

The Conduct of Nigerian Foreign Policy since Independence-1999

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Abstract: *Nigeria's foreign policy has navigated from the colonial conservation of Britain to a more dynamic trend that is Afrocentric which was introduced by the Gowon and Mohammed administrations. Both domestic and external factors propelled the Nigerian state to alter its foreign policy outreach thereafter. This paper examines the dynamic trend of Nigeria foreign policy from independence to 1999 when the military took their exit and handed over power to a democratically-elected government. A cursory focus of the policy thrusts of various regimes was x-rayed and the different factors that were responsible for their emergence. From the examination the paper made findings which include that Nigeria's foreign policy like other nation states is dynamic and responsive to its environments. It was concluded that Nigeria indeed has reached a zenith in realizing her objectives and recommended among others that there is need to involve a stable polity in the country.*

Keywords: *Foreign Policy; Nigeria; Independence; Conduct.*

1. INTRODUCTION

For a meaningful comprehension of Nigeria's foreign policy, there is need to attempt to prefer the meaning of the concept. Foreign Policy has been and is observed and considered in divergent perspectives by the scholars of the field of international relations, and nobody has really formulated a universally acceptable definition of the terminology and probably nobody will ever succeed in doing so (Ake, 1981). On the strength of the foregoing therefore, we shall make an x-ray of divergent conceptualizations by some scholars. Foreign Policy is an inter play between the outside and the inside (Ake, 1996). The Foreign Policy of a state usually refers to the general principle by which a state governs its reflection to the international environment (Anderson, 2015).

Foreign Policy is presumably something less than the sum of policies which have an effect upon national governments (AWA, 2006). It is also seen consisting of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and another (Bertch et al, 1978). In another view, Foreign Policy has been defined as a dynamic process of interaction between the changing domestic demands and support and the changing external circumstances (Braybrooke and Linblom, 1963). Foreign Policy could be the strategy or planned course of action developed by the decision makers of a state vis-à-vis other states or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in terms of the national interest (Darhl, 1995). It could be posited as that policy which involves the formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape the behavioural pattern of a state while negotiating with other states to protect or further its vital interest (Dror, 1968). Wallace (1997) sees Foreign Policy in terms of high diplomacy, as concerned primarily with other states, with international stability and the rules of the international system, and with the promotion of the national interest through the cultivation of good relations with other government and the negotiation and maintenance of international agreements (Dye and Ziegler, 1986).

Although there has been no universal satisfaction of the concept, it is quite revealing from the meanings espoused above that Foreign Policy is a dynamic process involving interaction between the domestic and the external environment. This of course will be in accordance with the national interests of the states concerned. In sum, Foreign Policy is essentially the instrumentality by which states influence or seek to influence the external world, and to attain objectives that are in consonance with their perceived national interest. Hence, we can conceive of Nigeria's Foreign Policy as the explicit objectives which Nigeria wants to pursue and achieve in her external relations. Essentially, it is the instrumentality by which Nigeria influences the global environment and through which she realizes objectives that are in conformity with her perceived national interest.

To appreciate Nigerian Foreign Policy one has to understand the critical factors involved in the historical foundations; the principles; objectives and channels of making and conducting Foreign Policy. It is therefore on these premises that Nigeria's foreign policy has thrived since independence.

The Nigerian state is a heritage of the colonial merger of hitherto heterogeneous nationalities into one. It came as a state by the accident of European slave trade in Africa. Therefore, Nigeria became an historical geographical expression, powered by phony claims by the European based on treaties entered into with the illiterate traditional rulers of the vicinity. Although elites of ethnic divisions sought, fought and won political independence of Nigeria, the boundaries remained ill-defined by the distant and ill-informed negotiators that were unsuitable to the socio-cultural entities. Nigeria is perceived as an imposition upon the people because its merger was only facilitated simply by the custom duties by the erstwhile colonial masters (Worsely, 1967).

Against this background, the welding together into a state of ancient cultural zones became an effort of more administration convenience than by any means a conscious encouragement to a wider political identification, association and power. In other words, the evolution of the Nigerian foreign policy could be traceable to the long-standing trade and diplomatic relations transpired between kingdoms, chiefdoms and city states that were forced into the British Colonial influence, as the European states like Britain, Holland, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany and Belgium (Ofoegbu, 1996). Thus, under the colonial rule Nigeria lost the power to formulate its foreign policy to imperial Britain (Akinyemi, 1974).

The principles that guide Nigerian foreign policy are in conformity with the well-established principles of traditional law as well as the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU). They are as follows:

- Sovereign equality of all states;
- Respect of territorial integrity and independence of other states;
- Commitments of self-determination and independence of other states;
- Commit to functional approach as a means of promoting cooperation and peaceful co-existence in Africa
- Non-alignment to any geo-political power blocs.

The objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy have, since the country's attainment of independence in 1960, been broadly spelt out by successive administrations. Be that as it may, the most central and common upon which others are anchored being the promotion of the national interest of the federation of its citizens. Therefore, among the elements of the national interest which also constitute the objectives of the country's foreign policy as follows:

The defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;

- The creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time, foster national self-reliance and rapid economic development.
- The promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world;
- The promotion and the defence of justice and respect for human dignity especially the dignity of the black men.
- The defence and promotion of world peace (Etzioni, 1967). However, while these grand objectives described Nigeria's national interest, some of them, as Aluko posits are not realistic and cannot therefore "provide rational and realistic basis for the country's external behaviour; (Eyestone, 1971). Section of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended lucidly enact the basic objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy under the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy. In spite of the slight adjustment in the various assertions, the substance of the foreign policy objectives generally has not changed. Whatever differences that exist therefore cannot be attributed to changes in substance but rather in the emphasis placed on the specific objectives as well as the style adopted by a particular regime in executing the objectives (ACHR, 2004).

In this regard, the nature of Nigerian foreign policy is such that emerging nations in the international arena do make for a situation in which the new state would be free from all hiccups to formulate and implement their foreign relations. And in the case in which Nigeria had to contend with the colonial

heritage, it meant that the status-quo anti-thesis in the run-up to her sovereignty, and even thereafter, also had to contend with quite a retinue of prejudices and biases. Therefore, what culminated into the Nigeria's foreign policy was mostly cloned from the colonial heritage.

2. OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY SINCE INDEPENDENCE

2.1. 1960-1966

Nigeria's foreign policy commenced on a moderate level of independence, wider Balewa as prime Minister and Head of Government under the parliamentary regime, while Azikiwe was the Governor-General and ceremonial Head of State. As the master of foreign policy of Nigeria, Balewa inherited the very difficult but herculean task of having to shape the Nigerian foreign policy completely out of nothing (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). This was because Nigeria under colonial rule had no separate foreign policy that was entirely its own as all foreign policy decisions were taken by Britain on its behalf. Significantly, Balewa adopted a conservative, Pro-Western policy. Although, he embraced the policy of non-alignment, there was no firm commitment by this government towards it. According to Balewa, Nigeria would be "non-aligned in international relations with regard to the big power blocs, but never neutral in matters affecting African peoples" (Kolb, 1978). He stressed further that Nigeria would be adequately objective, selecting the policy for each occasion in "Nigeria's interest and in that of world peace" and that the country would not associate herself "as a matter of routine with any of the power blocs" (Latham, 1998).

In spite of the unequivocal statement by Balewa, his government's foreign policy was generally Pro-West while his proclaimed non-aligned posture was more in name than in action. He absolutely committed to western idea of idea enterprise and believed that communism was an evil that must contact avoided. He thus made sure that contact between Nigeria and Eastern Europe was highly restricted in conformity with his determination to "prevent the infiltration of communism and communist ideas into Nigeria". The most concrete and visible manifestation of Balewa government's alignment with Britain was the Anglo-Nigeria Defence pact of 1961 under which Nigeria granted Britain unrestricted overflying and air staging facilities in the federation (Lemin, 1984). The pact was not conceived as being incompatible with the policy of non-alignment and it was not until after violent student demonstrations and sharp criticisms by opposition groups that the pact was abrogated in 1962. Even then the abrogation was not without a clause that each of the government would strive at all times to render "such assistance and facilities in defence matters as are appropriate between partners in the common wealth (Linblom, 1959). This shows that although the pact was dead, its spirit continued to live. Indeed, the pro-Western policy of the Balewa government was manifested in various ways throughout the first republic. Similarly, while the Balewa regime emphasized that the corner stone of Nigeria's foreign policy would be Africa, subsequent actions of government did not justify the pronouncement as there was little concretely done to illustrate the proclaimed Afrocentric policy.

On the issue of non-alignment, it was glaring that Balewa's government could not have remained neutral in the East-West ideological war. Although the Prime Minister eventually pronounced non-alignment as one of the principles of the Nigerian foreign policy, it was probably to satisfy a section of the coalition government. While discerning that Nigeria would pursue a policy of non-alignment in her relationship with the then two blocs, Balewa went on to declare that:

We are grateful to the British who we have known as masters, then as leaders, and finally as partners, but always as friends, we shall never forget our friends (Akinyemi, 1974).

These friends obviously were the British and their traditional western allies. As regard non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, excessive attachments to legalism and ignorance made the country's foreign policy a confusing lot. This explains Nigeria's policy towards the Congo crises in the early 1960s as well as the country's hasty decisions in 1961 (Oyelakin, 1989) to sever diplomatic ties with France over her atomic bomb test in the Sahara Desert, even though the action was jointly agreed upon by all African countries. The bottom line here is that Nigeria was able to learn a lesson in international policies that morality did not matter as such. On January 15, 1966, Ironsi, benefited from the coup that toppled Balewa's government and because the first military Head of the Nigerian state. Though his government was short-lived, Ironsi did not shift from the Pro-West posture as his government as engulf in the struggle to resolve the huge domestic problems precipitated

by the ousted civilian leadership. And irrespective of the crises that characterized his government, Ironsi was able to reiterate to the apartheid South African regime that the policy of separate existence, was absolutely unacceptable to Nigeria (Oyelakin, 1989). While serving economic and other relations with the apartheid South Africa, Ironsi also banned the sale in Nigeria, of all Portuguese goods with a condition that until the Lusophone African States were free from the clutches of colonial oppression (Nwolise, 1984).

2.2. 1966-1975

With the fall of Ironsi's regime in July 29, 1966 Gowon became the Head of State. The serious internal conflicts which erupted brought the Nigerian state to a near stage of disintegration. And these had adverse impact on Nigeria's external relations as the country could not play an active role in foreign policy except that officials were busy trucking the world to explain the circumstances of the fratricidal civil war which raged interruptedly for 30 months, (July 1966 – January, 1970). Therefore, the concentration of events that preceded the civil war as the civil war itself made Gowon to begin to have a rethink in the area of foreign policy. As the pro-Western posture of Nigeria's foreign policy continued unabated, Nigeria relaxed relations with the Eastern Europe, as government began to shift ground and open up to the Eastern bloc. For instance, when Britain refused to supply aircraft to Nigeria, the Nigerian government turned to the defunct Soviet Union which did supplied aircraft and arms and ammunitions and before the end of the war, Eastern Europe generally as the defunct Soviet Union, the Caribbean countries as China were cultivated by Gowon to become friends with Nigeria. This help assiduously to balance the principle of non-alignment and neutrality.

Gowon also redefined Nigeria's foreign policy towards African states, amidst other issues such as the elite criticism of non-alignment posture, the apartheid policy in South Africa, the Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of independence in Southern Rhodesia. The formation of ECOWAS in July, 1975 was the climax of Gowon's foreign policy outings just before he was ousted from office by Mohammed. And the keeping together of the Nigeria state as one indivisible entity, despite the civil war, was one of the greatest achievements of Gowon's diplomatic relations. In the process, Nigeria learnt that in foreign policy relations, there is neither permanent friend nor permanent enemy, rather permanent interest is paramount. As a result of this, Nigeria became a force to be reckoned with in Africa. Still under the government of Gowon, Nigeria played a leading role in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Lome Conventions in 1975, between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the African, Caribbean and the Pacific states (ACP), concerning trade, aid and investments (Babalola, 2004).

2.3. 1975-1979

Mohammed brought dynamism and activism into Nigeria's external relations. The administration's interest in foreign affairs was demonstrated by the setting up of the Adedeji Commission to overhand the foreign policy machinery of the country. The commission's recommendations led to a redefinition of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and the setting up of guidelines that determined fundamentally the course of Nigeria's external relations. These foreign policy objectives were identified as follows:

The defence of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;

- The creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries, while at the same time fostering national self-reliance and rapid economic development.
- The promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world.
- The promotion and defence of justice and respect for human dignity, especially the dignity of the black man, and
- The defence and promotion of world peace.
- These objectives, he said, were to be pursued with the realization that the centre-piece of Nigeria foreign policy was Africa, Mohammed said that Nigeria was committed to the total liberation of all oppressed black people in Africa and indeed anywhere else in the world. Based on this, the Mohammed regime made far reaching impact and achieved significant fact in foreign policy issues. The most cites was Nigeria's dramatic and timely intervention in the Angola Independence crisis in 1976 which remarkably illustrates the dynamic and action oriented Afrocentric policy of

the administration. Strictly, Nigeria's initial primary concern was the establishment of a national government by the three leading political groups in the country namely the movement for the liberation of the peoples of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for total Independence of Angola (UNITA). According to Oyelakin (1989), the whole world was astounded when General Mohammed recognized MPLA and gave support to its leader, Augustino Neto. As a result Angola became (absolutely) independent under Neto.

However the East-West ideological differences soon became manifest as the three different groups aligned to each of the existing two ideological camps-East led by the defunct Soviet Union and West led by the United States of America, thus bringing into fore power rivalry between the two super powers. While the MPLA gained the support of the Soviet Union, the FNLA and Unita were backed by the United States. South Africa was equally supporting the FNLA and UNITA. Nigeria was however still encouraging in three factional groups to jointly work together to gain independence in the interest of their people. By November 22, 1975, the country was still in support of government of national unity. However, when it became obvious that apartheid South-Africa was tireless working to ensure that a puppet government was formed in Luanda by the UNITA and FNLA. Nigeria spontaneously reconsidered her position, and on November 25, 1975, the country announced its recognition of the MPLA government as the legitimate government and the one representing the interest of the Angolan people. In an address delivered at the Kampala summit of the then OAU in January 1976, Mohammed declared unequivocally that the Nigerian Federal Military government has been deeply convinced that the MPLA is the most dynamic, most nationalistic of all the movements representing the interests of the Angolan people and convinced that it possesses the attributes of an effective government joined other African (23) countries in according it recognition (Newswatch, 1985).

At the wake of February 13, 1976, Mohammed was assassinated in an abortive coup led by Dinka and Obasanjo continued in office as the Head of State. Obasanjo continued with the same as laid down by Mohammed, and Nigeria's voice continued to be heard in the international community. Some of the most outstanding things done by Obasanjo administration were the punitive measures applied to British Companies following Britain's unacceptable policy in Rhodesia and Apartheid South Africa. For instance, in 1978, the British-owned Barclays Bank was partially nationalized in Nigeria when government took over 80% of the company's shares and changed its name to Union Bank of Nigeria Limited. His foreign policy thrusts greatly enhanced the independence of Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) in 1980. This was made possible by the nationalisation of British petroleum in 1979 as a means that hastened the Lancaster's Conference. The action partly pressurized the British Prime Minister, Thatcher to promptly open negotiations with Mugabe's patriotic Front (PF) which had before now been stigmatized as a terrorist organization. Also the slogan; Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria foreign policy made its debut as popularity through the role of Nigeria in African external relations. The partial nationalization of Barclays bank and the taking over of British petroleum because of their links with apartheid South Africa were no debut practical demonstrations of Nigeria's Afro-centric and non-aligned policy. The government also pursued with vigor its decolonization policy and provided financial and logistic support for the liberation movements particularly these in Southern Africa (Akinboye, 1999).

Furthermore, Obasanjo assured indigenes of other African countries resident in Nigeria that nothing in the indigenization measures would affect them and hoped that Nigerians residents in those other African countries would enjoy reciprocal courtesies. In 1976 Nigeria pulled out of the Olympic games at Montreal, Canada as a protest measure against the participation of New Zealand because that country refused to end sporting link with South-Africa. The immediate cause of the withdrawal was that while the Soweto massacre of the defenceless women and school children was ongoing, the New Zealand rugby team competed in South Africa concurrently (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

In September 1, 1976, Nigeria joined the nuclear club and a new decree was announced to enable the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission develop nuclear power for peaceful uses only. Nigeria initiated talks with West Germany on the purchase of atomic power plant with a 450 Megawatt medium range reactor valued at about 1,000 million Deutschmark.

In July 20, 1976 the federal government took over and offered for sale 120 companies owned by non-Nigerians for violating schedule one of the Nigerian Enterprise Promotion Decree of March, 1972. Also, the FESTAC that was initiated by his predecessor Mohammed was declared open at Lagos

by Obasanjo. The festival was organized to bring together all peoples of Africa and black world in diaspora to forge out a closer link of cooperation, friendship and understanding. The philosophical assumption therefore was that the new search for realism must start from the root with the rediscovery and harmonization of African common beliefs, values, attitudes and goals for the development of our heritage (Kamany, 1978).

2.4.1979-1983

In line with the Mohammed Obasanjo regime's political transition programme, Obasanjo successfully handed over power to the civilian government of Shagari in October era witnessed a retrogressive reversal in Nigeria's foreign policy posture bequeathed to it. Nigeria once again reverted to the conservative, pro-Western policy that was reminiscent of the Balewa era. Although Section 19 of the 1979 constitution committed government towards promoting African unity, little effort was made by Shagari to actualize this. Rather than pursuing an active foreign policy, he engaged in proactive policy. For instance, in June 1981, Shagari failed to attend the OAU summit in Nairobi, Kenya on the flimsy excuse that the OAU secretariat did not list on the agenda the border conflict between Nigeria and Cameroun, similarly, Shagari regime declared in 1982 that Nigeria would not attend the OAU summit in Tripoli, Libya unless Libya satisfied certain conditions that all OAU members states should be allowed to participate, secondly, Libya must withdraw its troops from Chad; and thirdly, under the pretext that a quorum had been formed.

In 1981, Shagari condemned the continued occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco as a clear case of colonization. Nigeria had also refused the admission of western Sahara into OAU because of jeopardized the achievements of the OAU good offices committee, the ADHOC Committee and the implementation Committee on western Sahara to which Nigeria belonged (Ofogebu, 1979).

In 1980, Shagari echoed in a visit to the USA that it was a futile exercise to conceive of a military victory against South Africa. The Nigerian position at the time was not tactical enough because even if victory could be achieved through sustained warfare, at least, violence was inevitable and it was untimely of Nigeria to hasten to make such devastating and demoralizing statement on the decolonization of apartheid. Although the Shagari administration supported decolonization, its commitment to it was not sufficient due mostly to the severe economic crisis which the country began to experience in the early 1980s.

2.5.1983-1985

Amidst the deepening economic crises, the Shagari government was toppled by the military junta headed in December 31, 1983, Buhari reverted to the dynamic foreign policy posture of the Mohammed/Obasanjo regime. He pledged their Nigeria would continue to maintain Africa as the centre-piece of its foreign policy. And as a matter of routine, the Buhari regime reformulated the principles as objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy in the underlisted terius:

- The eradication of all the vestiges of colonization from the continent and the liberation of Namibia;
- The destruction of apartheid in racist South Africa;
- The peaceful resolution of conflicts in the continent; and
- The development of the continent through regional co-operation.

The Buhari regime which prided itself as an offshoot of the Mohammed/Obasanjo government made strenuous efforts to follow that regime's footprints on foreign policy. For instance, just as the preceding government accorded recognition to MPLA in Angola, the Buhari administration recognized the Polisario government in Western Sahara against the backdrop of opposition by some African states. The Buhari government also re-launched Nigeria's deep commitment to the cause of freedom and liberation struggle particularly in South-Africa. Realizing that strong economy and good national morale are part of the successful foreign policy, Buhari shape a successful foreign policy, Buhari took steps to rehabilitate the nation's economy and established the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) brigade, to instill sound morale into the citizens, but these were not to materialize as he was removed by Babangida in another military coup on August 28, 1985.

2.6.1985-1993

As the leadership changed in August 28, 1985 and Babangida took over is a palace coup the country had a new phase of foreign policy. Babangida relaxed the radical posture of the Buhari government's foreign policy and came up with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP); and on the external

plane, the regime adopted economic diplomacy as the thrust of its foreign policy. However, the SAP failed to restructure the Nigerian economy in a manner as to reduce its dependence on the West. Thus, rather than reducing the nation's economic problem, it has exacerbated it. Similarly, the policy of economy diplomacy has merely succeeded in opening up the nation's economy to external influence. The Babangida regime however made its mark in projecting the country's image as a regional power in the West African sub-region.

Nigeria's leadership role in the Liberian and Sierra-Leonean crises clearly underscores this philosophy. The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which was set up in 1990 at the instance of the Nigerian government and Babangida successfully brought peace to the war torn Liberia.

The peace-keeping force on which Nigeria has expended enormous both human and material resources has also succeeded in achieving the same goal in the crises-ridden Sierra Leone where the legitimate regime of Kabbah was reinstated to power.

The dynamic foreign policy thrusts of the Babangida regime included the Concert of medium Powers, the Technical Aids Corps Scheme (TACS), and Economic Diplomacy as well as conflict resolution in the West African region, among others. However, the administration along the line lost steam, as it became tyrannical and in the process, inflicted very damaging political wounds on the nation by annulling arguably the freest and fairest presidential election in the annals of Nigeria political history, purportedly won by Abiola.

The annulment of the 1993 presidential election plunged the country into serious political logjam, and the political machinations within the military-cum-civilian ruling class forced out Babangida when he pretentiously brought the slogan of "stepping aside". His exit paved way for the lame-duck and or toothless bulldog Shonekan's interim National Government (ING) which has been recorded as a footnote administration in the annal of political journals in Nigeria's history.

Under Shonekan Nigerian foreign policy was quite uneventful, as little was said to be achieved. The ING faced serious problems of legitimacy and popularity whereof it eclipsed on November 17, 1993 when Abacha took over the realms of power to the uneasy position of Head of State.

The Abacha regime followed the footsteps of the Babangida administration on foreign policy machinations. Indeed, apart from consolidating the achievements of Babangida regime, the Abacha years pursued a reactive foreign policy, and there was no significant impact made to project the image of the country beyond the frontiers of Nigeria. For instance, relations with some international organizations particularly the Commonwealth of Nations was not cordial. Abacha should however be credited for issuing a lasting solution to the Liberian crises. This led to a democratically-elected government in that beleaguered country. Also, his government should be commended for carrying out similar assignment in Sierra Leone where the military junta that seized power from a democratically elected government was flushed out by the ECOMOG peace-keeping force led by Nigeria. This led to the emergence of a democratically elected government in that beleaguered country. These events of course also pose a serious challenge to Nigeria in its quest to have an enduring, stable and remarkable democratic system unchallenged by any form of military incursion.

2.7. 1998-1999

However with the demise of Abacha in June 19, 1998, the subsequent assumption of office by Abdulsalam Abubakar, the dispositions of the western oligarchies towards Nigeria swayed. This was a result of the serious commitment which Abubakar showed in handing over power to a democratically elected government in May 29, 1999 and its administration's commendable human rights records. He no doubt boosted Nigeria external image.

3. CONCLUSION

Nigeria's foreign policy has since independence been consistently guided by the same principles and objectives. However, the emphasis that has been persistently laid on them by successive regimes in the country differs depending on the domestic within which decisions are made, the external environment and the attitudinal posture of the foreign policy makers at a given time. The foreign policy environment of the country in the future is likely to be influenced tremendously by the same

principles and objectives with necessary adjustments and modifications depending on the orientations of the political leadership as the existing circumstances in the global system. Since the task of foreign policy is essentially to protect a nation's interest, such imperative would necessarily guide the makers of the country's external policy. Thus, Nigeria's national interest has so far been jealously guided by any governments in power irrespective of their political or ideological inclinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for Nigeria to adopt a sound economic policy as a fundamental pre-requisite for conducting effective foreign policy cannot be over emphasized. Given that all foreign policies spring from the economic base of a state, Nigeria's economic base should re-orientate in such a manner that the country's dependency structure would be removed and a national economy that is capable of sustaining a realistic foreign policy goal will be built. Furthermore, Nigeria should continue to project her leadership image and regional power status particularly in the west African sub-region. In doing so however, emphasis should be laid on multilateral diplomacy. In this regard, Nigeria's security and survival should be seen as inextricably bound up with those of her neighbours, and efforts should also be made to foster peaceful coexistence among ECOWAS member states. It should also be a policy goal for Nigeria to expedite the process of economic integration in the West African sub-region.

Finally, since Nigeria's foreign policy can only be meaningfully conducted in a stable political environment, there is the imperative need to evolve a stable policy in the country. The current political situation in the country does not provide optimism that the leadership adherence to authoritarianism in the form of military rule will not be ignited soon. Hence, the conduct of a credible foreign policy will be difficult if not impossible to achieve. There is therefore the need for a complete overhaul and transformation of the Nigerian political system to true democratic governance to conform with prevailing global best practices. This shall be the only way by which Nigeria can restore her goodwill the international community and brighten the hopes and aspirations of the citizenry in the conduct of a purposeful, credible and dynamic foreign policy in the years ahead.

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