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AN EVALUATION OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY, UNDER THE PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO ADMINISTRATION (1999 – 2007)

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Abstract

This study is an evaluation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy under President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007). This research aimed to provide a detailed background to Nigeria's foreign policy under during the above mentioned regime, with a focus on finding out if the then Nigeria's foreign policy was geared toward the realization of her national interest. There is an abundance of evidence to show that internal policies constitute the key to Nigeria's foreign policy. The research reveals that there is no altruism in international politics and that countries in all instance work to actualize their national interests also 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. This research among other things recommends that Nigerian foreign policy should aim at creating benefits for the betterment of the people. It should no longer focus on Africa without clearly defined policy objectives and that Africa and its crop of inept leaders must as of necessity revisit their modus operandi in domestic politico-economic matters as in the manifestation of their foreign policy.

Keywords: Nigeria, Foreign Policy, President, Olusegun Obasanjo, Administration

Introduction

All states have some kind of relations with one another. This is to say that no state in the modern times can avoid the involvement in the international affairs, and this involvement must be systematic and based on certain principles guiding it. In other words, states in its interactions with one another have to behave with one another in a particular manner. The framing of the foreign policy is, therefore, an essential activity of a modern state, for a state without foreign policy is like a ship without a captain which may drift aimlessly and may be swept away by the wave of current

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events. What a state intends to do is defined by its interests; what is actually able to achieve is a function of its military and economic capability as well as the quality of its diplomacy (Aluko, 1981). The Olusegun Obasanjo administration, though inherited an already existing foreign policy from the previous government, just like other governments made it's own policy to guide the country in her relations with other countries during his administration.

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, this notwithstanding, there still exists contrary opinions.

Akindele and Ate, (2000) revealed that 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: 2005:35) 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, there were still lapses in the administration’s foreign activities.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, at inauguration in May, 1999, inherited a nation with a battered image and without credibility externally. In his determination to regain Nigeria’s lost glory and re-integrate it into the civilized world, he engaged in a deft shuttle diplomacy across the major capitals of the globe. It is in view of the above imperative that the study is set to evaluate Nigeria foreign policy under the Obasanjo’s administration.

Objective of the study

The Objective of this work is therefore to;

Provide a detailed background to Nigeria’s foreign policy under President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007, with a focus on finding out if the then Nigeria’s foreign policy was geared toward the realization of her national interest.

Literature Review

Nigeria’s Foreign Policy under the Obasanjo Regime (1999-2007); A Bird’s Eye View

A brief overview of the policy thrust of Nigeria’s foreign policy between 1999 and 2007 reveals that contrary to opinions expressed in certain quarters, it was overtly conservative and harboured a lot that pandered to the interest of the hegemonic forces of Western Europe and the United States of America. As a result, it did not and could never have aided the realization of the national interests of the country. A foreign policy that is not supported by the existence of a home grown and indigenously-owned economy is, to say the least, antithetical to the projection of independence of action in the international arena.

Indeed whether it was in terms of the country’s involvement in the settlement of intra African disputes or in the consolidation of African initiatives as regards the curtailing of the pillaging effects of the Bretton Woods Financial institutions’ activities within the country as elsewhere in Africa, the story was nothing to write home about. Witness for instance the debacle that was the Liberian in which the country failed to sharpen the policy parameters of its involvement as a result of which it failed to recoup any gains in spite of the enormity of costs attendant to its intervention in the place (Aluko, 1981).

Note also the total failure of the Bakassi policy and the unmitigated pains it did inflict on the Nigerian nation state. Perhaps it is pertinent to add that altruism is seldom the fulcrum around which the wheel of foreign policy revolves. Its main goal at any given time must be the maximization of the national interests of the country.

This failure to enhance the wellbeing for the people of Nigeria between 1999 and 2007 through the initiation and implementation of a dynamic foreign policy can be captured in almost all the foreign policy moves to the Obasanjo regime at the time and our position will become clearer as we carry our comprehensive survey of some critical milestones in the foreign policy of that regime later in a section of this chapter.

The Relationship between the Substructure and the Superstructure; Evaluating the Domestic Economic Imperatives of Obasanjo's Foreign Policy 1999-2007

Stripped of any embellishments and reduce to its most central elements, the dependency approach emphasizes as its article of faith not only the dialectical relationship between the capitalist centres of the world and the undeveloped peripheries in the third world but also-political process in any given political entity presupposes a thorough understanding of the realm of such a formation. Indeed, it is the economic which determines what happens in the other spheres, including the laws, the social relations; in a word it emphasizes that the substructure (the economic) determines the superstructure (the political) this is why it is said to an off-shoot of the Marxian approach to the analysis of political and economic phenomena (Marx, 1848).

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their national productive forces. The sum total of these relations of productions constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

This is precisely what is known as the Marxian economic interpretation of his (Ebenstein: 1973:3)

It is also against this backdrop that we are going to examine the political economy of Nigeria during the Obasanjo years (1999-2009) in order to ascertain the veracity of the claim that given the nature of the domestic political economy that subsisted in Nigeria at the time, the reality of the nature of the history of the centuries- old Euro-American vi-a-vis Nigerian connection, and the selfish and or somewhat anarchic nature of the contemporary international political system, it was impossible for Nigerian to have realized an independently determined and of course people oriented foreign policy (Nwahiri, 2007).

The Congruence of Internal Development Paradigm and Foreign Policy

The thrust of the Nigeria economy between 1999-2007 when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was at the helm of affairs as the president of the federal republic of Nigeria. An evaluation of the economy during this period showed that there was an avalanche of capitalist economic variables and that these were at the behest of the Bretton Woods financial institutions which reinforced the incorporation of Nigeria into the world capitalist system. The net effect was the expropriation of

the Nigerian economy thereby exacerbating underdevelopment and dependency. Needless to say, dependency is antithetical to freedom of action in the foreign policy arena.

The result was that the country was not able to initiate, let alone sustain and implement an independent, people oriented foreign policy that would have been able to guarantee the realization of the its national interest (Obiozor, 2007).

It is the contention in this work that Nigeria did not witness the inauguration and pursuit of a dynamic foreign policy which was capable of securing the real national interest of the country between 1999-2007. Given the potency of the elements of national power available to the country; a very large population, the availability of the petro-dollar that resulted from the price of oil in the international market, the presence of abundant material resources in terms of arable land and other minerals, etc, one would have expected that the Obasanjo regime would rise to the occasion and launch Nigeria into a foreign policy orientation that was geared to the actualization of the country's national interests (Ogwu and Olaniyan, 2005).

Note also that there were certain antecedents of the dramatis persona called Olusegun Obasanjo that should have aided him in talking the world by storm thereby realizing Nigeria's interests in the global system. Here was a man who had gained world acclaim by organizing elections and handing over to a democratically elected government in Nigeria in 1999, this same man had once been appointed a member of the commonwealth Eminent Persons Group as soon as he had left office as a military head of state in 1979. In addition Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was herded into prison on the grounds of what was purely a non existent coup and his imprisonment had generated a global and universal uproar. This same man emerged from the prison and marched to the State House as a democratically elected president and therefore could be said to have had the world waiting for him (Obiozor, 2007).

Indeed it is our position here that the man failed or was incapable of hijacking the momentum of the moment to launch Nigeria into a phase in foreign policy that would have been able to move the country into a new and enhanced echelon in foreign policy actions dedicated to the national interests of the country. Let us hasten to add that whatever achievements that are assigned to that regime could at best be said to be modestly marginal and a number of factors are responsible for this use of a wrong premise as the basis of assessment. Chief among these is the issue of relativism as a benchmark. Here the foreign policy actions of the Olusegun led civilian administration was assessed using the predecessor military administration as the standard. But military governments are aberrations and the world of the twenty-first century has tended to regard them with utter disdain. It is therefore an error of judgment consequent on a wrong premise (Obiozor, 2007).

Now given the orientation to action of the Nigerian government between 1999 and 2007, given the events at the domestic political economy and the nature of the interactive network as it concerned international monopoly finance coupled with the role of the imperialist motivated Bretton Woods financial institutions in Nigeria's trade, monetary and fiscal policies, it is hardly surprising that the regime could not achieve much in terms of the pursuit of the country's foreign policy.

Critical Milestones in Assessing Nigeria's Foreign Policy Between 1999 and 2007

In order to better understand the Nigeria's foreign policy actions of the Olusegun Obasanjo led administration between 1999 and 2007, two major and notable events namely The Debt forgiveness as a so called achievement and the Bakasi imbroglio are examined.

i. The 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 dramatis 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.

Tables 4.2 (a-v): Etevin pages showing how state governments contribute to the debts the eventually mounted against Nigeria.

Table 4.2a ABIA STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
CHF 49,100.000	Umuahia Water Supply Scheme	Not executed
GBP 12,360.000	Arochukwu Ohafia Water Scheme	Not executed
DM 24,457,920	Abia Golden Chicken Farms Ltd Ogwe	Not executed
USD 23,577,745	Rural Electrification Rojegr	Not executed
CHF 43,300.000	Umuahia Ceramic Factory	Not executed
CHF 243,500.000	Glass Ceramic Factory	Executed but failed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2b ADAMAWA STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
FRF 55,45 MILLION	Mubi Bricks Project	Executed but failed
USD 279.8 million	Infrastructure Facility Project Loan	Executed
USD 56 million	Dadin kowa Dam Civil Works	Executed

Source: See the bottom of the table

Table 4.2c AKWA IBOM STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
DM 73,080.000	Qua Steel Products Ltd.	Executed but failed
DM 62,33 million	Sunshine batteries Ltd. Ikot EEkene	Executed but failed
US\$ 11,764,706	Rural Water supply Project	Executed
ATS 86,52 million	International Biscuit Factory, Ukana	Executed but failed

Source: See the bottom of the table

Table 4.2d ANAMBRA STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
GPE 11,811,023 & USD 3,100,000	Carpet Manufacturing Project, Iheiala	Not executed
DM 142,617,527.31	Rural Electrification	Executed
USD 0,633,000	Purchase of Irrigation	Executed

Source: See the bottom of the table

Table 4.2e BAUCHI STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
ATS 72,794,754 & USD 30 million	Bauch Steyr Plant	Executed and functioning
FRT 29,168 million	Dimara Yankari Spring waters Company Ltd	Executed and functioning
USD 8.1 million	Bauchi Modern Market	Executed and functioning
GBP 14,436 million & USD 32 million	Balanga Dam	Executed and functioning
USD 7.7 million & GBP 23.17 million	Bauchi Modern market	Executed and functioning
USD 53.145 million	Gombe water supply scheme	Not executed

Source: See the bottom of the table

Table 4.2f BENUE STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
FF 101,137,869,& USS 35 million	Makurdi Sheration Internatinal Hotel	50% Completed
USD 67.30 million & GBP 87.56 million	Agric. Water and Electricity project	Executed and functioning
USD 700.000	Benro Packaging Company	Executed and functioning
USD 71.4 million	Naka-Adoka-Awajir Ojo Road Project	50% completed

Source: See the bottom of the table

Table 4.2g BORNO STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
FRF 116.75 million	Maiduguri Sheraton Hotel Project	Note executed
GBP 2.52 million	Tractors and Equipment	50%

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2h CROSS RIVER STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
ATS 138,880,000	The Cross River Limestone Project	Executed but shut down

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2i DELTA STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
GPB 9,578,151	Warri Farm project	Not executed
DEM 750 million/DEM 1,380,000	-	-
ATS 1,143,000/USD 72,000,000	-	-
USD50,000/GPB 12,240,002	-	-
USD 8,000,000/FRF 127,144,000	-	-
USD 43,000,000/DEM 19.944,000	-	-
DEM 17,014,000/GPB 11,900.000	-	-
USD 5,500,000/GPB 11,900,000	-	-
DEM 40,000,000/ATS 95,497.000	-	-
ATS 238,000,00	-	-

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2j EDO STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
GPB 27,647,470 & USD 23,510,000	There road projects	30% completed
ATS 1,080,500	Bendel feeds and flour mills	Executed and functioning
USD 38,682,523	Warri. Benin road	50% completed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2k ENUGU STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
USS 38 million	Road project: Abakaliki Ring Road	Executed
USD 10,511,252	Purchase of Irrigation Pump	Not executed
DM 134,367,837	Rural Electricity project I-II	Executed
DEM 358, 000, 000	Hotels and Industrial project	Executed
DM	Enugu and Abakaliki water project	Not executed
PES 5.22 billion	Three 200 bed specialist Hospitals	Executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2L IMO STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
USD 32 million	Imo Modern poultry limited	Executed but failed
FF 78,257,586	Restin paint industries ltd	Executed
FRF 108,581,727	Aluminum Extrusion industries plc.	Executed
SFR 18,560,000	Ministry of lands, survey and urban planning	Executed
GPB 8,340,000 & USS 15.630,000	Rural Electrification Phase II	Executed
GPB 25,751,600 &USS	Rural Electrification Phase II	Executed

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23,577,745		
CHF 54,746,000	Imo Concord Hotels Limited	Executed
USS 53,746,000	Mbaise/Obowo Regional water scheme	Executed
GPB 6,033,000	Owerri Capita City Industrial infrastrucur	50% executed
USS 10,633,000	Purchase of Irrigation Equipment	Executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2m JIGAWA STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
USD 8,082,986	Agro-Allied Small Scale industries	Executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2n KADUNA STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
ATS 389,470,00	Turnkey production plant	Executed
U\$ 4,363,910	Ikara food processing project	Executed
US\$	Purchase of Irrigation pumps	Execute
FF 60,605,315,50	Purchase of 100 no. Buses	Not executed
YEN 1.512,000,000	United Nigeria textile ltd	
YEN 1,260,000,000	Arewa textile expansion project	

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2o KWARA STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
FRF 1,044,000	Jebba Hydroelectric plant	Executed and functioning
USS 85,000,00	Jebba paper	Executed
DKK 603,200,000	Specialist Hospitals	Executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2p LAGOS STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
DKK 215,560,000	Six mini water works	Executed
NLG 39,240,000	Four mini waterworks	Executed
FRF 424,630,000	Adiyan I intake	Executed
FRF 501,430,000	Adiyan II scheme	Executed
FRF 67,140,000	Iju waterworks	Executed
US\$ 37,570,000	The mini steel project	Not executed
YEN 209,170,000	Egbin Thermal Power Station	Executed
NGI, 64,740,000	f-28 Aircraft and Spare parts	Executed
US\$ 70,250,000	The Boeting Aircraft	Executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2q NIGER STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
GPB 141,116,000	Water supply projects phases I & II	Executed
ATS 447,805,000	Rural Hospital projects phase I&II	Executed
US\$ 12,887,000	Minna-Hydrflor Irrigation pumps	Not executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2r OGUN STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
GPB 2,840,000	Kuto market	Executed
GPB 12,900,000	Ota Hotel project I	Executed
BEF 274,470,000	Water treatment plants	Executed
GPB13,400,000	Ijebu Ode market project	Executed
GPB 4,900,000	Gateway hotel, ijebu-ode	Executed
DEM 25,130,000	Abeojuta External Line plant	Executed
USD 34,940,000	Lower Ogen Irrigation project	Executed
US\$ 28,000,000	Oso Iwopin Road	Executed
US\$ 100,100,000	Iwopin paper mill	Executed
OSUN STATE		

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2s OSUN STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
DM 155,42M & DM 10.13M		
DM 76.39M, DM 160M,NLG 50.31M	Oshogbo steel rolling mill	Executed
GPM 101.27M	New Ede/Oshogbo water scheme	Executed
US\$ 58.99M	New Liesa/Ejigbo water scheme	Not executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2t RIVER STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
GBP 13,063,803	Rural Electrification projects	Executed
USD 15,750,000	Container Glass Factory	
CHF 54,000,000	Delta Hotels ltd	
USS 29,038,717	Glass Factory	
FRF 20,873,717	MGF-Radio, TV, Communication Equipment	
DEM 53,310,961	Transmission lines	
US\$ 27,000,000	Nun river project	
GPB 19,428,560	Gas turbine/Alternator station	

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2u SOKOTO STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
USS 180m	Ginginya Hotel	Executed
YEN 5.129m	Construction of four Hotels	Executed
US\$ 73m	Sokoto water supply extension	Executed

Source: see the bottom of the table

Table 4.2v YOBE STATE

LOAN	PROJECT	REMARKS
GPB 3.62m	Biscuit Factory	Not executed

Source: for tables (4.2a..... 4.2v) tell magazine, no 29, July 18, 2005, pages 42-44

Note also that from tables 4.2 (a...v), it is clear that a very large chunk of the borrowing that led to the debts were done by the state governments and not the federal government. Well it could be said that perhaps the federal government was the guarantor of these loans that were taken by the state government. That in itself does not in any way detract from the fact that some of the loans were taken by the state governments.

Nonetheless we do not want to introduce the elements of the classical ideals about the theory of federalism and what should be the nature of the relationship between the federal government and those of the component units in terms of what is known as Fiscal Federalism. What is important here is that the fact of the states' involvement would perfectly have been a reason for at least threatening to repudiate a part of the said loans. In any case, is outright debt repayment or forgiveness necessarily a virtue? And if it were, why is it that even some of the world's greatest debtors do not bathe an eyelid about their debts. For instance the United State of America is the world's largest debtor nation (prof. Sam. Aluko in an interview in tell Magazine, page 32, no.17, April 25, 2005) to be exact, the United States Dollars in debt.

A much more perceptive government would not have bought line, hook and sinker the bogey about debt forgiveness at the expense of a colossal twelve billion United State Dollars paid in one ell-swoop. Perhaps the worst repercussion that an attempt at debt repudiation would have attracted would have been economic sanctions which according to professor Aluko is a very good incentive to embark on inward looking approach to development; the very approach that aided countries like Japan and even the USA to domesticate their own technological development. We reckon with the fact that there was a time in the history of the United States of America when the credo was 'splendid isolation' and this was reflected in all facets of the national life of that country.

The truth of the matter is that Nigeria at this time could not have possibly called the bluff of the western powers and their imperialistic Bretton Woods financial institutions partly because the

country was in the strangle-hold of these capitalist force and again partly because the control of the country's domestic economy was totally in the hands of these same people. Debt repudiation could have been a policy package in the foreign economic policy of Nigeria at the time. However this was not to be due largely to the dependent, neocolonial and underdeveloped nature of the Nigerian economy. Note that all these are strange bedfellows with the idea of an independent action in foreign policy execution.

Yet there is still another sense in which the quest debt cancellation detracted from Nigeria's national prestige and independence of action in the political realm. Here we want to draw attention to the indignities which the Nigerian debt cancellation team was subjected to and how they were usually snubbed and treated with disdain by the officials of the member nations of the Paris Club of Creditors. Indeed inspired by the fact that from Germany to Italy, from France to Spain, Dr. Mr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala either had worked with all these officials previously at the World Bank or knew them, the team still had to almost genuflect for these people. Indeed as ably narrated by her, when she was not loitering at the lobby of one hotel or the other just to catch an audience with a particular European finance minister, she was busy forcing herself into an elevator carrying one such minister just to be given audience. She recounts the fact that the Italian finance minister was particularly difficult and deliberately elusive (Tell Magazine, No. 29, July 18, 2005:48

This of course had grave consequences for Nigeria's national pride and prestige. It also said something about our ability (or the lack of it) to stand eye ball to eye ball with these fellows if an occasion arose which made the clash of Nigeria's national interest and theirs inevitable. It is indeed in this light that we must begin to appreciate the conditioning factors which was in contradistinction to what these countries wanted. It also goes to show that the economic variable is nearly always the deciding factor in terms of the politics which the modern day nation state plays be it locally within its territory or in the international political arena. Well the people at the helm of affairs would never have allowed such a hypothetical clash as being suggested here to have occurred. They would have gone to any extent to subordinate the interest of the country to that of western monopoly capitalist interest because their role as bridgeheads of imperialism in Nigeria has had their positions compromised. Perhaps Nwoke (in the NIIA Enlightenment Course Series, Vol. 1, no. 1,2000, page 75) was alluding to this fact when he stated that " this is why foreign policy has largely been conducted in such a way as not to rattle or embarrass the principal metropolitan powers who, in the contemporary international system, are the vanguards of imperialism"

ii. The Bakassi Imbroglio.

The failure of the Nigerian policy on Bakassi represents one of the most unacceptable foreign policy executions of the twenty-first century. It is not our intention to rehearse the details of the case here but suffice it to say that after the internecine and intermittent disputation between Nigeria and the republic of Cameroon, the matter as to the ownership of Bakassi was taken to the international Court of Justice at the Hague for adjudication at the instance of Cameroon.

However it must be noted that it is trite law of the statute that established the ICJ that member nations of the United Nations Organization are not under compulsion to take their matters to the court for adjudication. They are also not under any legal obligation to appear if such a case is taken to the court by a contending party. The ICJ exercises what is known as advisory opinion. The court itself was established through articles 92 to 96 of the charter of the United Nations Organization and article 38 of the statute of the ICJ empowers the court to apply international conventions or treaties whether it is general or particular establishing rules recognized by the contending parties (Kelsen:1959:309)

Now questions could be raised as to why Nigeria had to wait until Cameroon took the proactive step of taking the matter to the ICJ? Again given the fact of the ground norms particularly as it concerns the right of a contending party not to appear, why did Nigeria rush into appearing at the court when it was known that once its judgment was given, parties to the dispute were bound by the decision of the court? In any case did Nigeria take the best legal representation on international law or did it just assemble a rag-tag team based on mountainous legal fees that were to be accruable to such a team who might have been the cronies of the government? For instance did the Nigerian legal team research very incisively and were they well schooled in international jurisprudences? What were the legal implications of the Anglo-German treaty of 1913 which was the main plank of the Cameroonian argument during the proceedings?

Perhaps at this juncture, it is important to note that territorial integrity and the inviolability of same is one of the core interests of the modern day nation state

Note also that the modern day nation state is prepared to do anything including going to war if only to avoid losing any part of its territory (no matter how small) to another nation state. The fact that it is a core value which countries of the world guard jealously cannot be overemphasized. Indeed according to Peters (in the NIJA Enlightenment Course Series, Vol. 1, no. 1, 200, page 19), “Although war has its horrors, dangers and uncertainties, these will most often be endured by a state rather than surrender any national territory or permit national prestige and honour to be humiliated”

Again what about the Anglo-Germany pact of 1913? Was it such a treaty whose sanctity could not be challenged? Or would such a challenge have been interpreted to mean the display of gangsterism in international politics? In any case who could have set such a moral high ground when it is said that there is no morality in international politics and that countries do not act altruistically at the international arena?

To exact, one can go on and on with these question and infinitum. What is correct to say is that the Nigerian government at the time bungled the Bakassi matter because it did not have the right world view to counter the evil machinations of neocolonial and imperialist forces particularly. It was therefore such that Nigeria lost a very large chunk of its oil rich territory to Camaroon just because the country was not able to take certain precautionary measures to checkmate the imperialist moves of France-a major metropolitan power. Note also that the domestic politics of the country was not only under the control of forces external to it, it was also weak and vulnerable thereby predisposing the nation of inferior position vis-à-vis its ability to assert its preferences in the execution of foreign policy.

There were many options that were open to Nigeria at the time. For instance the country could just have refused to show appearance at the international court of justice since appearance is not compulsory and absence is also allowed. Indeed in an extreme case, Nigeria could have invoked the doctrine of **Rebus sic Stantibus** which states that countries could walk away from treaties that were voluntarily entered into if a change has occurred which made the implementation of the treaty in reference was signed many years before Nigeria became a sovereign state. Note also that she was not even a party to the treaty and that some countries in the modern world are beginning to call for the abrogation of unjust treaties for a much more equitable world.

Perhaps in the bid of the Nigerian government at the time, to be seen as good boys by the neocolonial over lords in Europe and the United States of America and course because of its entrenched interests as the local wing or agents of international capital finance, they country. In any case those pro imperialist forces who would misrepresent any repudiation of treaties or refusal to accede to the unjust ones (by the new and underdeveloped countries like Nigeria as else where in the third world) must reckon with the fact the United States of America till date has not signed both the Kyoto protocol on pollution and the instrument which set up the war Crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone. Its reason might just as well be that as a big industrial giant, the Kyoto instrument could possibly run counter to the interests of the manufacturing concerns within America whereas the refusal to give its determination to protect its armed forces personnel against the humiliation of being brought for trails before such a tribunal. Are we still talking of gangsterism in international politics? Your guess is as good as mine.

Conclusion

From the critical evaluation done in this paper to provide a detailed background to Nigeria's foreign policy under during the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, this research concludes that even in those areas like the spear-heading of the formation of the African Union and the New partnership for African Development, the regime was not perceptive enough to realize that juxtaposing such on the superstructure of the contemporary vertical international division of labour between Africa and the metropole and the colossal amount of capital flight from Africa (nay Nigeria) to the metropolitan centres, these programmes no matter how lofty in their aims would never lead Africa even a step in the direction of auto-centred development.

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. Finally, the research concludes 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. 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.

Recommendation

In the light of the discoveries made by this research, it is therefore recommended among other things that:

- i. The scope of Nigeria's foreign policy should no longer be limited to continental affairs. It should be focused world-wide and geared towards the promotion of our cultural heritage, and scientific, economic and technical cooperation with viable partners.
- ii. The goal of the country's foreign policy should aim at addressing domestic problems and enhancing our national development, and military arrangements with NATO countries in order to give peace a permanent character in our societal needs and our sub-region.
- iii. Nigerian foreign policy should aim at creating benefits for the betterment of the people. It should no longer focus on Africa without clearly defined policy objectives.
- iv. Finally, in seeking to end this brief treatise, it is perhaps germane to state that whether it is in terms of Nigeria or indeed any other country in the African continent as elsewhere in the third world, there is an emerging consciousness that it is becoming intellectually and practically unrewarding to heap all the problems associated with the Blackman's backwardness on external factors alone. This is to say that while not losing sight of the negatively oriented brigandage that was visited (and continues to be visited on the continent) by the forces of imperialism, the woeful failure of inept leadership by Africans themselves is considered a critical factor in the whole ugly scenario. By and large Africans themselves have over the decades presided over some of the worst types of leadership that have predisposed their countries to outside exploitation and have often elected (through their actions) the inferior foreign policy trusts of their countries. Examples abound in Africa and back in Nigeria, this unfortunate state of affairs has been the stock-in-trade since independence in 1960.

Therefore the period between 1999 and 2007 represented a line of continuity in the ugly cyclical chain of inept leadership and pro imperialist foreign policy. Chinweizu has characterized African nation states which are the result of these bad and inept leaderships as 'poor fare states' (1978:345) while Ekwe-Ekwe refers to them as 'African Genocide states' (Open Democracy) and has gone further to state that Africa is tired of and does not need the so-called aid or debt-cancellation from the west. Ekwe-Ekwe's position is that the one thing that the west needs to do for the development of Africa is to stop forthwith the sale of arms to the genocide states, that litter the African landscape (Open Democracy on the net)

Note also that no matter how much one may want to chastise the west and the US for the crippling effects of neocolonialism, we must tell ourselves the obvious truth by recognizing the truism that there is no morality and or altruism in international political system to maximize the realization of their national interests. The United States of America could not and was never intended to be an exception to this rule. It plays to project and realize its national interests and could not in terms of real politik be blamed for doing so if this position is appreciated and accepted, then Africa and its crop of inept leaders must as of necessity revisit their modus operandi in domestic politico-economic matters as in the manifestation of their foreign policy. This necessity is needless to say very urgent.

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