
**ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE AND POLICY ORIENTATION OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY BETWEEN
1999- 2007**

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Abstract

The nature and policy orientation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy under President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) deals with the measurement of Nigeria State or nation at the time. Nigeria is a regional power with gaining sense of self-assurance and a developing capability to demonstrate it. This research principally attempts to underscore through historical, descriptive and comparative analysis, low strategies for perceiving Nigeria's foreign policies were configured in managing political economy of Nigeria's administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007). There is an abundance of evidence to show that internal policies constitute the key to Nigeria's foreign policy. The research reveals that the era of the second coming of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as Nigerian president between 1999 and 2007 did not witness the inauguration and implementation of a dynamic and people-oriented foreign policy dedicated to the realization of Nigeria's national interests. It was also established as a fact that international politics is the true personification of power politics and also the veritable consummation of alignment to ones national interests. This research therefore, among other things recommended that the country Nigeria must no longer operate in such a way as to be seen as anybody's good boy as such a posture is symptomatic of weakness and servility. But ensure that the national interest always take precedence to morality in international politics.

Keywords: *Nature, Policy Orientation, Foreign policy, Administration, Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo.*

Introduction

No country is an island of itself; to this effect every nation in the formation of its policy put into consideration its relationships with other countries, the government of the country in question must develops strategies to guide their actions in the international arena so to deal with the inevitable practical challenges which arises in the affair of states as they interact with one another. Suffice it to say that the national interest of a country constitutes a set of high prized national objectives which such a country aggregates, nurtures, protects, projects and seeks to achieve as it interact with other nation states in the international political environment. Indeed it

inheres and is prioritized in a concentric circle in which national objectives regarded as core in nature are in the innermost recesses of the concentric circle.

Foreign policy may be seen as a set of practical measures, sometimes coherent, but often by no means intrinsically consistent, utilized by governments to meet these problems. Often times the referenced designated makers seek to manipulate the external environment in order to achieve certain national objectives known as national interest. It is in the light of this that Akinboye (in Anifewose and Enemu: 1999) reviewed foreign policy as “the instrumentality by which states influence or seek to influence the external world, and to attain that are in consonance with their perceived national interest. It is therefore correct to assert that properly conceived, the foreign policy of any given country is the external projection of the internal or domestic environment of such a country. Indeed its orientation, nature and dynamics are usually determined by the socio-politico and economic situation at home which may uncertain world of the international political arena. This is why a new development in the field is what scholars have come to characterize as ‘intermestic’. The nature, direction and ‘national interest’ content of the foreign policy of the erstwhile president Olusegun Obasanjo led civilian administration in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007 is an area of serious argument among sholars in the field of foreign policy. Indeed opinions are divided as to the dynamic bent (or lack of it) of the foreign policy of that administration.

The process of reintegration Nigeria into the mainstream of world events started by the regime of general Abdul Salami Abubakar many months before the arrival of the Obasanjo regime. To be exact in this effect, Nwahir (2007) revealed that General Abubakar visited Washington, Paris, London to convince these countries that Nigeria was now ready for democracy. He also used the period to restore broken friendship all over the world due to the crude politics of late Sani Abacha” It is worthy to note that it was reported that during the visit to Washington, general Abdul Salami Abubakar received a red carpet treatment from former President Bill Clinton and went ahead to address the United Nation General Assembly in New York. This notwithstanding, the Olusegun obasanjo regime did achieved great miles stone accomplishments as regards the Nigeria foreign policy.

There is an avalanche of scholars who are of the view that the regime did initiate and execute a progressive, dynamic and people-oriented foreign policy that capture the essence of the national interest of the country at the time. Olu Adeniji who was Nigeria’s Foreign Minister under the president Olusegun Obasanjo regime stated that the administration of President Obasanjo restored confidence and credibility to Nigeria’s capacity to contribute to the prevention, management and resolution of various conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. Continuing along this line, he asserted that the regime kept faith with its foreign policy agenda and was most successful in ending the civil strife in Sierra Leone while involving the United Nations Organisations in Ethiopia/Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Western Sahara and even the Balkans.

Some of the actions taken by the Olusegun Obasanjo led government in relations with other countries in the name of foreign policies and relationships rose lots of questions in the minds of

Nigerians and non-Nigerian who have the interest of the country at heart and opinions are divided as to the dynamic bent (or lack of it) of the foreign policy of that administration. This study therefore analyzed the nature and policy orientation of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999 - 2007.

The aims of this study are to;

1. Determine the nature and policy orientation of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999-2007 under president Obasanjo.
2. Examine the main trajectory of the foreign policies and actions of the Obasanjo administration between 1999- 2007.

Literature review

Foreign Policy

Arriving at a consensus as to a generally accepted definition of the term 'foreign policy' is an area of contention among scholars in the field of international relations. What is certain however is that there seem to be a tacit acceptance that it is a series of policy objectives and the modus operandum for achieving same which guild the orientation to action of the modern day nation state as it seeks to achieve its national interest while interacting with other in the international political system.

In an effort to capture the real meaning of the term, Asobie (in Amucheazi (ed). 1980) stated that "practical problems arise in the affair of states as they interact with one another. Foreign policy may be seen as a set of practical measures, sometimes coherent, but often by no means intrinsically consistent, utilized by governments to meet these problem".

According to Godlstein and Pevenhouse (2004) "Foreign policies are the strategies used by government to guide their actions in the international arena. Foreign policies spell out the objectives state leaders have decided to pursue in a given relationship or situation as well as the general means by which they intend to pursue these objective". Needless to say, there are for critical elements in the above referenced definition and these are (a) strategies, (b) international arena, (c) objectives and of course the implied one which is (e) the domestic environment.

Accordingly Handreinder (1967 as reproduced in Nwahiri: 2007) has averred that foreign policy is "a co-ordinated strategy with which institutionally designated decision makers seek to manipulate the international environment". Akinboye (in Anifewose and Enemuo: 1999) defined foreign policy as "the instrumentality by which states influence or seek to influence the external world, and to attain that are in consonance with their perceived national interest". It is therefore correct to assert that properly conceived, the foreign policy of any given country is the external projection of the internal or domestic environment of such a country. Indeed its orientation, nature and dynamics are all determine by the socio-politico and economic situation at home which may uncertain world of the international political arena. This is why a new development in the field is what scholars have come to characterize as 'intermestic' (Rourke and Boyer: 2004).

The Foreign Policy of Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo Regime

The nature, direction and 'national interest' content of the foreign policy of the erstwhile president Olusegun Obasanjo led civilian administration in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007 is an area of serious argument among scholars in the field of foreign policy. Indeed opinions are divided as to the dynamic bent (or lack of it) of the foreign policy of that administration. There is an avalanche of scholars who are of the view that the regime did initiate and execute a progressive, dynamic and people-oriented foreign policy that capture the essence of the national interest of the country at the time.

Among the dramatis personae on the affirmatives side is Ambassador Olu Adeniji who was one of Nigeria's Ministers of Foreign Affairs under President Olusegun Obasanjo. In an article titled; The Cost and Dividends of Foreign Policy which was contributed to a national symposium organized by the Presidential Advisory Council on International Relations (PAC) in 2005, Adeniji had compartmentalized and prioritized the advances and the achievements that were made in the pursuit of Nigeria's foreign policy under Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. According to him the first was the reintegration of Nigeria into the mainstream of world events after the debacle that was general Abacha's foreign policy. Olu Adeniji who was Nigeria's Foreign Minister at the time went on to recount the achievements in such other areas as peace keeping and the settlement of intra-African disputes, the initiation of the actions that led to the formation of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the Nigerian contributions to the transformation of the erstwhile Organization for African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) to mention just a few (PAC:2005:33,34,35,36) in the said article, the minister had argued inter alia "The Administration of President Obasanjo has restored confidence and credibility to Nigeria's capacity to contribute to the prevention, management and resolution of various conflicts in Africa and elsewhere". Continuing along this line, he asserted that the regime kept faith with its foreign policy agenda and was most successful in ending the civil strife in Sierra Leone while involving the United Nations Organisations in Ethiopia/Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Western Sahara and even the Balkans. According to Adeniji, "The country had an added responsibility to bring peace to war-torn Liberia by granting asylum to president Charles Taylor apparently against popular and international opinion, besides other national sacrifices in human lives and economic resources" (PAC: 2005) when all these so called achievements are added together the Obasanjo regime could be said to have done well in the area of Foreign policy.

However nothing could be farther from the truth and it is from here that we must take our departure to state the case as it is, in addition to situating the foreign policy orientation of that regime in its proper perspective. In the first place, it is the contention in this work that it was the regime of general Abdul Salami Abubakar which started the process of the reintegration of Nigeria into the mainstream of world events many months before the arrival of the Obasanjo regime. To be exact, according to Nwahiri (2007) "General Abubakar visited Washington, Paris, London to convince these countries that Nigeria was now read for democracy. He also used the period to restore broken friendship all over the world due to the crude politics of late Sani

Abacha” We are to note that it was reported that during the visit to Washington, general Abdul Salami Abubakar received a red carpet treatment from former President Bill Clinton and went ahead to address the United Nation General Assembly in New York (Nwahiri, 2007).

Needless to say, junketing around the world and condescending for a paternalistic relationship should not be the hallmark of the foreign policy of an independent Nigeria. For instance Nelson Mandela did not have to prove anything to anybody in the west on his emergence as the first black president of South Africa. Therefore any such visits must have been necessitated by the inner dynamics of the South African social formation and national interest rather than the need to please or placate the western world. The point to be noted is that the so-called reintegration of Nigeria even started under a military regime and the western world had no problem with that. This means that such acceptance is not the result of a foreign policy magic wand. It was only the product of the acceptance of the fact that the regime was omitted to a return to democracy. In any case, in seeking to assess all the claims made by the erstwhile minster of Foreign Affairs, Olu Adeniji, a question could be posed as to what were the benefits all the policy actions of the Olusegun Obasanjo administration in terms of the realization of the national interest of the country, Nigeria and how did that impact on the lives of the Nigerian citizens who should be the beneficiaries of such policies?. In other words whether it is in terms of the peace keeping efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone which gulped billions of petro-dollars of the Nigerian states in addition to the lives of the country’s soldiers or the effort in Ethiopia/Eritrea, Burundi etc. what were the terms of the national interest of the country whether tangible or intangible?

The answer is that it was neither here nor there. This is because such policies were not anchored on a well thought out strategy that would survive the test of time. Indeed more often than not, ego and considerations that were selfishly motivated had an overriding interest. Of course such outside interventions also meant that avenues for massive contracts in military supplies were now available. Again let us pause for a while and ruminate over some of the contentions of Ambassador Olu Adeniji. Our position in this enterorise is that the numerous foreign trips of the president were really unnecessary and Nigerians did react to type against such trips which they saw as a further waste on the lean resources of the country. Secondly it was further proof that the regime was pandering to the dictates of the western world and the United States which it therefore wanted to impress by all means hence the visits to Washington and many of the European capitals.

Secondly it is instructive to remind us that according to Morgenthau (1967) “The objectives of foreign policy must be defined in terms of the national interest and must be supported with adequate power” Eze (in the PAC publication, 2005). Professor Goerge Obiozor is a notable voice in the area of Nigerian Foreign policy and diplomacy. Erudite, eminent and intellectually sound, the Professor who is an alumnus of one of America’s prestigious universities could be said to have occupied almost every post in Nigeria’s diplomatic service. From being a presidential

assistant on international Affairs to one of Nigeria's Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) which he ultimately headed as the Director-General. Specifically during the period under review; 1999 to 2007, he occupied the following posts: Ambassador to Israel 1999 to 2003, High Commissioner to Cyprus, 2003 and Ambassador to the United States of America 2004 to 2007.

In a book which he just published, Obiozor (2007) has tried to analyze Nigeria's foreign policy under president Olusegun Obasanjo. Indeed Obiozor's comments and views could be described as the real testament to the alleged dynamism and people-oriented dispositions of the Nigerian foreign policy between 1999 and 2007. In the work under review, Obiozor touched on almost every aspect of Obasanjo's foreign policy and not unexpectedly his comments were dripping with eulogies for the manner and results that the regime, according to him, recorded for Nigeria in the international arena. To be from the settlement of intra-African conflict to the granting of credit/loans to African countries' from the transformation of the OAU to AU, to the crystallization of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), to a so-called issue of garnering respectability for Nigeria among the comity of nations, Obiozor had everything complimentary to say about Nigeria's foreign policy during the eight-year rule of president Olusegun Obasanjo.

According to Obiozor "At the risk of sounding immodest, I must state that the indispensability of resolution of the protracted conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Sudan; while demand for president Obasanjo's personal involvement and good offices have become even more urgent in Coted'Ivoire, Congo DRC, the Darfur region, Somalia, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region

And with respect to Nigeria's operation in the international political system, he was of the view that the Obasanjo-led administration performed creditably well. Again, in his own words, (2007) "President Obasanjo has gradually restored Nigeria credibility within the international system". What is indeed certain is that whether it is in terms of the foreign policy bent of the Obasanjo administration or in terms of its execution, Obiozor's book encapsulates all that is in the foreign policy trust of the regime between 1999 and 2007.

Theoretical Review

The importance of a theoretical framework in a work of this nature and magnitude cannot be over-emphasized. This is because theoretical frameworks are akin to what may be called organizing device. They are tools of analysis and as a result they help not only in sharpening the illumination of the research agenda, but also play a very important role in making sure that the subject being investigated is concretely captured without the drawback of what Ollawa (1979) has characterized as 'reification'. Indeed elaborating on this matter, Unanka (2004) has averred that "As framework and lenses by which the social-political analyst arrives at greater understanding, theoretical approaches decide the contours of any investigation and may

determine the value of the outcome of such investigation“. It is therefore in the light of the afore-referenced position that the choice of a theoretical framework becomes a critical step in the consummation of a research undertaking.

In the event, the theoretical framework that is to be deployed in the service of the study at hand is the Centre Periphery paradigm itself a variant of the political economy approach or what has more characteristically been known as the dependency theory. The theory postulates that the world is divided into two. One half is the ‘have country’ or the exploiting nation and the other half is the ‘have-nots’ or the exploited nations. The one is characterized as the Centre whereas the other is said to be the periphery. In a well celebrated article which was entitled *A Structural theory of imperialism* which was published in the *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 8, No. 2, (1971), Johan Galtung stated that the relationship between the centre and the periphery is one of asymmetry or unequal exchange in which the Centre is perpetually exploiting the periphery.

In furtherance of the adumbration of the theory, Galtung averred that in order to be able to exploit the periphery, the centre establishes what he characterized as the ‘bridgehead’ in the periphery and it is through the instrumentality of these local collaborators that it is able to expropriate the resources of the periphery (Galtung 1971). Also, according to this theory, there is the centre of the centre (cC) and the periphery of the Centre (pC). There is also the Centre of the Periphery (Cp) and the periphery of the periphery (pP).

Galtung identified what he termed a harmony of interests between the center of the centre and the centre of the periphery and went on to state that the force at work here are at the behest of imperialism. Subsequently, he also delineated what is termed two mechanisms of imperialism namely; the vertical interaction mechanism and the feudal interaction structure and argue that while the former is the very essence of the unequal relationship, the later is the main instrument for the reinforcement and perpetuation of the unequal may exploitative relationship.

A very incisive and elaborate theoretical framework which we cannot exhaustively expose here for reasons of brevity, the centre-periphery approach to the analysis of international relations captures in a most vivid manner the ramification of the imperialist design in the peripheral countries in terms of the engendering of certain social forces through which the economies (and hence politics) of these countries which are already incorporated in the world capitalist system are exploited for the good of the economy of the west and or the United State of America. Nonetheless, a theoretical framework must also have an empirical referent for it serve the purpose for which it was meant. It is for this reason that we must take Nigeria as our case study.

Selected Critical Milestones in Assessing Nigeria’s Foreign Policy Between 1999 And 2007

In other to relate this to the Nigerian situation, let us examine some of the often vaunted foreign policy actions of the Olusegun Obasanjo led administration between 1999 and 2007. In other words, let us briefly analyze issues like: (a) the debt forgiveness as a so called achievement, (b) the transformation of the OAU to the AU, (c) the military intervention in Liberia, (d) the initiative at NEPAD and (e) the hosting of CHOGM.

(a) Debt Forgiveness as a so called achievement

The extracting of a measure of debt forgiveness (60%) from the Paris Club of creditors under the aegis of the IMF and the World Bank by the Obasanjo led administration has often been touted as one of the major fall-outs of the regime's foreign policy. Indeed speaking during a well circulated interview, the dramatic persona and in fact the woman who actually authored the script in the whole scenario; Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala had eulogized the whole enterprise thus "you see it is an act of God that in each and every place, my former colleagues (at the world bank) were there. That is why I say God wants us to get the debt relief this year" (Tell Magazine, no. 29, July 18, 2005).

However a detailed study of the circumstance of the Nigerian debt burden shows that the country had no need of paying out a whopping Twelve billion United States Dollars (\$12 billion) of hard earned money to realize the so called debt relief. First is the fact that the debts were of doubtful origin. Indeed according to the then Nigerian Minister of Finance, nobody really knew what the debt profile of the country was at the initial stages of the negotiation with the Bretton Woods Financial institutions and the Paris Club of Creditors (Tell Magazine: 46, no. 29, July, 2005). This indeed would have been a very good moral ground from which the debts or at least substantial part could have been repudiated. However that was not to be mainly because the government wanted to be in the good books of the international financial institutions and western nay the United State of American governments. Needless to say it would have been unthinkable for the Obasanjo government to have contemplated anything of the sort given the fact of the avalanche of IMF and World Bank staffers and apostles who were the brains running the debt cancellation drive (Nwahiri, 2007).

(b) The transformation of the OAU to the AU.

This is said to be another of the foreign policy achievement of the government that subsisted in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007. Indeed it is a bogey that is often flaunted in an attempt to project that regime as one that really achieved a lot in the formulation and execution of a dynamic foreign policy agenda that resulted in the concretization of the national interest of the country (Obiozor: 2007, Nwahiri: 2007)

The need for a continental government for Africa is a historical necessity. It is in fact a necessity which must animate and re-energize an inevitability that suffered an avoidable accident of suspended animation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1963, when on account of the evil machinations of imperialist manipulations, the imperceptive Monrovia group (made up and saturated by the presence of pro-imperialist lackeys like Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria) triumphed over the much more dynamic and Afro centric Casablanca group led by the inimitable Krumah of Ghana. One of the major fall-outs was that Africa lost a momentous opportunity to institute and agree on the modus operandum of a charter for continental integration that would have heralded her into a political union. Needless to say such a continental government would necessarily and inevitably have been a bulwark against all the vicissitudes that the peoples of African descent are going through in contemporary world events.

To be exact, the pervasion of the authentic unification spirit and the subsequent substitution of a tentative agenda that took place in Ethiopia in 1963 and which witnessed the formation of the OAU along the theoretical framework of functionalism was perhaps an event of immense negative historical proportions. Henceforth Africa was left bare, bereft of any internally generated momentum for any meaningful progress either for an autarchic independent development or effective operationalization of its enlightened self interest in the contemporary international political system. Indeed Nkrumah (1970) was being prophetic when he averred that “Unless Africa is politically united under an All-African Union Government, there can be no solution to our political and economic problems”

To this effect, credit cannot be given the Olusegun Obasanjo government with any achievement in its facilitation of the formation of the African Union. We posit that the government could have done more and was also in a position to do so but never did. It is also instructive to note that Nigeria which claims to be the giant of Africa was in the vanguard of those Monrovia group which frustrated the 1960s. There is therefore a line of continuity in the conservatism that was manifested by the Balewa government in Addis Ababa in 1963 and that exhibited by the chief Olusegun Obasanjo led administration as far as the formation of a union government for Africa is concerned. The one substituted the formation of a continental union government for the OAU and the other the AU for the same purpose. Witness also the demonstration of the same spirit by the Nigerian delegation led by Vice President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan towards the same objective during the last summit of the AU in Addis Ababa recently. The position of this study is that the so called changes that have been wrought on the constitutive instruments of the AU are merely cosmetic and are incapable of making the organization realize the political and economic interests of Africa in the murky waters of extra continental politics. In any case, Morgenthau (1967) has taught us that politics particularly international politics is indeed a struggle for power. It is therefore a tragic irony that a foreign policy action, which did not at least attempt the realization of African unity on a framework that could possibly redefine positively, the location of the continent in the power calculus of the world, is often bandied about as an achievement by the erstwhile administration. And if the African interest was compromised, we do not see how that could (even if remotely) promote the realization of Nigeria’s national interest.

(c) The military intervention in Liberia.

As we have already pointed out earlier in this work the peace effort in Liberia has often been credited to the government led by chief Olusegun Obasanjo between 1999 and 2007. However it must be stated that it was the military government led by former president Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida that look that military-interventionist initiative. It is therefore only proper to argue that the government that subsisted between 1999 and 2007 inherited that situation when it arrived in May 29, 1999. Nonetheless an undeniable fact was that erstwhile president Olusegun Obasanjo did take some actions to bring that internecine conflict to an end. However certain question remain to be clarified with respect to this matter.

In the first place, what was the costs of that intervention to the people of Nigeria and what were the benefits? Note that we have already stated the fact that there is no altruism in international politics. Nations try as much as they could not to get entangled in such huge military confrontations particular if their national interests are not directly involved. In addition even when such interventions are inevitable, attempts are made to extracts as much benefits; diplomatic, economic, and military from the beneficiaries of such interventions. What gains did the Nigeria government derive with respect to our national interest vis-à-vis the intervention in Liberia? The answer is an emphatic 'none'. Rather it was an aggrandizement that was fashioned on an incoherent policy that is akin to the father Christmas and big brother figure; an orientation to action in foreign policy which Adeniji has seriously condemned (PAC publication, 2005).

The country formally had experienced a diplomatic embarrassment which former Liberian president Taylor's refuge in Nigeria had caused the country in diplomatic circles around the world. Taylor was escorted into Nigeria by president Olusegun Obasanjo even though it was well known that many of the Suit Case that the ex-liberian war lord was carrying contained millions of illicit dealings in Diamonds which he made from Sierra Leone where he was said to have exported war (The News; vol.26, page 41, may1,2006).

Note also that the ambivalence and fraud that characterized Taylor's so called escape from his abode in Calabar was said to have been an attempt by the Nigerian government not to annoy the fugitive to the point of revealing the dirty side of his relationship with Nigerian high government officials (including the then president) who were said to have been his big-time business partners while the war raged on in Liberia. Neither did this ugly part of the relationship end with Taylor's arrival in Nigeria. Instead he was said to sold his private jet (which to all intents and purpose is the property of the Liberian people) to a Nigerian government official. It is indeed in the light of all of these that the united states government also snubbed president olusegun obasanjo who on the eve of the purported escape of Taylor was visiting the united state of America and was almost refused audience by president George W Bush. (the news; vol. 26,no.16, page 41,may 1,2006)

Add that to the fact that there are no notable Nigeria manufacturing or construction concerns that are involved in the business of rebuilding the war raved economy and the futility of the country's intervention in Liberia and the massive resources in terms of men and materials would better be appreciated. On the converse side, Nigeria's image was badly dented from bad publicity occasioned by the accusation that her military top brass got involved in the illicit diamond trade that went on in Liberia while the war lasted. This had the ugly consequence of contributing to the lowering of standards and pollution of the professional spirit within the armed forces.

(d) The initiative at NEPAD

There is a considerable corpus of writing on the importance of NEPAD as an all embracing policy framework for Nigeria nay African socio-politico and economic development. NEPAD is the acronym for New partnership for African Development; the latest policy framework for Africa's development which was launched in October 2001. It is also said to be the initiative of African Heads of States and Government under the aegis of the African Union (Obiozor, 2007).

Indeed to recent positive comment on Nigeria's foreign policy under the erstwhile Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as president has failed to give a pride of place to the emergence of NEPAD and Obasanjos' purposed preeminent and leadership role in it. For instance his spectacular courage in the leadership of the African Union was said to have been a factor in the banishing of coup d'états in Africa and within the matrix of this achievement, NEPAD and its ancillary organs like the African Peer Review Mechanism are all enhancing public support for transparency in public Affairs (Obiozor:2007)

However questions could be raised as to the reality of the envisaged capability of NEPAD in leading to the economic and political transformation of Nigeria nay Africa. Our position is that the overtly loaded optimism and hope on the veracity of the promises of the NEPAD initiative is grossly misplaced. According to Obiozor (2007) "On its part, Africa has adopted on over-arching strategy to overcome marginalization through the New partnership for African Development (NEPAD). NEPAD is a program of the African Union (AU) with the long-term objective of eradicating poverty in Africa, and placing African countries on the path of sustainable growth and development" Nothing could be farther from the truth.

For a start, it could be stated that the NEPAD Instrument is not as home grown as is being bandied about. Highlighting this important aspect of NEPAD Odion-Akhaine (2004) had stated inter alia. "Inspired by the west ownership claimed by Africa, it aims at resource mobilization, through debt relief, Official Development Assistance (ODA) and FDI. It is essentially underpinned by many of the neoliberal assumptions which informed previous policy reforms in Africa". In reality, it could have been written by anybody in Africa or Nigeria. However the assumptions it makes about Africa and the way out of its present developmental quagmire are all symptomatic of an IMF and World Bank derivative. Needless to say these assumptions are not only misplaced, they are also incapable of achieving the targeted objectives. But that is not even the main issue here.

NEPAD is not the first of its kind in terms of blue prints for African economic and political development over the last two decades. According to Bukarambe (2004) in a publication of the NIIA entitled NEPAD in the Nigerian Dock, "by the time NEPAD was launched in October 2001, Africa had gone through six other economic recovery programmes in the past 20 years without the continent experiencing any significant improvement". Indeed he went on to state unequivocally that in terms of problems and prospects, NEPAD was not going to be any different

from the others before it. To be exact, we could not agree any more with this position and this is for a number of reasons.

First is the fact that in placing a lot of hope on the efficacy of NEPAD, contemporary African leaders seem to have put the cart before the horse. This is because it could not be denied that central to Africa's development problematic whether in terms of the political or the economic is the underdevelopment and dependency which has been that lot of the continent and which is the culmination of the asymmetrical relationship that has characterized more than five hundred years of the incorporation of African into the world capitalist system. It is not only a relationship of unequal exchange, it is one in which there is the unmitigated out flow of resources from the African homeland to the metropolitan centers in Europe and the United States of America. On other attribute of this relationship is that it is based on a vertical international division of labour in which Nigeria-type societies are consigned to the unenviable position of providers of raw materials whose prices are determined by the capitalist centres and consumers of industrial goods whose supply and prices are determined development partners and the Bretton Woods financial institutions were going to come to Africa's aid in the financing of the NEPAD programmes!

The optimism that NEPAD is going to succeed when the two expected sources of funding (both internal and external) are neither here nor there is borne out of either a certain level of intellectual dishonesty that is aimed at camouflaging the objective conditions in Africa today or unmitigated ignorance of such realities. It is therefore not a false saying to contend that Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and his co-travelers (who are the founders of NEPAD) are critically aware of these objective African conditions and that they instead chose to initiate policies to the contrary because of their locus as local petit bourgeois compradorial elements whose role in the mode of Galtung's 'Bridgehead' is critical in the massive expropriation of Africa by the forces of western capitalism and imperialism.

It is also in the light of the afore-stated background that we must assess the so called achievement in the foreign policy domain of the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo led administration between 1999 and 2007. This is to say that the notion of achievement emanates from the NEPAD initiative is rather misplaced because in the long run, it is only an ineffective stop-gap measure which is merely going to perpetuate the African nay the Nigerian development problematic; underdevelopment and dependency with very dire consequences for life and death on the African continent. Ordinarily, NEPAD as partnership with Europe and America should not have been a bad idea. However in the circumstances of the local ecological and the international systemic factors conditioning the present arrangement, such a partnership arrangement is to say the least patently disadvantageous (Wilmot, 1979).

(e) The hosting of CHOGM

Among the touted foreign policy achievements of the Nigerian government between 1999 and 2007, none is as unacceptable as the hosting by that government of the commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Abuja in December 2003. According to Nwahir (2007) "Nigeria hosted the prestigious Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Abuja, December 2003 which Queen Elizabeth the second and Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister attended. These events no doubt signaled the readmission of Nigeria into global politics"

Now given the pervasiveness of the kind of views expressed above, one is tempted to ask questions as to the relevance of the Commonwealth in the scheme of things in the contemporary international political system. Again what benefits are derivable from memberships of the Commonwealth organization to a country like Nigeria?

It is important to posit that there is not much except of course that it is one of the vestiges of better forgotten British colonialism in Nigeria. Indeed the British Commonwealth of nation is simply a historical anachronism perpetuated by Britain to boost the convoluted image of its erstwhile role as an imperial hegemon in world affairs. It is also an attempt to feather the nests of a receding colonial power that was overwhelmed by the emergence of the two new superpowers on the aftermath of the second World War. Lacking the military strength, the economic resources and the technological powers to still remain relevant in the power calculus of the emergent post World War two configuration of forces, Britain sought refuge in a so-called Commonwealth that has nothing common about it.

It is therefore a mark of the neocolonialist tendencies that continues to colour and underpin Nigeria's foreign policy permutation and execution that the country still finds it necessary to keep and nurture its membership of what is purely a historical relic. Needless to say the Commonwealth symbolizes the attempted recrudescence of an imperial power that is spent and relegated to the background. One therefore wonders how Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's hosting of a meeting of such an organization or his championing of Nigeria's membership into that could have amounted to something that should be recorded on the positive side for him. If anything that he sought to keep Nigeria within the Commonwealth; that he hosted such a meeting in which millions of the hard earned tax payers' money was wasted (and this within the matrix of the abject poverty that is pillaging the land) is one more proof that the country was in the deepest quagmire of neocolonialist exploitation at the time.

Conclusion

From the of analysis done in this work to as determine the nature and orientation of the foreign policies under the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, important findings were made and towing that line, this research takes its position that era of the second coming of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as Nigerian president between 1999 and 2007 did not witness the inauguration and implementation of a dynamic and people-oriented foreign policy dedicated to the realization of

Nigeria's national interests. In addition even if the policies that were enunciated and implemented were with the best of intentions (and this is for the sake of argument) such policies were misdirected because the national interest of the country was not properly articulated and identified. That there is no altruism in international politics and that countries in all instance work to actualize their national interests. Therefore it is totally unacceptable that the whole gamut of Nigera's assistance to countries in Africa seemed to have been extended in the manner of a 'Father Christmas'. As a result no tangible or even intangible benefits accrued from such undertakings inspite of the enormous human and material resources that were wasted in their execution. That foreign policy properly so called is the external projection of a country's domestic environment and that even though the index of local conditions might contain other elements, the economic is the watershed which determines every other thing. Therefore in examining the foreign policy of any given political entity, it is always important to examine the dynamics that generate and animate those local conditions and of course the nature of the relationship between those local conditions and the world capitalist system. And that the incidence of failure in the foreign policy arena of the Olusegun Obasanjo presidency is the direct consequence of neocolonialism since the economy was and continues to be exploited by those foreign interests.

Recommendation

In line with the landmark discoveries made by this work, the researcher recommended among other things that;

As the leading black nation in the world, Nigeria must begin to query the justness of certain international treaties, which she erroneously acceded to. it is true that the harbingers and holders of the contemporary hegemonic positions the world over would in all instances plead Pacta Sunt Servanda (that parties to a treaty are obligated to fulfill the duties consequent on their membership and not walk away from it) as their alibi. To such an ignoble retort, Nigeria should also plead Rebus Sic Stantibus (that a party to a treaty can abdicate the obligations if a change of fundamental nature has made the fulfillment of such treaty obligations impossible)

It has been established as a fact that international politics is the true personification of power politics. It is also the veritable consummation of alignment to ones national interests. Therefore the country Nigeria must no longer operate in such a way as to be seen as anybody's good boy as such a posture is symptomatic of weakness and servility. But ensure that the national interest always take precedence to morality in international politics.

It needs to be reiterated that Nigeria is only the giant of Africa, she is also the pride of the black man nomatter where he is found anywhere in the world. This also means that Nigeria does have a manifest destiny dictated by the historical imperatives of the Blackman and the African continent. Needles to say, the logic and dictates of this historical necessity and the enormity of the elements of national power that it has pleased Mother Nature to bless Nigeria with also demand that hers is the inauguration of an activist and anti-imperialist foreign policy on the

globe. To be able to do this a number of actions call for urgent attention. These actions must be politico-economic and must aim at moving Nigeria away from her current hopeless location in the configuration of forces in the contemporary international system.

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