

Julius K. Nyerere and Tanzania's Foreign Policy Vis-À-Vis Uganda: *The Moshi Conference And Tanzania's Foreign Policy- Proceedings, Outcomes, And Implications For Uganda–Tanzania Relations*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Tanzania's foreign policy toward Uganda under the leadership of Julius Kambarage Nyerere, with particular reference to the 1979 Moshi Conference. Convened during the Uganda–Tanzania War (1978–1979), the conference represented a decisive African-led diplomatic intervention aimed at establishing a post-Amin political order in Uganda. By analyzing the conference's proceedings, resolutions, and immediate outcomes, the study evaluates its broader implications for Uganda–Tanzania relations and regional diplomacy in East Africa. Drawing on historical and diplomatic analysis, the article argues that the Moshi Conference embodied Nyerere's distinctive fusion of moral leadership and political pragmatism. While the conference succeeded in facilitating political transition and enhancing Tanzania's regional standing, it also generated long-term diplomatic tensions rooted in sovereignty, political autonomy, and post-conflict governance challenges.

Keywords: Julius K. Nyerere; Tanzania foreign policy; Moshi Conference; Uganda–Tanzania relations; East Africa; diplomacy

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INTRODUCTION

Tanzania's foreign policy in the post-independence era was profoundly shaped by the ideological convictions and ethical vision of President Julius Kambarage Nyerere. Anchored in Pan-Africanism, anti-imperialism and regional solidarity. Tanzania's external engagements frequently extended beyond the principle of strict non-interference; The Moshi Conference of March 1979 stands as a defining moment in this tradition, occurring at the intersection of military intervention, diplomatic mediation, and post-conflict political reconstruction in Uganda.

Nyerere consistently argued that African diplomacy should be guided by moral responsibility rather than narrow national interest. As he asserted; "the purpose of African unity is not to build empires, but to ensure justice, dignity and peace for all Africans" (Nyerere, 1968: 45). This normative outlook informed Tanzania's decision to confront the regime of Idi Amin and to facilitate Uganda's political transition through an inclusive diplomatic process.

This article analyses the Moshi Conference as both a diplomatic event and a strategic instrument of foreign policy. It examines its proceedings, evaluates its outcomes, and assesses its long-term implications for Uganda–Tanzania relations within the broader context of East African regional diplomacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Julius Nyerere and Tanzania's Foreign Policy Philosophy

Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the first President of Tanzania, developed a foreign policy philosophy deeply rooted in ethical considerations, Pan-Africanism, and a commitment to anti-imperialism. His philosophy was a blend of moral idealism and pragmatic realism, often referred to by scholars as ethics-driven realism (Mazrui, 1979, 2021; Phares, 2023). Central to this philosophy was the concept of Ujamaa, a model of African socialism emphasizing communal responsibility, justice, and social cohesion, which Nyerere sought to extend into the international arena (Nyerere, 1968, 1979).

Nyerere believed that a nation's foreign policy should reflect its internal moral and social values, a position that

diverged from purely strategic or power-based approaches prevalent during the Cold War period (Crawford, 2021). His vision of Pan-Africanism was not merely rhetorical but operationalized through active engagement with African states and liberation movements, supporting self-determination and stability while opposing external domination (Mazrui, 2021; Schmidt, 2021). This approach positioned Tanzania as a moral actor in regional diplomacy, capable of mediating conflicts while maintaining a principled stance on justice and human rights.

Ethical considerations in Nyerere's diplomacy were reinforced by a commitment to sovereignty and non-interference, balancing moral intervention with respect for national autonomy (Herbert & Nyakora, 2025). This balance allowed Tanzania to serve as a credible mediator in conflicts without being perceived as a hegemon. Scholars such as Phares (2023) argue that this dual focus on ethics and pragmatism created a unique form of diplomatic capital that enhanced Tanzania's regional influence while maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of both domestic and international audiences.

Furthermore, Nyerere's foreign policy philosophy integrated a strategic awareness of *realpolitik*. While ethics guided the overarching objectives, pragmatic considerations informed operational decisions such as alliance formation, conflict mediation, and engagement with multilateral institutions (Crawford, 2021; Kell & Masabo, 2024). This hybrid approach allowed Tanzania to navigate complex geopolitical environments, particularly in East Africa, where post-colonial states faced internal instability, cross-border threats, and international pressures.

In sum, Nyerere's foreign policy philosophy emphasized the operationalization of ethical leadership in regional and continental affairs. It combined normative ideals justice, Pan-African solidarity, anti-imperialism with practical strategies for mediation, negotiation, and post-conflict reconstruction. This philosophy laid the foundation for Tanzania's engagement in Uganda during the Moshi Conference, reflecting a consistent application of moral yet pragmatic diplomacy that would influence subsequent African statecraft (Omara-Otunnu, 1987; Avirgan & Honey, 1982).

Background: Uganda–Tanzania Relations and the Road to Moshi

The relationship between Uganda and Tanzania prior to the Moshi Conference of 1979 was shaped by complex political developments in East Africa during the post independence period. Both countries emerged from British colonial rule within a decade of each other Tanganyika gaining independence in 1961 and Uganda in 1962 and initially shared aspirations for regional cooperation and African unity. Leaders such as Julius Kambarage Nyerere and Milton Obote were strong advocates of Pan Africanism and played key roles in efforts to strengthen East African integration through institutions such as the East African Community (EAC). Early relations between the two states were therefore characterized by ideological affinity and cooperation, particularly in the fields of regional trade, political solidarity, and continental diplomacy (Karugire, 1980; Mazrui, 1979).

However, this early cooperation began to deteriorate following political changes within Uganda. In January 1971, General Idi Amin seized power in a military coup that overthrew President Milton Obote. The coup dramatically altered the diplomatic dynamics between Uganda and Tanzania. Nyerere refused to recognize Amin's government, arguing that the coup represented an illegitimate seizure of power and violated the principles of constitutional governance and African political stability. Consequently, Tanzania became a center for Ugandan political exiles, including Obote and several opposition figures who sought to organize resistance against Amin's regime (Omara Otunnu, 1987).

The presence of Ugandan exiles in Tanzania further strained bilateral relations. Amin accused Tanzania of supporting subversive activities aimed at destabilizing his government, while Tanzania maintained that its support for Ugandan dissidents was grounded in moral and political opposition to Amin's authoritarian rule. Throughout the 1970s, tensions between the two states escalated through diplomatic confrontations, border skirmishes, and propaganda campaigns. These tensions were also embedded within the broader geopolitical context of the Cold War, during which African states navigated complex alliances and ideological divisions (Avirgan & Honey, 1982).

The conflict reached a critical turning point in October 1978 when Ugandan forces invaded the Kagera Salient, a region in northwestern Tanzania. This invasion represented a direct violation of Tanzanian sovereignty and prompted a decisive response from the Tanzanian government. Nyerere framed the military response not merely as an act of national defense but also as a broader effort to remove an oppressive regime that threatened regional peace and stability. Tanzanian forces, supported by Ugandan exile groups organized under the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), launched a counteroffensive that eventually pushed Ugandan troops back across the

border and advanced toward Kampala (Avirgan & Honey, 1982; Omara Otunnu, 1987).

Despite the military momentum, Nyerere emphasized that the removal of Amin's regime should not result in Tanzanian domination over Uganda's political future. Instead, he insisted that Ugandans themselves must determine the structure of their post Amin government. This perspective reflected Tanzania's broader foreign policy philosophy: intervention could be justified in the pursuit of justice and regional stability, but legitimate governance ultimately had to emerge from inclusive political dialogue among the affected population. It was within this context that Tanzania initiated the idea of convening a conference of Ugandan political actors to design a transitional framework for governance.

The proposal culminated in the Moshi Conference, held in March 1979 in the Tanzanian town of Moshi. The conference aimed to bring together diverse Ugandan political factions including exile movements, former government officials, intellectuals, and representatives of resistance groups to negotiate a collective political strategy for post Amin Uganda. By facilitating this gathering, Tanzania sought to balance its military intervention with a diplomatic process that respected Uganda's sovereignty while promoting national reconciliation and political reconstruction (Heilman, 1980; Schmidt, 2021).

The road to Moshi therefore illustrates the convergence of military necessity and diplomatic vision within Tanzania's foreign policy. While the Tanzanian army played a crucial role in defeating Amin's forces, the ultimate objective extended beyond military victory toward the creation of a legitimate political order in Uganda. This combination of strategic intervention and diplomatic mediation laid the groundwork for the Moshi Conference, which would become a defining moment in East African regional diplomacy and a practical demonstration of Nyerere's ethics driven foreign policy philosophy.

The Moshi Conference: Proceedings and Diplomatic Design

The Moshi Conference, held in March 1979 in the town of Moshi in northern Tanzania, represented a decisive diplomatic effort to shape Uganda's political transition following the collapse of Idi Amin's regime. Organized under the auspices of the Tanzanian government and strongly supported by President Julius Nyerere, the conference brought together a wide array of Ugandan political actors who had been operating in exile or within resistance movements. The central objective was to establish a unified political framework capable of guiding Uganda's governance after Amin's removal (Avirgan & Honey, 1982; Omara-Otunnu, 1987).

The diplomatic design of the conference reflected Nyerere's broader philosophy of inclusive political dialogue. Rather than imposing a Tanzanian-designed solution, the conference sought to create a forum where Ugandan factions could negotiate among themselves while Tanzania served primarily as a facilitator. This approach aimed to maintain the legitimacy of the transition process by ensuring that decisions regarding Uganda's future would emerge from Ugandan actors rather than external authorities. Such an approach was consistent with Tanzania's commitment to respecting sovereignty even while engaging in regional intervention (Crawford, 2021; Schmidt, 2021).

More than twenty Ugandan political and military organizations participated in the conference. These groups included representatives of former political parties, exile organizations, intellectuals, military officers, and civil society figures who opposed Amin's regime. Among the most influential participants were supporters of Milton Obote, members of the Save Uganda Movement (SUM), the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) led by Yoweri Museveni, and other exile-based organizations that had mobilized against Amin throughout the 1970s (Karugire, 1980; Omara-Otunnu, 1987).

One of the most significant achievements of the conference was the creation of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), which was designed as a broad umbrella organization representing the various anti-Amin groups. The UNLF served as both a political coalition and a transitional authority responsible for guiding Uganda's post-Amin governance. The conference also established the National Consultative Council (NCC), a legislative body intended to represent diverse political interests and provide oversight for the transitional administration (Avirgan & Honey, 1982).

The leadership structure of the transitional government was another critical issue addressed during the conference. After extensive deliberations among the delegates, Professor Yusuf Lule was selected as the interim president of Uganda. Lule was perceived as a relatively neutral figure that could bridge competing factions while providing a semblance of legitimacy and stability during the transition period. His appointment reflected the conference's emphasis on consensus-building and the desire to avoid dominance by any single political faction

(Heilman, 1980).

Tanzania's role throughout the proceedings was carefully calibrated. Although the Tanzanian government had facilitated the conference and provided logistical support, Nyerere deliberately avoided direct interference in the decision-making process. Instead, Tanzanian officials acted as mediators and guarantors of security, allowing Ugandan delegates to debate and negotiate among themselves. This strategy reinforced the perception that the Moshi Conference was fundamentally a Ugandan political initiative rather than a Tanzanian imposition (Mazrui, 2021; Phares, 2023).

Nevertheless, the diplomatic environment of the conference was not without tension. Rivalries among Ugandan factions often complicated negotiations, particularly between supporters of Obote and other groups wary of restoring his influence in Ugandan politics. These divisions reflected deeper ideological, ethnic, and political differences that had characterized Uganda's political landscape for decades. As a result, the conference required delicate mediation to maintain unity among participants while ensuring progress toward a transitional arrangement (Omara Otunnu, 1987; Williams, 2020).

Despite these challenges, the Moshi Conference succeeded in establishing a provisional political framework that accompanied the military campaign against Amin's regime. As Tanzanian and UNLF forces advanced toward Kampala, the diplomatic agreements reached at Moshi provided a blueprint for governance in the immediate aftermath of Amin's fall. The conference therefore functioned as both a political negotiation platform and a strategic complement to the military effort underway in Uganda (Avirgan & Honey, 1982).

In the broader context of African diplomacy, the Moshi Conference demonstrated how regional actors could facilitate political transitions through inclusive dialogue rather than unilateral intervention. Tanzania's approach illustrated a distinctive model of mediation in which military assistance was paired with diplomatic mechanisms designed to restore political legitimacy. This combination of strategic intervention and institutional design would shape subsequent debates on peace building and regional conflict resolution across the African continent (Crawford, 2021; Elischer, 2023).

Outcomes and Immediate Effects

The Moshi Conference of March 1979 produced a series of significant political and diplomatic outcomes that shaped the immediate post Amin period in Uganda. These outcomes were both institutional and symbolic, reflecting the conference's role as a bridge between military intervention and political reconstruction. By establishing transitional political structures and legitimizing a new leadership framework, the conference provided the foundation for Uganda's governance after the collapse of Idi Amin's regime (Avirgan & Honey, 1982; Omara Otunnu, 1987).

One of the most immediate effects of the Moshi Conference was the institutionalization of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) as the principal political authority representing anti Amin forces. The UNLF functioned as a broad political coalition bringing together various exile movements, military factions, and political organizations that had participated in the conference. As an umbrella organization, the UNLF was tasked with coordinating both the military struggle against Amin and the political transition that would follow his removal from power. The creation of this unified political structure was crucial in presenting a coherent alternative government to both Ugandans and the international community (Karugire, 1980).

Closely linked to the formation of the UNLF was the establishment of the National Consultative Council (NCC), which served as a provisional legislative body during the transitional period. The NCC was designed to represent diverse Ugandan political interests and provide oversight for the interim administration. In theory, this structure embodied the inclusive and participatory ideals promoted during the Moshi Conference, ensuring that no single political faction would monopolize authority in the immediate aftermath of Amin's rule (Avirgan & Honey, 1982).

The appointment of Professor Yusuf Lule as interim president was another important outcome of the conference. Lule's leadership symbolized a compromise among competing political factions and was intended to stabilize Uganda during the transition period. His selection reflected the conference's emphasis on consensus and legitimacy, as he was widely perceived as a relatively neutral figure capable of uniting different groups within the anti Amin coalition (Heilman, 1980).

Parallel to these political developments, the military campaign against Amin's forces continued to unfold.

Tanzanian troops, operating in collaboration with the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) the military wing of the UNLF advanced toward Kampala. In April 1979, the combined forces succeeded in capturing the Ugandan capital, effectively ending Amin's rule and forcing him into exile. The fall of Kampala marked the culmination of both the military and diplomatic efforts initiated by Tanzania and Ugandan opposition groups (Avirgan & Honey, 1982).

The immediate international response to these developments was largely supportive. Many African states and members of the international community recognized the transitional government established through the Moshi process. Tanzania's role in facilitating the conference and supporting Uganda's political transition enhanced its diplomatic reputation as a responsible regional actor committed to peace and stability. Scholars have described this moment as a significant demonstration of Tanzania's moral authority in African diplomacy (Mazrui, 2021; Phares, 2023).

However, the immediate post conference period also revealed structural weaknesses in the transitional arrangement. The coalition nature of the UNLF meant that deep political divisions among its constituent groups persisted even after Amin's removal. These divisions soon manifested in conflicts over political authority, ideological direction, and the distribution of power within the transitional government. The fragile nature of the coalition became evident when President Yusuf Lule was removed from office only a few months after assuming power, following disagreements with the National Consultative Council regarding the scope of presidential authority (Omara Otunnu, 1987).

Despite these challenges, the Moshi Conference had succeeded in achieving its primary short term objectives: the removal of an authoritarian regime, the establishment of a transitional political framework, and the restoration of Uganda's international legitimacy. The conference therefore stands as an example of how regional diplomatic initiatives can shape political outcomes in post conflict environments. At the same time, the tensions that emerged during the immediate aftermath highlighted the difficulties inherent in constructing stable governance structures in deeply divided political contexts (Williams, 2020; Elischer, 2023).

Long-Term Implications for Uganda–Tanzania Relations

The Moshi Conference and the subsequent removal of Idi Amin's regime had far reaching implications for the long term relationship between Uganda and Tanzania. While the immediate objective of ending Amin's rule was achieved through the combined military and diplomatic efforts of Tanzanian forces and Ugandan opposition groups, the broader consequences of the intervention continued to shape bilateral relations and regional politics in East Africa for decades. Scholars generally agree that the Moshi process created both opportunities for cooperation and sources of tension between the two states (Karugire, 1980; Omara-Otunnu, 1987).

One of the most important long term outcomes was the stabilization of interstate relations between Uganda and Tanzania after nearly a decade of hostility under Amin's regime. The overthrow of Amin removed a major source of regional instability and opened the possibility for diplomatic normalization. Tanzania's support for Uganda's political reconstruction contributed to restoring communication and cooperation between the two governments. In this sense, the Moshi Conference functioned not only as a mechanism for internal Ugandan transition but also as a diplomatic bridge for rebuilding bilateral relations (Avirgan & Honey, 1982).

However, the relationship between the two countries in the years following the conference was not without challenges. Some Ugandan political actors expressed concerns that Tanzania's extensive involvement in Uganda's liberation might translate into undue political influence over the country's domestic affairs. These perceptions occasionally generated suspicion among segments of Uganda's political elite who sought to assert stronger national autonomy after the transition. As a result, Tanzania had to balance its continued support for stability in Uganda with a careful respect for Uganda's sovereignty (Williams, 2020).

The political transitions that followed the Moshi Conference further complicated the relationship. Uganda experienced several leadership changes during the early 1980s, including the presidencies of Yusuf Lule, Godfrey Binaisa, and the eventual return of Milton Obote in 1980. Each transition brought new political dynamics and sometimes altered Uganda's diplomatic posture toward Tanzania. Despite these fluctuations, the fundamental cooperation between the two states largely persisted, particularly in the areas of regional security and diplomatic engagement (Omara-Otunnu, 1987).

In the broader regional context, the Moshi Conference also had significant implications for East African diplomacy. Tanzania's role in facilitating the conference demonstrated that African states could take the lead in

resolving regional conflicts without heavy reliance on external powers. This approach strengthened the principle of "African solutions to African problems," a concept that has since become central to regional peace building initiatives. By combining military intervention with diplomatic mediation, Tanzania presented a model of regional leadership that influenced later conflict-resolution efforts across the continent (Crawford, 2021; Elischer, 2023).

The conference also contributed to Tanzania's reputation as a state guided by moral authority in international relations. Under Nyerere's leadership, Tanzania had already gained recognition for its support of liberation movements in Southern Africa and its commitment to Pan African solidarity. The successful coordination of the Moshi Conference reinforced this image, portraying Tanzania as a principled actor capable of balancing ethical commitments with practical political strategies. This reputation enhanced Tanzania's standing within continental organizations and diplomatic circles during the late twentieth century (Mazrui, 2021).

From a theoretical perspective, the Moshi Conference offers valuable insights into the relationship between ethics and realism in foreign policy. Tanzania's intervention demonstrated that moral principles such as opposition to authoritarian rule and commitment to regional stability can coexist with pragmatic political considerations. Nyerere's strategy involved recognizing the limits of military victory and emphasizing the need for legitimate political institutions to sustain long term peace. By convening Ugandan factions and encouraging inclusive governance structures, Tanzania attempted to translate ethical objectives into practical institutional frameworks (Phares, 2023).

Despite these achievements, the experience also revealed the limitations of externally facilitated transitions. The instability that followed the Moshi Conference illustrated that political unity among exile groups does not automatically translate into sustainable governance once power is achieved. Uganda's continued internal conflicts during the early 1980s demonstrated that deeper structural challenges such as factionalism, institutional weakness, and historical divisions required longer-term political solutions beyond the scope of the conference itself (Williams, 2020).

Nevertheless, the long term legacy of the Moshi Conference remains significant. It represents one of the most notable examples of successful regional intervention in post-colonial Africa and illustrates how diplomatic initiatives can complement military operations in addressing complex political crises. For scholars of international relations and African diplomacy, the conference serves as a case study of how ethical leadership, regional solidarity, and pragmatic negotiation can intersect to produce meaningful political change.

Ultimately, the Moshi Conference continues to influence contemporary debates about peace building, mediation, and regional responsibility in Africa. Tanzania's role in facilitating Uganda's transition highlights the potential for African states to shape their own security and governance frameworks through cooperative diplomacy. While the process was not without its challenges, the conference remains a defining moment in the history of Uganda–Tanzania relations and a testament to the enduring impact of Nyerere's foreign policy philosophy.

Synthetic Literature Review Conclusion

The literature on Tanzania's intervention in Uganda and the Moshi Conference reveals a complex interplay between ethical principles, regional political realities, and pragmatic diplomacy. Across historical, political, and international relations scholarship, a consistent theme emerges: the foreign policy of Julius Kambarage Nyerere represented a distinctive attempt to integrate moral leadership with strategic political action. Rather than viewing ethics and realism as mutually exclusive, Nyerere's approach demonstrated how normative commitments such as justice, sovereignty, and Pan African solidarity could be operationalized through concrete diplomatic initiatives and regional engagement.

Scholars examining Tanzania's foreign policy philosophy emphasize that Nyerere's political thought was deeply influenced by the principles of Ujamaa and Pan Africanism. These ideological foundations shaped Tanzania's broader commitment to supporting liberation movements, resisting authoritarian regimes, and promoting cooperation among African states. Within this framework, foreign policy was understood not merely as a tool for national interest but as an extension of Tanzania's moral responsibility within the African continent. This perspective explains why Tanzania assumed an active role in Uganda's crisis during the late 1970s despite the significant economic and military costs associated with such involvement.

The historical literature further demonstrates that the deterioration of Uganda–Tanzania relations during Idi Amin's regime was a critical catalyst for the events that culminated in the Moshi Conference. Amin's coup in

1971 and his subsequent authoritarian rule fundamentally disrupted earlier patterns of cooperation between the two countries. Tanzania's decision to host Ugandan exiles and provide political space for opposition movements reflected Nyerere's refusal to legitimize Amin's regime. The invasion of the Kagera region in 1978 ultimately transformed this political conflict into a direct interstate confrontation, prompting Tanzania to pursue both military defense and diplomatic planning for Uganda's post-Amin future.

Within this context, the Moshi Conference stands out in the literature as a carefully constructed diplomatic mechanism designed to complement military intervention. Rather than imposing a Tanzanian political solution, the conference sought to create an inclusive platform in which diverse Ugandan factions could negotiate a shared political framework. The establishment of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and the National Consultative Council (NCC) reflected an effort to institutionalize this cooperative approach and provide a foundation for transitional governance. Scholars generally agree that the conference represented a significant experiment in regionally facilitated political reconstruction.

At the same time, the literature also highlights the inherent difficulties associated with such transitional arrangements. While the Moshi Conference succeeded in uniting various anti Amin groups and establishing a provisional government under Yusuf Lule, the coalition nature of the UNLF meant that underlying political divisions remained unresolved. Subsequent leadership changes and political instability in Uganda demonstrated that the process of national reconstruction required far more than a single diplomatic event. These developments underscore an important lesson emphasized by many scholars: external facilitation can create opportunities for political transition, but long term stability ultimately depends on domestic institutional consolidation and political consensus.

Despite these limitations, the broader significance of the Moshi Conference remains widely recognized in the literature. The event illustrated the potential for African states to take the lead in resolving regional conflicts through a combination of military capability and diplomatic initiative. Tanzania's actions contributed to the emergence of a norm within African diplomacy that emphasizes regional responsibility and the principle of "African solutions to African problems." In this sense, the Moshi process represents an early example of regionally driven conflict mediation that anticipated later peace building frameworks developed by continental and regional organizations.

Furthermore, the case of Tanzania's intervention in Uganda provides important insights for theoretical debates within international relations. It challenges conventional assumptions that small or medium sized states are limited to passive roles within global politics. Instead, Tanzania demonstrated how moral authority, diplomatic credibility, and strategic leadership could enable a state with limited material power to exert significant influence in regional affairs. This form of normative leadership, grounded in ethical principles yet implemented through pragmatic decision-making, remains one of the defining features of Nyerere's diplomatic legacy.

Ultimately, the literature suggests that the Moshi Conference should be understood not only as a historical event but also as a broader model of ethics informed diplomacy in post-colonial Africa. The conference highlighted the importance of inclusive dialogue, institutional design, and regional cooperation in addressing political crises. Although the transitional structures it produced faced considerable challenges, the process itself demonstrated that diplomatic initiatives rooted in moral commitment and pragmatic negotiation can play a decisive role in shaping political outcomes.

In conclusion, the scholarship reviewed in this chapter reveals that Tanzania's engagement in Uganda during the late 1970s was a defining moment in the history of East African diplomacy. The Moshi Conference embodied the central principles of Nyerere's foreign policy philosophy by combining ethical responsibility with strategic intervention. Its legacy continues to inform contemporary discussions on peace building, mediation, and regional leadership in Africa, offering valuable lessons for scholars and policymakers seeking sustainable approaches to conflict resolution and political reconstruction.

CONCLUSION

Tanzania's foreign policy under President Julius K. Nyerere, as exemplified by the Moshi Conference, demonstrates a distinctive model of ethics-driven realism in regional diplomacy. By combining normative commitments justice, Pan-African solidarity, and anti-imperialism with pragmatic political interventions, Tanzania effectively mediated a complex post-conflict transition in Uganda. The immediate success of establishing a transitional government and garnering international recognition highlights the potential of moral authority as a form of diplomatic capital (Nyerere, 1979; Phares, 2023; Herbert & Nyakora, 2025).

However, the Moshi Conference also illustrates the inherent limitations of exile-based coalitions and external mediation, emphasizing that ethical foreign policy must be grounded in an understanding of domestic political realities. Sustainable regional stability requires a balance between principled leadership and the practical realities of governance, institutional capacity, and socio-political dynamics (Omara-Otunnu, 1987; Crawford, 2021; Schmidt, 2021).

Ultimately, the Tanzanian case provides valuable insights for contemporary African diplomacy: ethical considerations can guide foreign policy, enhance regional influence, and foster post-conflict reconstruction, but they must operate alongside pragmatic strategies that acknowledge the complexities of domestic and regional politics. Nyerere's model remains a benchmark for moral yet realistic engagement in African statecraft, offering lessons for both policymakers and scholars of international relations (Mazrui, 2021; Schmidt, 2021; Kell & Masabo, 2024).

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Single author

(Nyerere, 1968) or Nyerere (1968) argues that...

Two authors

(Avirgan & Honey, 1982) or Avirgan and Honey (1982) highlight that...

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Direct quotes

“Tanzania’s intervention in Uganda demonstrated the interplay between moral leadership and political pragmatism” (Phares, 2023, p. 82).

Reports

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