. al.*, 2016). Such strategy is mostly geared to the enhancement of knowledge, understanding and interoperability between defence and security bodies. It further culminates in the exchange of best practices and ultimately, the defence and security doctrine of institutions. Despite the challenges of the Russia and Ukraine war the European defence industry is a formidable industrial giant in the world in a dynamic security environment. According to European Parliament Research Services (EPRS), the European defence industry comprises a number of large multinational companies, mid-caps and over 2000 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (EPRS, 2013). The European Defence Agency (EDA) has direct employment in an industry estimated at 196,000 highly skilled labour and creates over 315,000 jobs indirectly. The European Defence Technologies and Industrial Base cuts across France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden. However, the largest company by revenue in 2021 was Italy's Leonardo, then European Multinational Airbus, followed by French companies Thales, Dassault and Safran. The EU and its member states seek to reinforce the European defence industry in times of crisis. To mitigate the high demand for supplies and materials from the Ukraine war, the European member states have planned to boost their defence budget, to a combined total envisioned to reach Euros290 billion by the year 2025 (EPRS, 2013).

Beatrice (2021), observes that the Franco-American defence cooperation was established amongst existing multilateral partnerships, specifically in the area of outer space. Although the US publicises a multilateral approach, it draws parallels to an informal practice in small groups. Nonetheless, the US and France both see a crowded and competitive space program. The two space powers have started working together on space surveillance projects as a result of France's technological advancements. Political norms, political cognition, and political function all contributed to the political convergence. By establishing guidelines for acceptable behaviour in space, bilateral cooperation has become more formalized and has expanded over time. Two separate types of cooperation, one pertaining to technical matters related to space surveillance through data and information exchange, and the other to normative matters promoting international norms and behaviour in outer space, serve as examples of bilateral defence cooperation in space.

### **Multilateral Cooperation Strategies are a Challenge in Africa**

The idea of multilateral cooperation strategies exist in Africa as portrayed by the pan-African information and intelligence sharing cooperation which was conceived early in 1992 with a concern of growing radicalization and extremism in the region (Kalinaki, 2014). A comprehensive cooperation has not yet been reached, although, to stop the surge in terrorist activity, there has been a need to cooperate in the sharing and collection of intelligence. Nevertheless, several cooperative organizations on sharing intelligence and information in sub-regions have been formulated on 'generic' or 'loose' agreements. These include the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), in the year 2002, under the plan of action of the AU high level intergovernmental meeting on prevention and combating of terrorism. The Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISCA) was established in the year 2005. This is a loose cooperation body. The CISCA officials from the most intelligence services in Africa meet regularly. The AU established an informal intelligence structure, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) for observation and monitoring of conflict hotspots in the continent. Most of the other 'informal cooperation in information and intelligence sharing in Africa, are structures that involve mutual police or defence cooperation. Mostly under bilateral agreements such as those between Burkina Faso and Mali (2004), Cote d'Ivoire and Mali (2000), Mali and Guinea (2005) and Benin and Nigeria (2005). Others include the EAC Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EACPCCO), the South Africa Region Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO) and the West Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (WAPCCO) with a more similar objective of sharing information and intelligence.

Cline (2016) notes that neither the Sahel nor North Africa security mechanisms have proven any particular value for security cooperation, despite the existence of several de-factor security and intelligence exchange frameworks. Additionally, there are localized multilateral information and intelligence systems that have been established or at least discussed. The Lake Chad Basin created a Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit (RIFU) with an agreement in 2013, while the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) established a Centre for gathering and analysing information and intelligence in 2011. It comprises eleven states that participate in the centre with each providing three representatives.

In contrast to defence diplomacy's underpinning defence and security cooperation aspects that create mutual trust between states, North-South defence diplomacy, particularly between Europe and Africa, happens against the background of international hierarchy of power depiction, although not anarchy (Barkawi 2011). An issue is conducted between equivalent sovereign states in the context of representation distinction involving various forms of transborder regulations. The response to 2013 Mali's political crisis comes to the fore. The geopolitical context of neo-liberal post-Cold War world's ideological capitalist order, and in a show of power to subjugate African Union (AU) and with hidden national interest in Mali, France – a Veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and a Chair of peacekeeping missions since 1997, took responsibility to restore peace and security in Mali (Chafer 2016; Oditi, 2022).

The AU's Peace and Security Commission (PSC) established the APSA's five mechanisms for security (AU, 2002). These include the Standby Forces of ECOWAS, the Eastern Africa, - EASF, the South Africa Development Cooperation (SADC), the Central Africa and for the North Africa (AU, 2013). The three ECOWAS, EASF and SADC standby force are presumed functional. However, their 'functionalities' result with ad hoc organization of forces to respond to crises despite existing architecture stipulations. Challenges of funding are commonly cited however little is known of the hidden interests of Western world in their dysfunctionalities (Oditi, 2022).

## Literature's Study Gap

Drab (2018) observes that in practice, defence diplomacy drives many roles and tasks of a state into achieving the necessary foreign relations goals encapsulated in the national interests particularly grounded in matters of defence and security. The snippet literature review, portrays an emerging trend in most regions of the globe in which security threats are addressed on the platform of defence foreign relations and conducted on the basis of foreign defence and security policy. The North-South defence diplomacy is found to be hierarchical and characterised on African dependency to the West, thus weakening mutual relations establishment between African member states in the existing cooperation arrangements.

The African Union's Peace and Security Commission (PSC) was formulated with a view of fostering the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP). But, direct bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the basis of defence diplomacy within the existing mechanism for security seems to be in discord for meaningful mutual relations to achieve the desired peace and security in the region. Furthermore, there is no clear literature on the efficacy of defence diplomacy multilateral cooperation strategies utilization in fostering mutual interstate relations in Africa (Ngari, 2024).

## Theoretical Literature

This study is anchored on the theory of peace as postulated by Johan Galtung (Galtung, 1969) and later exemplified by the Peace Research Institute, Oslo (Peace Research, 1998). The Peace Research Institute argues that the concept of peace is found in all thematic layers concerning concepts of power, security, strategy and national interest. Where power is viewed as influence manifested between states through persuasion, inducement, coercion, force or authority, while strategy is a plan of action in order to attain a goal, and security refers to physical protection against certain threats. Conversely, no scheme of security, for instance, militarization or war, can be considered a necessity to guarantee peace, but only peaceful pragmatic actions can promise peace. It is in these pragmatic actions necessary to generate conducive peace, that the study underpins the examination of the eight strategies of defence diplomacy of a state's institution.



However, national interest conjures benefits to the state. Thus, peace in itself should conjure peace-proactiveness that produces a common basis between states to realize harmonious aspects of purpose for deeper ties (Galtung 1969). Galtung's theory of peace is postulated in three lenses, including as an *agreed social goal*, as a *social goal that is complex and difficult* although not unbearable to achieve, and that it can be termed as *absence of violence* (Ibid).

In this respect defence diplomacy approaches to promote mutual trust between states can be pegged in the multilateral cooperation memorandum of understandings and agreements between states or institutions of states. In which states or institutions of states collaborate in certain aspects with a view to fostering peace and security. Some cooperation aspects are costly or hard to manage, but the sovereign has to bear the cost of the importance of national interest, particularly concerning fostering state safety and security for its perpetual existence.

Between and within African states, peace is yet to get into the right vessels within which it can sail inbound or outbound the state. Hence, African states need to contextualise defence diplomacy cooperation strategies as peaceful and pragmatic actions of cooperation between states that can promise peace.

Despite peace being a contested idea, Galtung (1967, p193), postulated several theories of peace based on significant conditions conducive to peace. These appropriate conditions for peace include symmetry, homology, symbiosis, entropy and institution building. Where symmetry refers to equality between states, taking cognisance of the fact that all states are sovereign in an anarchic international system. Moreover, some approaches to foster peace and security demand cooperation in certain aspects particularly in defence diplomacy and not coercive force or persuasion (use of sanctions).

Homology means some level of structural similarity between states, for instance, culture, shared history or origin, people, governance system or corporate institutions. In this respect, the study underpins the fact that the African states have commonalities in terms of origin, people, governance and ideology, culture and norms. Symbiosis refers to cooperation between two or more actors that are dependent on one another in certain aspects. The African philosophy of "*African solutions, to African problems*" is exemplified through the African state's symbiotic nature, social-economic through common markets, the utility of Sea-ports (as many are landlocked states), and regional mechanisms for security. Entropy means interactions and relations between states and people should exist at all levels, for instance, government and institutions.

Between the African states the conditions conducive for peace exist at different level for a pragmatic realization of peace between them. It is based on these aspects that the study seeks to ground the theory of peace as its tool of analysis in the examination of defence diplomacy cooperation strategies between African states through their institutions that could foster peace.

## METHODOLOGY

The study's methodological approach is underpinned by various techniques and procedures for identifying, collecting, analysing and interpreting data.

### Research design

The study applied a qualitative research design that underpins a pragmatic approach to research. It further enables to ground methodological approach that works best to achieve the desired conclusions to the research problem being investigated (Kaushik & Walsh 2019). In this respect the study generated qualitative data that enabled to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Qualitative data is not easily translatable numerically since it comprises opinions, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions (Mugenda, 2019). This demands a robust and rigorous analysis undertaking.

### Study Site

The study was conducted in Kenya, with a key focus on defence and security institutions that included Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), in particular, these included the Ministry of Defence, Ministry

of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), National Intelligence Service (NIS), National Police Service (NPS) and Department of Immigration (DoI). However, to ensure the heterogeneity, validity and reliability of the data for the purpose of generalization of results in the African context, more data was collected from the sub-regional mechanisms for security member states. From the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) Standby Force, Nigeria and Ghana were considered due to the English language, from the South African Economic Community Development (SADC) Standby Force security mechanism Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania were considered, and from Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi were considered.

### Target Population

The target population were adults, from the Kenyan MDAs and as well as from the three sub-regional security mechanisms. Individuals with requisite education levels, i.e., a basic degree and above, and had served for over twenty years, while they were either working in leadership position or had worked in a leadership position were targeted irrespective of gender.

### Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study applied the Cochran Formula to determine the appropriate sample size (Bartlett, *et. al.*, 2001). For an unknown population size, the formula is  $n_0 = \{z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)\} / e^2$ . Where the intended margin of error is represented by 'e'; 'p' is the percentage of the population that possesses the trait; and z is the z-value that was taken from the Cochran z-tables,  $z = 1.96$ . To mitigate the challenge of the study in determining the actual populations of the MDAs in order to calculate the sample size, the study took into account that 50% of the population in the organization was targeted, which offered the greatest degree of variability. The margin of error was then calculated using a 95% confidence level, which resulted in a  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error. According to the Cochran's z-Tables, z has a value of 1.96. Consequently, it was determined that the theoretical sample size was  $n_0 = \{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)\} / 0.05^2 = 385$ .

Further, the study employed the purposeful sampling technique to specifically target decision-making persons who possessed the necessary information, competence, and experience related to the research in the MDAs identified, while a similar approach was employed for the sub-regional security mechanism (Sub-RSM).

### Data Collection Tools

The study gathered both primary and secondary data using open and closed ended questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII). The secondary data was acquired from the libraries and e-resources. In addition, the study conducted a focus group discussion (FGD) and conducted sixteen KIIs, while ensuring gender parity. The response rate on the questionnaires was 240 respondents or 62.3%, which was considered significant enough for the study

### Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity of the data collected the study certified the research tools were well formulated to capture information with respect to the objective of the study. The reliability of the research tools was ensured by pilot-testing which was conducted in the Ministry of Interior. The analysis of the pilot-testing collected data enabled to carry out some corrections and adjustments of the research tools. Further, the data collected by the research tools was triangulated.

### Study Limitation

The major challenge to the study was determining the actual target population in institutions of defence or security due to the governance bureaucratic code of classification of information in Kenya and in the sub-regional security mechanism. Likewise, the study had to focus on key informants in the sub-regional mechanisms for security, particularly those that worked in the headquarters.

## Data Analysis

The quantitative or non-numerical data was acquired through various collection methods including interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions. In order to make meaning of concepts, opinions or experiences the data was organized by means of transcribing (audio), verbatim (field notes) and some in narrative (accounts of FGD) format. It was further reviewed and explored to determine patterns or repeated emerging ideas. The data was then categorized on identified codes. Each participant's responses were tagged with codes. Recurring themes were identified and coded together into a cohesive, overarching theme with respect to each defence cooperation strategy being examined. Additionally, the questionnaire data based on the Likert scale was analyzed using the Microsoft excel application.

## RESULTS

The study explored eight defence diplomacy cooperation strategies with the capacity to strengthen mutual trust in shaping FDSP for deeper cooperation between African states, and hence create a peaceful and secure environment.

The questionnaire responses captured Likert scale weights on open and closed ended questions and a contingent response that captured the opinions, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of the respondent. To analyse the Likert scale weights responses for the study considered that they were basically ordered categorical data (i.e., ordinal) since they convey size, order, rank or sequence. In which case the responses to defence diplomacy cooperation strategies on figure-1 were viewed in terms of lowest significant to highest significance with respect to encouraging bilateral or multilateral cooperation between states in Africa (i.e., Likert scale 1 = lowest, Likert scale 2= Low, Likert scale 3= High and Likert scale 4 = highest significant). The Likert scale here was used as a tool for measuring qualitative data to represent facts and conventions about the responses to these parameters and thus enable the study to analyse their significant as well as rank them. The measure of each parameter, therefore is the measure of each numeral that is directly related to the type of scale.

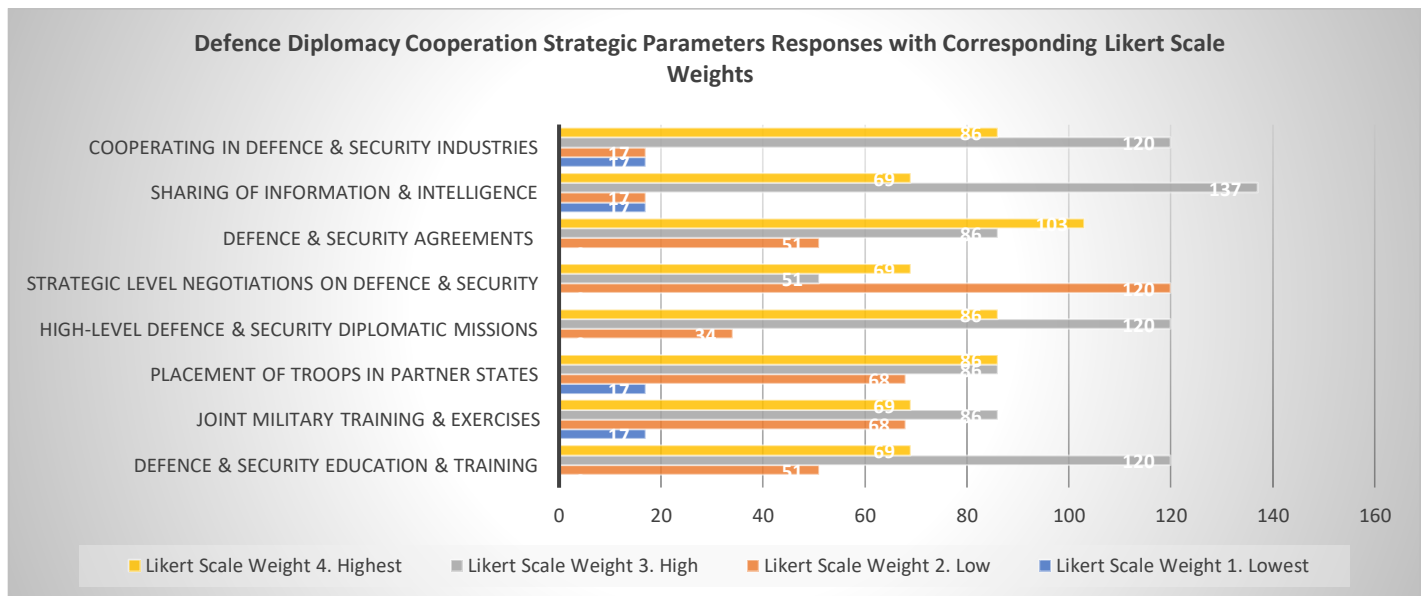


Figure. 1.

Source: Author 2023.

Combining the responses in the Likert scale 3 = High and 4 = Highest weights, and making it a percentage of responses, as shown in Figure. 1. Hence the study reveals that defence diplomacy cooperation strategies of collaboration in defence and security in industries, sharing of security information and intelligence, and conducting high level defence and security diplomatic missions were at 85.83% of responses. Thus, revealing that the strategies have high to highest significant levels to shape the foreign defence and security policy (FDSP) of the state to cause multilateral cooperation. These are followed by bi- and multi-lateral defence and

security cooperation agreements and defence and security education and training at 78.75% of responses. This reveals second level ranking in the significance of the parameters with respect to the deepening of mutual trust among states in Africa. The cooperation strategic strategy on the placement of defence troops into partner states' defence forces or ministries was found to be at 71.67% response, while joint military training and exercising together was found to be at 64.58% and defence and strategic level negotiations on a security issue were found to be at 50% response which also were found to have above average or at average in shaping state cooperation a state to cause bi- or multi-lateral defence diplomacy cooperation.

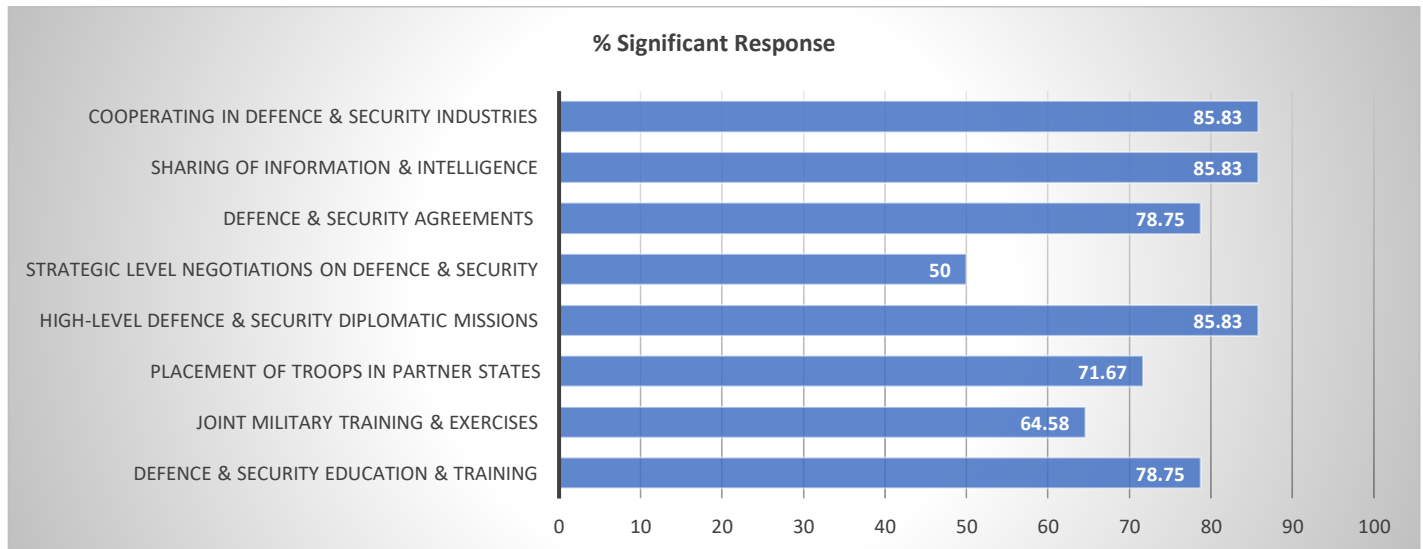


Figure. 2.

Source: Author 2023.

The focus group discussion (FGD) highlighted the positive impact that industrial cooperation could bring to African states. Notwithstanding, the East African Community (EAC) was found to have shelved the idea of industrial collaboration in the early 2000s. The positive impact view was in consonance with the Military Africa Report (2023), which noted that in the promotion of peace and security in Africa, one of the major cooperation challenges was due to a lack of financial capacity and infrastructure to support defence and security cooperation initiatives. However, the Key Informants' Interview (KII) and FGD had a positive view, which was similar to those derived from the questionnaire's Likert scale analysis and could address cooperation challenges as viewed by the Military African Report.

The defence diplomacy cooperation strategies of collaboration in defence and security in industries, sharing of security information and intelligence, and conducting high level defence and security diplomatic missions were perceived as could be initiated at a fundamental base of national level. The FGD established that African states could institute exchange programmes of engineers, intelligence officers and defence liaison officers to collaborating partner countries particularly in sub-regional mechanisms for security. This kind of exchange was collaborated by KII excerpts as follows:

On the defence diplomacy cooperation strategy in collaborating in defence and security industrial capacities, a KII had the following response: -

"It was the high time African states collaborated in their developing industrial capacity together particularly in defence and security. This will not be rediscovering the wheel as it has been realized in Western (Europe) countries for quite some time now. This can start by inviting young engineering officers to specialize their skills in Kenya's defence technical colleges in the Army, Air Force and Navy. This way a pool of skilled security officers will be created for future collaborations in security industries". (KI labelled LG-MoD).

On the defence diplomacy cooperation strategy for sharing security information and intelligence, another KII had the following response: -



“The defence and security institutions are best suited to cooperate in sharing information and intelligence at strategic level, while at operational and tactical levels institutions could collaborate in exchange of students, lecturers and liaison officers. This way’ states would be in a position to deal with common security challenges like human trafficking, terror threats, cross border smuggling and illicit trade. Also, it is a way of confidence building between states (*KI labelled SM-MFA*).

While another KII had the following response on defence diplomacy strategy on strategic level defence and security negotiations on a particular issue: -

“At the strategic level, defence and security negotiations are conducted between states with an aim of realizing a peaceful and secure region through sharing of security information and intelligence. However, it is paramount for small tactical or operational teams formulated from partner states to carry out information collection and analysis for the collaborating states. This enables to have a common stand to address a security issue of concern, for example, terrorism threat” (*KI labelled TN-NIS*).

The study established the security protocol of the East African Community (EAC) and made it possible to create a venue for the periodic annual meetings of the Directors of Military Intelligence (DMIs) from each member state. It was further revealed that, the meetings share intelligence and information at a strategic level on relevant security concerns impacting the sub-region. The conduct of high-level defence and security diplomatic missions is embedded in the realm of fostering mutual trust to ensure peace and security between states. Additionally, the discussants in FGD were of the view that African states should pursue high-level defence and security diplomatic missions to seek deeper and meaningful collaboration between African Union (AU) member states to address dependency on powerful foreign agency penetration into peace and security issues. The discussants noted that the AU policies on the war on terror in Africa were mostly influenced by the interests of external powers (especially the Western powers).

With respect to the second type of defence diplomacy cooperation parameters that included the bi- and multi-lateral defence and security cooperation agreements and collaboration in defence and security education and training, the KII and FGD were also in tandem with findings from the analysis of questionnaires Likert scale scores, as depicted by the following excerpts:

“Although not actively pursued, defence diplomacy was inadvertently employed through multilateral cooperation of states in Africa, for instance, the development of sub-regional mechanisms for security was a result of relationships between African Union member nations. Most of the sub-regional mechanisms for security lack a clear hegemon or obvious aspirant which may be the reason why they have been dormant since inception. Hegemons help to stir issues for cooperation to foster peace and security between the member states like Nigeria does in ECOWAS, and to an extent South Africa in SADC, in responding to crises in their member states. The rest, like the East Africa Standby Force (EASF), are dependent on external influences and support as seen in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan crisis” (*KII labelled IJ - MFA*).

However, in the FGD, the discussant noted that the member nations of the ECOWAS, the SADC, and the East African Community (EAC) had coordinated professional military training that enhanced cooperation among them despite the collaborations being bilateral. Most African countries depend on donors to sponsor their security personnel training by external powers like the US, France or China. Some African states like Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and South Africa had developed defence and security training institutions that could be the basis for multilateral collaboration in education and training within the sub-region. Training together of security juniors and senior officers would contribute to building mutual trust between security institutions and, to an extent, the states, which tend to ease the burden of conflict resolution. The Mbingo Island dispute between Kenya and Uganda was a case example (Christopher, 2017). The emerging dispute was “silently” resolved by the Chiefs of Defence Forces of the two states where one was a student of the other.

With respect to the placement of security forces to partner states, i.e., for crisis intervention, liaison or any other security related aspect, the KII from Rwanda, Uganda, and Malawi had a common observation; first, they were in agreement that the strategy was key to promotion of peace and security in a region, but they cited cases of simmering conflicts between some Africa states due to border disputes that could be detrimental to

achieving this parameter. In addition, the FGD noted that national defence policies in Africa were pursued with the aim of promoting regional peace and security despite squabbles between some African states. The placement of troops or security personnel was found to enhance liaison in response to matters of security as well as confidence building between states.

The key informants and discussants (FGD) had low opinion of cooperation strategy parameters of Joint Military Operations, Exercises and Training, and Defence and Strategic Level Negotiations on a Security Issue Area which was in tandem with low rating by Likert scale. This was underpinned by the following excerpts.

A lecturer from Joint Command and Staff College (JCSC) in Kenya responded that;

“Most African nations were not keen in conducting joint defence forces training and exercises in military operations, despite its capacity to foster mutual trust” (KI labelled MM).

A practitioner from National Intelligence Service responded that;

“There were two key redundant aspects to these cooperation parameters, these were brought on by a lack of confidence among the security regimes of member states, and the other was due to shortage of funds to finance the operations and initiatives. The key example is lack of EASF to respond to crisis in Sudan or South Sudan and SADC late response to Mozambique crisis” (KI labelled LB).

The FGD noted that these strategies were not fully embraced in Africa despite establishment of sub-regional mechanisms for security” (FGD).

## DISCUSSIONS

The United Nations (UN) new agenda for peace reminds states that international partnerships and cooperation do not require them to forego their national interests but encourage them to recognise that they have shared strategies necessary to foster peace and security (Kings & Mathews, 2012). In this respect, it portrays that the advantage of cooperating in various strategies of defence diplomacy offers peaceful pragmatic actions that are likely to promote mutual trust between them. African states, as members of AU and in the framework of APSA’s sub-regional mechanism for security, already have laid-out platforms for interstate negotiations to formulate memorandum of understandings (MOUs) and agreements of partnerships and collaboration in various defence strategies. Notwithstanding the African states’ level of development, the study’s findings on the eight strategies of defence diplomacy multilateral cooperation portray they have the capacity to build mutual trust amongst the African states.

### Cooperating in defence and security industries

The literature shows that the strategic approach of defence diplomacy in collaborating between governments in the defence and security industries are peaceful actions that lead to improved interoperability, expertise, and understanding between defence and security agencies, thus capitalising on the symmetric nature of states. Further it infers the generation of benefits with respect to exchange of best practices, doctrine, standards and norms. It also establishes employment opportunities as depicted by European defence agency.

In Africa, industries are in their formative stages in most countries and it is considered the best fundamental base for collaboration. As observed, there are opportunities for establishing exchange programmes through agreements and memorandum of understanding for individuals and institutions. Thus, such collaboration pegged on theory of peace tenet of entropy entails exchange of engineer experts and lecturers, and student engineers and technicians between defence and security institutions.

Thus, establishing a pool of engineers with common skills, knowledge and understanding, for future collaboration in security industries. Notwithstanding, there is an appreciation of partner states citizens as well as learning the national cultures of partners. States defence and security industrial cooperation encapsulates the theory of peace. This is because of the power exuded between them in the established mutual and cordial

relations. Thus, creating a harmonious aspect of purpose for deeper ties that generate homology, symbiosis and atrophy as postulated by Galtung (1967).

### **Sharing of information and intelligence**

Regional security mechanisms in Africa were developed to play critical roles in tackling security concerns of the region, which include but are not limited to, terrorism, insurgency, and other intra-state conflicts (Total Military Insight, 2024). The collaborative frameworks are meant to ensure states efficient pooling of resources as well as the sharing of information and intelligence on emerging security threats. However, the security mechanisms are bedevilled with mistrust between partner states particularly on matters of security. Despite this view, the sharing of information and intelligence is a key defence diplomatic strategy that enhances the capacity to respond to crises that threaten regional peace and stability.

The EU region efforts on collaboration in security information and intelligence in whatever emerging threats are well articulated (Clen 2016). In contrast, literature reveals less attention is given to collaboration on matters of intelligence in Africa, despite conceiving the idea in back in 1992 (Kalinaki 2014).

Most African states' institutions of intelligence training are well developed to collaborate in conducting strategic and tactical training. For instance, the Kenyan institutions of national security, information and intelligence, such as the National Defence University – Kenya and National Intelligence Research University – Kenya (NIRU-K) should be seeking more collaboration in the region. Similarly, from other regional states. Such fundamental base investment will most effectively build capacities in regional states to collaborate through their security intelligence institutions while fostering peace.

### **Conduct of high-level defence and security diplomatic missions**

The data reveals a degree of notable significance acceptance that the conduct of high-level defence and security diplomatic missions is essential in fostering positive ties between states. Furthermore, given the goal of diplomatic missions is to seek mutual advantage through collaboration rather than competition, the evidence supports the theory of peace.

This defence diplomatic strategy is well articulated by China. According to Kenneth (2001), Chinese authorities employ high-level mission state visits as a means of coordinating defence projects and facilitating useful exchanges, including senior military officer training, arms sales, and ship visits. Similarly, African states with National Defence Colleges (NDC) like Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa, among others, normally have high-level delegation missions every year, leading participants to carry out study visits to various nations of Africa. Lectures and discussions emanating from these visits strengthen the international relations bond between the states. The delegation leadership and Participants acquire first-hand information on key areas of collaboration between their nations and the visited states on matters of defence and security.

### **Defence and security agreements**

Defence and security agreements or the Defence Cooperation Agreements (DCAs), are fundamentally established as long-term institutional frameworks for routine bilateral defence and security relations (Kinne, 2018). These may include issues in the field of coordinating defence policies, working groups and committees, joint military exercises, defence related research and development, materiel procurement, and training and education exchanges. DCAs have proliferated as a result of changes in the global security environment since the end of the Cold War. The primary goal is to modernise the security apparatus, respond to shared security concerns, and form security collaboration with like-minded countries. Despite the proliferation of DCAs they have not addressed the major issues necessary to overcome the dilemmas of state's mistrust and distribution of conflicts.

Well-orchestrated DCAs provide an aura of information about the trustworthiness of partners and the risks of asymmetric distribution of gains. This is what is lacking in Africa with respect to regional mechanisms for security, despite the observation that Africa has the least number of DCAs (Ibid). DCAs involve sensitive

national security issues such as access to classified information, defence policy coordination, and the sharing of sophisticated weapons and technologies. African states perceive this as intrusive and thus never build trust with one another.

Based on the sample forecasts, there is a desire to create DCAs in Africa on a foundation of trust that is likely to foster peace and security. This should occur at the individual and institutional levels of defence and security relations, such as missions, training and education, military exercises, and operations.

### **Defence and security education and training**

The study's result demonstrated the desire for professional training and education in defence and security within the context of defence diplomacy cooperation. Interaction between students and participants in educational institutions fosters a basic understanding of each in relation to the states to which they belong. Mutual respect is developed, as well as an appreciation of the culture, norms and standards of the various states. In the long run, it becomes apparent that the strategy can shape and foster collaboration between states to build mutual trust. Alongside these findings, a study conducted by the US Army Deputy Chief of Staff (ADCS) discovered that major tools of foreign policy and essential components of security cooperation are professional education and training in defence and security (Angela et al., 2018).

Professional training and education in varying combinations involves shaping defence and security officers' mindset through the aspects of socialisation. Thus, resulting into inculcation of values, attitudes and beliefs, and thus transfer of accepted knowledge, skills and competencies.

Additionally, education and training further shape the security leaders thought process and decision-making process by capacitating knowledge and skills in order to construct various alternatives within and between states. In the long-run the defence and security leaders are expected to understand the political, social and economic aspects that correlate with violence, if they are to manage it.

### **Placement of troops in partner states**

The study evidence points to the validity of the claim that locating military personnel to partner countries' security forces or in defence ministries as liaison staff or any other portfolio is a defence diplomacy strategic approach necessary to gestate mutual relations between states. In African region, this is underpinned by ASF's search for regional peace and security in which cooperation between subregional mechanisms for security would result in building mutual trust between partner states. However, it is still to be achieved to address the contemptuous view most African states have of each other. The case of EACRF withdrawal from Eastern DRC in 2024 as an African sub-regional block responding to threats to security barely a year after deployment portrays, the level of lack of understanding of this strategic approach.

On the contrary, this strategy has enabled the EU member states to build strong bonds of mutual trust between them. For instance, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) 'Peacebergs Tasks' conduct has established strong interdependence with respect to the use of security forces in partner states (Whitman, 2016). 'Peaceberg Tasks' often include, although not limited to the deployment of peacekeeping forces, internal security measures for election procedures, and the observation of disputed borders and peace accords. Nevertheless, this strategy has established strong interstate relations bonds in North America. A case at hand is the North American defence diplomacy initiatives, as expounded by the Canadian liaison programs (Canada-National Defence, 2013).

### **Joint military training and exercises**

The study reveals that the defence diplomacy strategy on joint military training and exercises between states is significant in cooperation and building mutual trust. The memorandum of understanding between various security institutions and state agreements reached in order to foster this strategy could help determine how state foreign and defence policies are implemented in Africa. Notwithstanding, the data also supports the strategy's inclination to multilateralism which resonates well with the high and highest rating. In this case, the



results portray that the strategy to an extent, is favourable in Africa grounded on theory of peace. Despite this view, it is revealed that the statist inclinations of most African states create strains and stresses for the strategy's full embracement. Key to this is the demand for intense planning material and financial resources.

New Zealand demystifies this strategic approach through the banner of "The Pacific Reset", with a view of outwitting China's soft power intrusion into the geopolitically contested region of the Pacific (Radi 2010). The New Zealand policy towards the Pacific region invested millions of dollars in military partnerships through joint military training and exercises (Lati, 2011). It hopes to validate its primary military justification for peace and stability by applying a defence diplomacy strategy of cooperation in joint training and exercises through incentives and influencing the Asian states to act constructively (Friz, 2018).

### **Strategic level negotiations in defence and security**

In the context of traditional national threats, defence and security cooperation was often interpreted as protecting the state from external physical threats. However, the contemporary international developments of security threats against the state have placed significance on non-traditional threats against the state.

Consistent with the findings of this study, another cooperative security study involving Indonesia and Singapore found that states aim to enhance their capacities to counter new threats by bolstering their defence and security endeavours through formalized security cooperation that shapes defence and security frameworks (Milia *et. al.*, 2018). Further, the research noted that not all security cooperation was successful, differences may emanate due to national interests if they are not well balanced in the cooperation agreements.

A pragmatic approach that supports this defence diplomacy strategy is the advancement of Morocco's foreign policy, which includes military cooperation and support for partner states like Saudi Arabia and the Arab League (Ahmed, 2017). Yemen's continued conflicts reflect Morocco's efforts at both bilateral and global military cooperation in the Middle East. Moreover, Morocco has agreements for defence cooperation with the US and Western Europe that cover a variety of areas, including technical support, joint exercises, multiservice training, and military officer training. Amity between military personnel and neighbourliness are two other facets of collaboration exemplified by theory of peace.

In contrast, the African Standby Force (ASF) and the corresponding sub-regional standby forces have major challenges in achieving effective cooperation levels. Most of the ASF's sub-regional security mechanisms are still in formative stages despite several multilateral negotiations under the African Union (AU) (Omar, 2005). The data provides evidence that suggests statist-oriented mistrust between the AU Member states prevails despite lack of financial resources to manage and sustain the liberal institutions established. In addition, the data revealed that the AU has the capacity to develop liberal institutions to serve as the member states binding agents, necessary to deepen inter-state relations. It could also be achieved through a comprehensive approach that tends to reduce political and military tensions, as advocated by the UK's Ministry of Defence (Goran, 2012).

## **CONCLUSION**

In the twenty-first century defence and security objectives are continuously focussing the FDSP efforts to manage complex security dynamics while minimizing risk. In an era of globalization events in one part of the world can have far-reaching consequences on other regions of the globe.

Institutions of defence and security in the globalized international system inevitably become part of the diplomatic toolkit to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation between states. The study's investigation concludes that defence diplomacy multilateral cooperation strategies are significant in fostering mutual trust and interstate relations between African states. However, if African states could embrace these defence diplomacy strategies, there is a likelihood of addressing the many bedevilling conflicts in the region as well as result in establishing a region that is peaceful and secure. The study in this respect further concludes that the defence diplomacy multilateral cooperation strategies, including partnering in security and defence sectors, sharing of information and intelligence, formulating agreements on bilateral or multilateral cooperation in

defence and security, conducting strategic level negotiations on security issues areas, conduct of diplomatic missions in defence and security, acceptance of partner states' troops, conduct joint military training, exercises and operations, and cooperating for professional training and education in defence and security institutions, are key in strengthening mutual trust and interstate relations if adopted by the African states.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that: (1), the study's identified defence diplomacy cooperation strategies need only African states mutual agreement to cooperate by use of defence and security institutions. For instance, the cooperation strategy in conducting joint military training, exercises and operations, or in cooperating for professional training and education in defence and security institutions. In this respect, people to people understandings would establish the necessary mutual relations between states ultimately; (2), embracing these defence diplomacy strategies should be viewed as the basis of retracing the lost step of African-hood whose wedge was driven by the imperialists' scramble for Africa, and continues to be manifested in neo-capitalist ideologies; (3), embracing these defence diplomacy cooperation strategies should be viewed as the basis from which African resources both human and natural could be utilised for the benefit of Africans and development of Africa; (4), the AU should foster states to depend on themselves or between themselves rather than the continued dependency on the West for cooperation between its member states.

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