INTERROGATING THE CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: FIFTY-NINE YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE, 1960-2019

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ABSTRACT

This paper interrogates the challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy, fifty-nine years after independence, 1960-2019. It took a historic excursion into Nigeria's foreign policy from 1960 when she gained political independence from Britain to date. It reveals that Nigeria's foreign policy over the years has been African-centered. Nigeria committed material and financial support among others to some African States, such as Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to liberate them from colonial rule and racism without deriving any benefits. Again, Nigeria had overwhelmingly provided humanitarian, and technical aid sent military support to intervene in the internal crisis of some African States, and spent billions of dollars as charity gestures done against domestic interests, with a majority of the citizenry benefiting but little from this gesture. Therefore, the Nigerians have not made the main focus of Nigeria's foreign policy. But in 1999, under the democratic rule of President Obasanjo, there was a paradigm shift from an African-focused to a global-focused foreign policy, mostly at the economic level, and the current President Buhari Administration has followed the same. The non-monetization of foreign policy assistance and the strategy for securing the UN Security Council permanent seat are some of the challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy. It calls on Nigeria to take advantage to enter into foreign business transactions with countries where Nigeria had intervened to restore peace or liberate them from

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colonialism like Sierra Leone, Namibia, and Angola as well as focuses her foreign policy towards achieving a permanent seat in the UN security council for Nigeria. It concludes that the Nigerian should be made the main focus of Nigeria's foreign policy.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Independence, Colonialism, Liberation, Government.

INTRODUCTION

When the British finally granted political independence to Nigeria in 1960, the expectation was very high that Nigeria was destined to be a veritable showcase of British parliamentary democracy in Africa in much the same way as India in Asia. Nigeria is, after all, the most populous Black nation and easily one of the most richly endowed in terms of geography and natural resources, and every other ingredient that could make it a great power. Claude Philips made this point more boldly that "Nigeria is potentially the greatest power in Africa from the standpoint of elements of national power". Even before independence, the hope had been expressed by then-British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan that the country looked set to accomplish great feats in African affairs (Fawole, 2003,p.4)

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa at Nigeria's independence on October 1, 1960, assumed the role of Nigeria's first Prime Minister. He was immediately faced with the task of defining Nigeria's position in the world polity. Nigerians from all walks of life had looked up to Balewa to form our nation's foreign policy based on the existing traditional and cultural dispensation as prominent in the Nigerian scheme of things. The elite had expressed hope that whatever foreign policies proffered would no doubt favour the aspiration of all which included seeing Nigeria among the top nations not only in Africa but the world at large (Mbachu, 2011, p.91).

Therefore, foreign policy is a system of one government towards another, a State towards another State, or a government towards an international organization in its entirety. Foreign policy is designed to promote, protect and defend a nation's vital interests such as the

preservation of national sovereignty, the defense of territorial integrity, promotion of economic, military, strategic, and diplomatic interests. Some factors influence foreign policy decisions. These are the external or global environment, the societal environment, the governmental setting the role occupies by policy-makers, and the individual characteristics of the policy-making elites (Babangida, 1985).

Again, foreign policy is a country's response to the world outside or beyond its frontiers or boundaries. That response may be friendly or aggressive, casual or intense, simple or complex but it is always there. It comprises many element-diplomacy, military, trade, economic, social, cultural, educational, sporting, etc and it varies in form and focuses according to circumstances (Chibundu, 2009). Also, foreign policy is the aggregate of a country's policies in its interaction with other members of the international community taking into consideration certain variables of the domestic and external environment (Adeniyi, 2005).

From the above explanations, therefore, foreign policy can be defined as the official policies and reactions of any given country in its relations with other countries or international public organizations. Therefore, this paper examines the challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy fifty-nine years after independence, 1960-2019.

A REVIEW OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: FIFTY-NINE YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE, 1960 – 2019.

Nigeria having just obtained political independence strove to establish a presence and identify with other members of the Comity of Nations. In his maiden address at the 15th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, made the first pronouncement of Nigeria's foreign policy as thus: (a) Maintenance of friendly relations with all nations and active participation in the work of the United Nations. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of, and peaceful coexistence with all countries, (b) Pursue a policy of non-alignment, that is, it will not align with any of the rival blocs but will consider each issue based on merit, (c) Development of cultural cooperation as a means of

strengthening political ties with all African countries, and (d) Commitment to African peace, development, cooperation, decolonization and fight against racism and apartheid (Adeniji, 2005; Mbachu, 2011).

But given Nigeria's colonial experience and the inherited objective factors of under-development, backwardness, and dependence reinforced by the subjective factors of pro-Western ideological orientation and values and pro-West worldview, it is obvious that these were bound to inhibit Nigerian foreign policy conduct. Thus, as a result of economic dependence as well as the ideological orientation of the elite and their internalized experiences and the image they held of their country in both the African sub-system and in an international environment, Nigeria was destined to pursue a pro-Western foreign policy (Mbachu, 2011).

Arguing further, Mbachu maintained that Nigeria's educational system, its economic relations (aid, investments, technical assistance), its legal system, political system, etc., were all patterned in line with those of the Western powers, especially Britain. Thus, despite Nigeria's claim of non-alignment, in practice its foreign policy was pro-West. Nigeria's six years National Development Plan (1962-1968), was drawn up by Western economists with undue reliance on foreign capital for its implementation. Much of the over fifty percent capital expenditure was to come from external sources largely from the West. The Nigerian government, therefore, sought aid in the form of loans, technical assistance, etc., from the West, while rejecting offers of aid and scholarship from the Soviet Union. Furthermore, at independence, Nigeria concluded an Anglo-Nigeria Defence pact which was only abrogated after much opposition from the radical faction of the population, students, and the opposition party.

Although Sir Abubakar knew very well there were other sources of capital investment and foreign aid, his view was that all these should be taken from 'real genuine friends' and not from self-interested countries. The British government did present itself as a 'genuine friend'. Not only did it offer to lend Nigeria £15 million for development in 1959. It also offered to assist Nigeria in raising loans from Western

Europe and North America. Apart from this, within the first few years of Nigeria's independence, Britain was more generous with aid to Nigeria than to Ghana. For example, the value of the British capital aid commitment to Nigeria in the first two years of her independence was over £32 million compared with the sum of only £7.16 million to Ghana after over six years of independence. Until the demise of his regime, Sir Abubakar stuck to his principle of receiving capital aid from only 'real genuine friends', that is Britain and other Western powers. It was said that shortly after Nigeria's independence, the Soviet Union offered her an interest-free loan of £20 million which was turned down by the federal government (Aluko, 1981, pp. 49-50).

Equally, under Abubakar's regime, Nigeria professed to be non-aligned, but instances of strong partialities to those he called 'our old friends' – the Western powers-were many. When the Soviet Embassy was established in Lagos in 1961, the number of its diplomatic staff was limited to ten, whereas no such restriction was placed on the diplomatic missions of Britain and the USA; and only five diplomatic car plates were allocated to the Soviet Embassy, one hundred each were given to the Americans and the British. Other instances of partiality to the West included Abubakar's defense of the resumption of atomic testing by the USA early in 1962, whereas in 1961 he had condemned the Soviet Union for the breach of the moratorium on atomic testing; his defense of the US-Belgian rescue operation in the Congo late in 1964; and his failure to condemn US involvement in Vietnam even in 1965 when public opinion in many Western capitals favored US withdrawal from that country. In short, under Sir Abubakar, Nigeria's non-alignment was, as put by Radio Kaduna, 'pro-West' (Aluko, 1981).

The foregoing assertions clearly show that the Nigerian government under Prime Minister Balewa between 1960 – 1966 was pro-Western in principle and practice. The Balewa regime was also African-centered in its foreign policies. For instance, she broke diplomatic relations with France in January 1961 over the testing of atomic/nuclear weapons in the Sahara desert. As a key player In African affairs, the Balewa regime in 1961 also supported the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth of Nations. Equally, the Balewa regime

played an important role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963.

While chairing the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Lagos in January 1966, to discuss the crisis brought about by Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), Balewa's home government was in crisis as a result of the political chaos of the Western Region arising from the October 1965 disputed elections (Mbachu, 2011). Therefore, the violence that took place during the 1964 - 1965 elections in the then Western Region (popularly referred to as the "Wild Wild West") which found expression in "Operation Wetie" culminated in the first military intervention in Nigeria (Tyona, 2018, p.68). The first military intervention in the Nigerian polity was carried out by a section of the Nigerian Army in the bloody coup of January 15, 1966, that assassinated Prime Minister Balewa alongside other prominent Northern politicians/elites. This ushered in the military junta headed by General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi that briefly lasted for a period of six months, that is January 15, 1966 – July 29, 1966.

Yakubu Gowon, born on October 19, 1934, became Head of State of Nigeria on July 29, 1966, via a bloody military coup, which is the second in the history of Nigeria since independence in 1960. This second coup led to the death of General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi, and much military personnel of Eastern origin. By then, Yakubu Gowon was a Lieutenant Colonel and the most ranking officer in the Army from the Northern Region, and he became the new Nigeria's Head of State at a very young age of about thirty-two years old and he remains the longest-serving Nigerian leader, both military and civilian regimes in Nigeria's political history. Yakubu Gowon ruled from July 29, 1966, to July 29, 1975, exactly nine years. His regime was engulfed in a 30 months civil war that began on July 6, 1967, and ended on January 12, 1970.

To Adeniji (2005) in this segment of the development of Nigeria's foreign policy, Nigeria was involved in a civil war. While the cardinal principles remained the same, the focus of government policy was the defense and protection of the country's territorial integrity, cessation of hostilities, and peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Nigerian civil war

and its management posed completely new challenges for foreign policy.

The experience acquired in prosecuting the war and eventually restoring peace brought dividends in terms of lessons that affected the county's foreign policy. For instance, the ambivalence and uncomplimentary role played by Britain and some Western countries, especially France, in supporting the Biafran secessionists reaffirmed the need for self-reliance and continued and unabashed neutrality or non-alignment. In fact, the support of the Soviet Union and her allies for the Federal government's war-time efforts obliterated the fear and suspicion that had hindered closer relations with the Eastern bloc countries and ushered in an era of cooperation and assistance agreements with these countries (Adeniyi, 2005).

The civil war provided for South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal to help with the dismemberment of Nigeria. The three racist countries supported Biafra and provided cover military assistance to the secessionist war effort. This experience made the review of Nigeria's policies towards these countries and their obnoxious policies a compulsory option after the war. Nigeria consequently worked to accelerate the collapse of settler colonialism and apartheid. General Gowon at the 1971 summit conference of the OAU, exhorted African leaders to step up efforts to hasten the liberation of the remaining colonies charging that, "we should liberate at least one colonial territory within the next three years". This was imperative according to him, because "the racist minority regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as Portugal and their friends, will not stop at nothing short of turning the hands of the clock back" and that "besides the vivid affront which they (that is, the unliberated colonies) constitute to our conscience, the threat they pose to our political independence and security is as real as it is intolerable".

As for South Africa, he remarked that the country was becoming an octopus that was "reaching out beyond its frontiers and exporting its racist policies and being used by imperialist powers to regain their foothold in Africa (Stremlau, 1977; Aluko, 1971; Ogunbadejo, 1976; Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

To further foster African unity and progress, especially in the West African Region, therefore, the Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, and his Togolese counterpart, Gnassingbe Eyadema toured the sub-region in support of the integration idea. Thanks to the draft that emanated from their efforts as they formal the basis for the emergence of the Treaty of Lagos, Nigeria on May 28, 1975, which birthed ECOWAS (Tyona, 2015a). Equally, in order to reunite the country after the civil war that ended in 1970. The General Gowon regime established the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) on May 22, 1973. The NYSC is a scheme that involves Nigerian graduates in nation-building. General Gowon was overthrown in a military coup on July 29, 1975, that brought on board, the dynamic and radically inclined military government of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed.

General Murtala Muhammed publicly declared that his government will make Africa the cornerstone of its external relations. He backed and recognize the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), one of the three guerrilla factions engaged in the struggle for the independence of that Portuguese colony. Again, General M. R. Muhammed was the brain behind the relocation of the ECOWAS headquarters/secretariat from Togo to Lagos, Nigeria, insisting that Nigeria, apart from playing a major or key role in the formation of ECOWAS, is the chief financier of the body and as such it deserves to have the headquarters /secretariat in its territory.

General M. R. Muhammed was in power for just six months and his regime came to an end on February 13, 1976, when he was assassinated in a bloody military coup attempt. General Olusegun Obasanjo his Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters succeeded as the new Nigerian Head of State. It is imperative to note that this period is mostly referred to in the text as the "Murtala Muhammed/Olusegun Obasanjo regime. There wasn't much difference in General Obasanjo's course of actions or policies from that of his predecessor (General Muhammed), just that the former lasted longer in office and had more issues to deal with. General Obasanjo's regime was also committed to the liberation of African countries still under colonization; especially Zimbabwe and apartheid South Africa which was under racist white

minority rule. In doing this, General Obasanjo nationalized the British Petroleum (BP) assets in Nigeria in July 1979. Equally the British-owned Barclays bank was also nationalized to demonstrate the regime's commitment to an Afro-centric foreign policy.

General Olusegun Obasanjo's economic disposition on British investments in Nigeria in the late 1970s was a clear message sent to the British government that Nigeria will use any means possible at its disposal to accomplish its foreign policy objective toward African countries to liberate them from colonialism and racism from the white minority supremacists. Thus, this action forced the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher to change her position or stance on the dubious transfer of "power" to a few selected local Zimbabweans leaders by the white minority regime of Prime Minister Ian Smith, instead of the majority nationalist groups in Zimbabwe like the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) who were bent on liberating Zimbabwe from colonialism. Therefore, in August 1979 at the Commonwealth summit in Lusaka, Zambia, Prime Minister Thatcher also convinced her government (Britain) to organize and host the Lancaster House Talks that resulted in true and genuine independence for Zimbabwe in 1980. This period came some months after General Olusegun Obasanjo had transmitted power to the democratically elected government of President Shehu Shagari in October 1979.

The regime of Shehu Shagari inherited a foreign policy that was very popular with the people as well as being the object of respect in the international system. But while adapting its principles, goals, and rhetoric, the regime quickly showed that it neither had the zeal nor the competence to keep up the pace it inherited … The result was that Nigeria's foreign policy remained at the level of routine observance of existing relations and obligations … The four years of the regime were, therefore, a period of recess for Nigerian's foreign policy (Otubanjo, 1989, P.6). President Shehu Shagari's government ended on December 31, 1983, via a military coup which ushered in General Muhammadu Buhari as the new Nigeria's Head of State.

General Muhammadu Buhari and his fellow-coup planners accused President Shehu Shagari-led government of corruption and deteriorating the economy. According to Mbachu (1996, p.38), the coup was announced by Brigadier General Sani of the Nigerian Army and it reads:

> Our economy has been hopelessly mismanaged. We have become ad debtor and beggar nation. There is the inadequacy of food… for our people who are now fed up with endless announcements of the importation of foodstuffs. Health services are in shambles as our hospitals are reduced to mere consulting clinics without drugs, water, and equipment. Our educational system is deteriorating at an alarming rate. Unemployment figures, including the graduates, have reached an embarrassing and unacceptable proportion.

Mbachu (2011) notwithstanding his criticism of President Shagari, General Buhari continued to follow in the footsteps of Shagari's foreign policy. Buhari's regime continued as a result of the country's great economic difficulties, to expel the so-called aliens from Nigeria more or less repudiation of the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of labor throughout the West African sub-region. This exercise of course brought its attendant financial, moral, diplomatic, and social costs to Nigeria. The Nigerian image suffered among the African countries. Besides, under the Buhari regime, Nigeria could no longer provide the needed political leadership to other African countries because of declining economic fortune. As it were, in his speech delivered at the ECOWAS summit, General Buhari could not make the usual promises and commitments and financial contributions and assistance that the previous regime was used to making to other African countries. Although the regime at some point in the time promised to support the ECOWAS and OPEC, including its calls for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), as well as the OAU and other liberation movements.

According to research studies, General Buhari's regime took a few important foreign policy steps with the platforms of the OAU, and Commonwealth of Nations to further campaign to isolate South Africa as well as insisting on the unconditional release of jailed anti-apartheid activists like Nelson Mandela among others. Sources also have it that the Buhari regime on November 11, 1984, at the 20th OAU summit in Addis Ababa recognized the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as an independent country in Africa notwithstanding Morocco's protest.

The watershed of Nigeria's foreign policy came when Buhari's regime attempted with the help of Israeli mercenaries to kidnap Nigeria's former Minister, Umaru Dikko from London. This led to the British government declaring Nigerian High Commissioner in London and some other Nigerian officials in Britain as *persona nongrata*. In its usual tit-for-tat manner, the Buhari regime reacted quite swiftly and demanded that the British High Commissioner in Nigeria and other British officials in Nigeria leave Nigeria immediately. This was the usual line of action of the regime which retaliated on every issue or treatment done to Nigeria by other countries, Western countries inclusive (Mbachu, 2011).

In addition, Fawole (2003) notes that General Buhari instituted the most far-reaching and draconian rule of any military regime till then. He abrogated human rights, outlawed criticism by tempering press freedom, hauled politicians into jail, outlawed politics and banned political discussions about the country's future, and prescribed stiff penalties for non-compliance. His regime almost turned the country into a virtual military garrison, which he ran according to stiff military discipline by declaring his regime's War Against Indiscipline (WAI).

General Buhari was overthrown in a military coup by his Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida on August 27, 1985. According to Mbachu (2011), General Babaginda gave the following reason for doing so: ''the ousted military government conducted our external relations by a policy of retaliating reactions. Nigeria became a country that reacted to a given situation rather than taking initiative as it should and has always done. More so, vengeful

considerations must not be the basis of our diplomacy. Africa's problems and their solutions shall constitute the premise of our foreign policy''

One of the most populist measures taken by the Babangida regime on foreign policy was the convening of the ''All-Nigeria Conference on Foreign Policy'' in April 1986. It was a huge assemblage of some of Nigeria's brightest scholars and experts in the field of International Affairs convened to discuss, analyze and make recommendations for the conduct of Nigeria's external relations. The conference generated lively and often heated debates among scholars to diverse ideological persuasions. It also provided a number of suggestions for the way forward for Nigeria (Akindele and Bassey, 1986).

It was in pursuit of the objective of making the West African sub-region safe for Nigeria that the country got involved in mediating the border war between Mali and Burkina Faso in 1986. The skirmishes had flared up into shooting wars, and Nigeria promptly got involved to ensure that it would not escalate into a major conflict capable of threatening peace and stability in West Africa. The Nigerian Foreign Affairs Minister, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi embarked on shuttle diplomacy, visiting the warring States and some neighboring countries such as Libya and Senegal to drum up support for a cease-fire, and negotiations. Having arranged the cease-fire, the matter was then referred to the OAU for resolution. Getting involved in such a mediatory effort also helped to project Nigeria's claims to leadership in the sub-region (Fawole, 2003).

Arguing further, Fawole maintained that, in general, the Babangida regime made conscious efforts to normalize damaged relations with many of the neighboring States in West Africa. This was perhaps a sensible thing to do considering the harsh treatment that the preceding Buhari regime had subjected them to. The closure of borders and the sudden currency change succeeded in virtually wrecking the economies of some of the States, particularly those like Chad, Niger Republic, and Benin that was dependent on Nigeria for survival. General Babangida moved swiftly to soothe their wounds through

offers of assistance. In fact, it was the goodwill that the regime generated within the ECOWAS community that caused the leaders of the sub-region to elect Babangida as ECOWAS Chairman for three consecutive terms, 1985, 1986, and 1987, an action unprecedented since the Organization came into existence in 1975.

Furthermore, according to academic studies, the tenure of Professor Bolaji Akinyeni as the helmsman of the Foreign Affairs Ministry under General Babangida's regime introduced and established the Technical Aid Corps (TAC) program, where Nigerian experts and professionals whose services were needed by other African nations were seconded to those nations at the expense of the Nigerian government. It is also on record that due to General Babangida's goodwill to fellow African countries many Heads of State and Governments in Africa paid state visits to Nigeria and Babangida equally made return paid state visits to Nigeria and Babangida equally made return state visits to many countries in Africa. In his contributions, Ajakaiye (1991) wrote:

> In the first three years of the Babangida administration, more than twelve (12) bilateral agreements that had been dormant were reactivated, and about twenty-five (25) cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation agreements were concluded in Africa alone.

In another dimension, during the General Babangida regime, Nigeria contributed to the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) an interventionist mediation force. To Yoroms and Obasi (2003), Nigeria contributed greatly to the conclusion of the conflicts in Liberia, and her contribution towards resolving the Sierra Leonean crisis undoubtedly demonstrated her capacity to administer peace operations in crucial situations even amid criticism. Being a major actor in the resolution of conflicts, Nigeria spent close to $10 billion on the two operations.

According to Adeniji (2005) with the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), foreign policy became re-aligned to ensure the success of the new mood for free and open market economic policies. Thus, 'economic diplomacy' was invented as a major element

of Nigeria's foreign policy under General Ike Nwachukwu as Foreign Affairs Minister. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was called to play an active role, especially with the creation of the Trade and Investment Department to oversee the realization of this policy. However, some analysts have argued that economic diplomacy was not in conformity with the commitment to other matters, especially on the African continent. With the concerted effort that led to independence in Namibia, Mozambique, and majority rule in South Africa, Nigeria assumed the 'big brother' posture on peacemaking efforts on the continent, and also became a major donor country in Africa. This posture is often criticized as desperate in focus and 'Father Christmas' in style. In other words, foreign policy was pursued at an enormous cost while the country did not derive a commensurate dividend.

Within the Nigerian polity, General Babangida's regime brought on board two political-party systems, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republic Convention (NRC), to facilitate his 'Transition Program. To Tyona and Abagen (2019), following the country's debilitating transition program by the Babangida government, it became evident when June 12, 1993, Presidential election was annulled. To stem the ugly tide, he hurriedly put in place an 'Interim National Government', headed by Ernest Shonekan who lasted for about three months. General Sani Abacha toppled the Interim National Government on November 17, 1993, and became Nigeria's new Head of State. The administration should be credited for using ECOMOG led by Nigeria to restore democracy in Sierra Leone in 1997.

Abacha's foreign policy was described as the most combative and defensive foreign policy in Nigeria's history. For Abacha, his recognition means "an eye for an eye" approach to international relations, which prompted him to employ an "area boy" diplomatic style to survive the hostile domestic and international environment into which his regime was born. This explains the uncoordinated approach and misunderstanding of the international environment that occasioned the regime's approach to foreign policy. It is imperative to note that Abacha's adamant nationalism and autonomy consciousness

which led to the abrogation of liberalization policies and sustained anti-Western stance on many issues, reinforced this hostility.

The United States of America and other Western powers actively encouraged and supported opposition groups in the country as well as those based abroad, and on some occasions, issued statements that amounted to gross interference in the country's internal affairs. This reached its height with the formation of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) in May 1994, a loose coalition of old and new breed "progressive" mostly from the South – West of the country, which consistently promoted and fuelled ant-Abacha sentiments abroad (Fawole, 2002; The Guardian, 1998, Osaghae, 2002; Zabadi, 2004).

General Abacha did things and took actions that were ordinarily thought to be impossible, even for intrepid military dictators. His arrest and detention of Moshood Abiola for years without trial, despite national and international protests, would ordinarily have been seen as a suicidal move on the part of any military ruler. Abiola who was a very wealthy and prominent Nigerian, an international businessman, of no mean stature, a sports philanthropist, and a political figure with a larger-than-life image.

General Abacha was neither intimidated nor moved by Abiola's gigantic image. But equally suicidal was the frame-up, arrest, trial, and jailing of former Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, and his Deputy, General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua in a phantom coup in early 1995. At the time of his arrest, Obasanjo was a respected international figure of no mean stature, one who counted among close personal friends several serving world statesmen and women, and himself a former co-chairman of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. Abacha could not be intimidated by Obasanjo's colossal stature, as he put his own former Commander-In-Chief in shackles (Fawole, 2003).

Equally, the hanging of the world-famous writer, environmentalist, and minority rights crusader, Ken Saro-Wiwa at a time that the Commonwealth Summit was in session in Auckland, New Zealand, undiplomatic. Elementary knowledge of global diplomacy should have told the regime that such an act would ordinarily be regarded as a slight on the Commonwealth, an organization that had,

as far back as 1991, taken a strong position on the need for democracy, good governance, and respect for human rights in its member states.

Besides, appeals for clemency for Saro-Wiwa and his Ogoni Kinsmen were still pouring in from around the world, including the Commonwealth members themselves, when the precipitate hanging was carried out. Abacha also frame-up and jailed civilians and journalists in the imaginary coups of 1995 and 1997 which was politically unwise. His dethronement of the powerful Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, was more than an act of reckless bravery, even for an Army General, especially one from a non-Fulani stock. By this singular act, Abacha proved that he could accomplish what others had considered unthinkable (Fawole, 2003, pp.210-211).

Therefore, due to Abacha's violation of human rights among other troubling circumstances, the junior football World Cup scheduled to hold in Nigeria was canceled in 1998, the country could not borrow from the World Bank and other international financial organizations, even foreigners could not invest in Nigeria, military training and exchange, and sales of arms and equipment were suspended. These, situations coupled with other fallouts from the despotic rule of General Abacha, exposed Nigeria to sanctions from other sources, with the most prominent being the county's suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations. This gave a negative/bad international image of the Nigerian State (Tyona, 2015b, p.57).

General Sani Abacha died in power on June 8, 1998. His successor, General Abubakar, oversaw a transitional government before the former military leader, Obasanjo again assumed political leadership through a popular election. Obasanjo's top foreign policy priority was to restore Nigeria's international reputation. Soon after he took power, Nigeria was readmitted to the Commonwealth of Nations. Sanctions were lifted. In 1999, Nigeria began pulling out of Sierra Leone, to cut costs and redirect resources to the Niger Delta, where the local security situation had deteriorated (Adebajo, 2000).

With the emergence of President Obasanjo in 1999 there was a paradigm shift from African-centered to a Global-focused foreign policy. Nigeria's foreign policy still remained essentially African-

focused at the economic level. The poor situation of the Nigerian economy inherited by Obasanjo, coupled with political vulnerability at the time, demanded new tactics and strategies and indeed, prompted the need to focus greater attention on extra-African actors, without necessarily implying any form of neglect of Africa. Thus, Nigeria emphasized the economic factor to the detriment of political considerations. This dramatic shift was explicated by President Obasanjo, that Nigeria's foreign policy interests extend beyond our concern for the well-being of our continent (cited in Tyona and Abagen, 2019).

In addition, Obasanjo's Foreign Affairs Minister (2003-2006), Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji expounded on this shift in Nigeria's foreign policy thrust from the original "cornerstone" and "center-piece" trajectory that Nigeria's foreign policy direction had to lead to where there are development funds and technical assistance, particularly in the light of the weakness in intra-African co-operations, crisis, and conflicts in Africa, as well as Africa's inability to bail Nigeria out of economic doldrums. He maintained that Africa as a cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy was geo-culturally and proximity factor-induced, while the global setting was an issue and economic reality compelled (cited in Tyona and Abagen, 2019).

Also and very importantly, based on Obasanjo's conviction that corruption remains a major challenge in Nigeria, he created two distinct anti-corruption agencies; the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). It is important to note that Nigeria's legislation has provided the function of combating corruption in the EFCC and ICPC. The EFCC was created and empowered to prevent, investigate and prosecute economic and financial crimes (Tyona, 2019).

The record of his successor, Yar'Adua has been mixed. Nigeria continues to rank high on international corruption indexes. A cease-fire has been brokered with the Delta insurgents, but inter-confessional instability had increased in the North. Nigeria has appeared on international terrorist watch lists, in the wake of thwarted 2009

'Christmas Day bombing" and a series of bombings (Gubak, 2015, p.637). President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua died in power and his Vice, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan succeeded him. Jonathan's presidency experienced alarming insurgency in Nigeria, especially in the North East part of the country perpetrated by the Boko Haram sects.

During the era of President Jonathan Nigeria's government money running into millions of US dollars which were meant to purchase military equipment to fight the Boko Haram sects terrorizing Nigeria was seized by the government of South Africa, and that of the government of the United States of America refusing to sale military equipment to Nigeria proved that Jonathan's presidency failed in implementing Nigeria's foreign policy thrust (Abagen and Tyona, 2019, p.69). Similarly, Colonel Sambo Dasuki, the then National Security Adviser (NSA) to former President Jonathan diverted and shared the sum of 2.1 billion US dollars 'Arms Money' meant to prosecute the war against insurgency. Huge sums of money earmarked for the purchase of military equipment by the Jonathan administration were mostly misappropriated or diverted by the various security units. Thus, President Jonathan's administration failed in achieving peace and security as well as economic diplomacy which are among the fundamental objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy (Abagen and Tyona, 2019).

In contemporary Nigeria, there has been an emerging paradigm shift with respect to international terrorism and Nigeria's foreign policy. In upholding Nigeria's foreign policy of peace and security, the President Muhammadu Buhari-led government has tackled the Boko Haram menace to the barest minimum level in the North-Eastern Region of Nigeria than the previous administrations. President Buhari liberated the Chibok girls held captive by the Boko Haram terrorist during President Jonathan's era. Equally, President Buhari ordered the Nigerian Chief of Army Staff to relocate his Command to Borno State to effectively tackle the Boko Haram menace. Borno State is the most targeted State in Nigeria by the Boko Haram terrorist.

Following the devastation from the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East part of Nigeria and in order to rebuild and address the

developmental challenges in the zone, President Buhari established and inaugurated the North-East Development Commission (NEDC) on May 8, 2019, with the mandate to receive and manage funds allocated by the federal government and international donor agencies for the resettlement, rehabilitation, integration and reconstruction of roads, houses and business premises of victims of insurgency as well as tackle the menace of poverty and environmental challenges of the area. The NEDC was allocated the sum of N45 billion for its 2019 budget and the sum of N10 billion was earmarked for its take-off (Abagen and Tyona, 2019, pp.71-72).

THE CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: FIFTY-NINE YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE, 1960-2019

There are several challenges faced with Nigeria's foreign policy since its independence in 1960. Adeniji (2005, pp. 45-49) mentioned some challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy as follows:

Protection of Nigerians Abroad

The first challenge is the defense and protection of Nigerians, including those with dual nationalities, anywhere they may be. Owing to the negative image projected of Nigeria internationally in the recent past, Nigerians are maltreated in many parts of the world. They are subjected to inhuman treatment even at the points of application for visas within their country. They are denied certain entitlements even when they meet the requirements. Efforts must be made to end this trend. The receiving states should be made to live up to the responsibility of ensuring justice and humane treatment for Nigerians, even when they are arrested for crimes. Their welfare and businesses outside the country should be protected through implementing the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements already signed with some countries and entering into more of such agreements. The impact of this concern is that apart from the intrinsic value in looking after the welfare of her citizens, they would be encouraged to have a sense of pride and belonging and work towards achieving the foreign policy goals of Nigeria rather than being apathetic or even obstructive.

Funding Foreign Policy Establishments and Activities

Another challenge facing the effective implementation of foreign policy initiatives is inadequate funding of foreign policy establishments and activities. That has been the trend in recent years. The result is that certain foreign policy activities could not be carried out for lack of funds. At certain times, many Nigeria Missions abroad have been in very embarrassing and compromising circumstances owing to the inability to pay the salaries of their workers, rent to landlords, and utility bills. A lot of reasons have been adduced for this problem, including the perceived marginalization of the National Assembly in foreign policy making.

However, rather than being a deliberate action, there are developments suggestive of the thinking that the under-funding is due to ignorance of what is involved in the making and execution of foreign policy. There appears to be a prevalent perception of diplomacy as the business of wining and dining. Most Nigerians, including some policymakers, seem oblivious to the fundamental difference underlying the operational activities of the foreign ministry and a home ministry. The facts are not appreciated that the foreign operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are paid for in hard currencies and the living conditions in many of the operational fields are very harsh. It should also be borne in mind that, as a member of several international organizations, Nigeria has internationally assessed dues in foreign currencies. Thus, underfunding damages the image of the country and subjects her and the foreign service officers to ridicule.

Democratization of Foreign Policy-Making Process

The need to democratize the domestic base of our foreign policy machinery presents the third challenge in the implementation of the policy of constructive and beneficial concentricism. Nigerians generally do not demonstrate patriotism and security consciousness; neither do they appreciate the policy of good neighborliness, like the interventions in Sao Tome and Principe or Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is because they have not been involved in the making of foreign policy.

Non-Monetization of Foreign Policy Assistance

The overriding challenge in focusing Nigeria's foreign policy on the Nigerian is that of non-monetization of our assistance to foreign countries and organizations. In the past, financial assistance was given to needy-friendly countries. Under the new direction of our policy, assistance should be given in kind, since the country has benefited from it. If we want to assist victims of a natural disaster in another country, for instance, it would be worthwhile to give materials and goods manufactured in Nigeria. Even if money is given, that grant should be tied to the import of the needed goods from Nigeria. In this way Nigerian manufacturers would benefit, the industries would be buoyant and Nigerians kept in employment. That is a foreign policy that is focused on the Nigerians.

Furthermore, the original theory of concentric circles as propounded by Professor Gambari aims at pursuing Nigeria's interests in each circle. In the innermost or core circle, these interests were specified as national security and self-preservation, which involves the maintenance of Nigeria's territorial integrity and the defense of her political independence. However, there was no indication of what Nigeria's interests are or should be in the middle and peripheral circles. The challenge here is to identify such interests and evolve strategies for their protection.

Lastly, it is a known fact that for inexplicable reasons, the private sector in Nigeria has not been forthcoming in taking advantage of the openings created by diplomacy to enter into foreign business deals in countries like Angola, Liberia, Namibia, etc. where Nigeria had intervened to restore self-rule or peace. Thus, it is not sufficient to seek to make Nigerians benefit from foreign policy efforts. You can take a horse to the stream, but you cannot force it to drink. It is Nigerians themselves that should exhibit determination and willingness to benefit from foreign policy efforts. The challenge, therefore, is the sensitization of the Nigerian public on how foreign policy and the international environment could be utilized to enhance poverty reduction, economic growth and development, and political stability at the domestic level.

Response to New African Policy of the United States of America

Emerging realities have brought into focus the challenge of a review of policy and attitude by Nigeria and the entire African continent, in response to the adoption by the United States of America of a New African Policy. The new policy is based on the report of an African Policy Advisory Panel, authorized by the African Congress in 2003. The report covers seven areas including the importance of Africa in US energy calculations, the terrorism threat in Africa, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the continent.

It is important to note that the report expresses American concern about the potential of radical Islam, and anti-American feelings, in Northern Nigeria, and the possibility of the tension in the North leading to a civil war between the North and South, that would be detrimental to American interests in Nigeria. Nigeria, and indeed Africa, should evolve strategies to respond appropriately to this new US policy on Africa. Parallel Committee/Panels should be set up to advise the Federal Government and the African Union respectively, on, joining the US in fighting terrorism, assisting the US to meet her energy needs from Africa, and putting pressure on the US to contribute more towards fighting HIV/AIDS, resolving conflicts and crises, and development, in Africa.

Strategy for Securing UN Security Council Permanent Seat

Finally, there is the challenge of working on our foreign policy strategies to actualize Nigeria's desire of becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Apart from the above-mentioned challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy, as stated by Adeniji (2005). There is also another challenge faced with Nigeria's foreign policy since independence in 1960 to contemporary times, which is that Nigerians are not made the main focus of Nigeria's foreign policy which is very unhealthy for a developing nation like hers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At independence, in 1960, Nigeria's foreign policy under Prime Minister Balewa claimed not to align with any of the power blocs, that is, West or East. But so many instances showed it was pro-Western in nature and character as well as African-focused. In its international economic transactions, Nigeria dealt strictly with the West, with Britain topping the list, and referred to them as old friends. The regime rejected scholarships and other aid or assistance from the Soviet Union. But with the emergence of the Nigerian civil war which began in July 1967 with the Biafran secessionist, she turned to her old friends for the supply of military equipment to prosecute the war but was eventually turned down. Thus, Nigeria had to turn to the Soviet Union to align with them in order to prosecute the civil war. After the civil war, Nigeria learned some lessons like not to depend or rely on any of the power blocs, but to be self-reliant, and that the Nigerian should be made the main focus of her foreign policy.

Again, Nigeria's foreign policy has always been African-centered. Nigeria liberated some African countries from colonialism and racism without any benefits. With the emergence of democracy in 1999, the Obasanjo-led administration redirected Nigeria's foreign policy to be more globally focused, where it could get development funds and military and economic cooperation among others. Jonathan's administration failed in achieving Nigeria's foreign policy. There was rampant destruction of lives and property by the Boko Haram terrorist, especially in the North East part of the country. Nigeria was seen by other nations of the world as a corrupt and terrorist State. But the present President Buhari-led administration has restored a lot of peace, law, and order in the North East in particular and Nigeria in general which is a very fundamental objective of Nigeria's foreign policy. Since the lack of funding for foreign policy establishments and activities as well as the lack of public participation in the formulation of foreign policy are some of the challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy, therefore, the paper recommends that the government of Nigeria should adequately fund the Foreign Affairs Ministry and its activities so as it can be able to attain or achieve foreign policy objectives. Again, it

recommends the Nigerian government to make it possible for the public to participate in the policy formulation process through the organization of public debates, conferences, and seminars on very critical issues on foreign policy matters under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA).

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