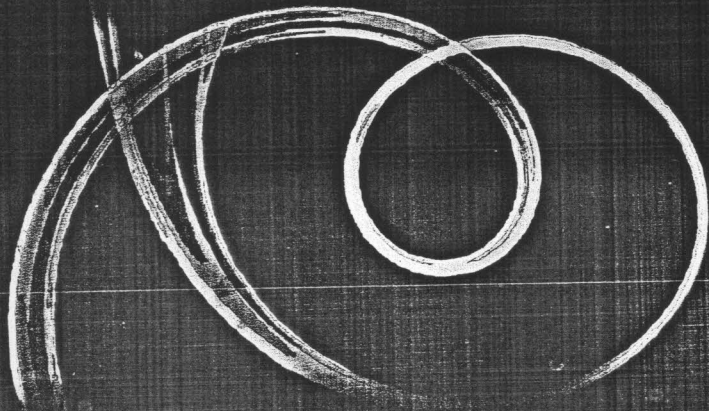


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NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: THE DEPRECIATING EMPIRE

Aremu Fatai Ayinde (PhD) & Aluko Opeyemi Idowu

Abstract

Nigeria, no doubt, had made great impact on Africa's development. In the last four decades it had been ravaged with all manner of developmental difficulties such as poverty, communal conflict, corruption, bad leadership, uncommitted followership and impudent advisers. Despite all these, Nigeria has made giant strides in the pursuance of peace and stability in Africa and indeed in the world. The empire of Nigeria's foreign policy notwithstanding is depreciating due to acute security challenges. The question this paper seeks to find out is the extent of implications the Nigeria's "Africa centre piece policy" has on Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development despite the internal security challenges. To what extent has African appreciated Nigeria's "Africa as the centre piece policy" despite the internal security challenges in Nigeria? The Afrobarometer round six data were used to interrogate and analyse the questions raised. Recommendations are posited to Nigeria and all other African states on the opportunity available and the responsibility that accompanies it. Conclusion is drawn on the basis of the consequences of insecurity on Nigerian polity.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Democracy, Independence, Africa centre piece.

Introduction

Every sovereign state has a unique feature of foreign policy. This is to prove an independent identity and free from external imperialism. It also shows the independent right of such states to relate in a pre-determined manner without any fear of intimidation from any externalities or prejudice. It is also a guardian of a sovereign entity's behaviour and comportment among committee of nations. Ever since independence, African, Asian and Latin American countries had put up with various foreign policies which dictate their level of developments. No doubt, many post colonial states in the last four decades were ravaged with all manner of developmental difficulties. These include; poverty, communal conflict, corruption, bad leadership and uncommitted citizens.

Nigeria in her foreign policy has made giant strides in the pursuance of peace and stability among comity of nations and a special focus is on Africa. Indeed in its wisdom, Nigeria chose among other principles Africa as the centre piece of her foreign policy (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012). Nigeria almost drugged itself with a big dose of harm when it unilaterally foisted on herself the burden of solving Africa's problems which is to the detriment of domestic responsibilities. Nevertheless, much had been done in the social, political as well as in the developmental prowess of Africa. The meaning of foreign policy in Nigeria is still shaped by the history of the past. It never sees the realities of the present. There are big lacunae created in the internal political sphere of administration which had ripple effects on the economy and the social lives of Nigeria. These political, economic and social lacunas have the potential of breaking down the walls of Nigerian foreign relations.

More importantly, it is pertinent to consider what foreign policy is in a global contest so as to give directions to the policy actors. Goldstein & Pevehouse (2010) and Olukotun (2013) posited that foreign policies are the strategies that guide the actions of governments in the international system as they spell out the objectives state leaders pursue in a given situation or relationship. For Adesola (2004) and Saliu (2010) foreign policy could be seen as the totality of all actions, decisions, overtures, and or interactions between and among states in the international system. Put differently, Gambari (2008) and Ajaebili (2011) observed that foreign policy could be based on economics, politics, culture or the creating of co-operation or understanding among nations of the world. It is the sum total of the interactions between and among domestic economies and policies of world nations. Before and after independence, Africa had been the corner stone of Nigeria's foreign policy.

The question this paper seeks to find out is the extent of implications the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy has on Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development despite the internal security challenges? To what extent had African appreciated Nigeria's Africa as the centre piece policy despite the internal security challenges in Nigeria? All this questions will be analyses in this work. The methodology adopted gives the extent that Nigeria had gone to in making itself available for its Africa project. The Afrobarometer round six data will be interrogated and analysis in this context. The realist theoretical framework is used to explain the rate of the breaking down or depreciation of Nigeria's foreign policy empire. This will be followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Realism

The world is a competitive globalized market. For a nation to survive, the reality must be faced in the relations among nations. Every country must be enthusiastic about her survival before any external freewill responsibilities. Any country that claims to champion the affairs of the other states at the detriment of its own realities is on political overdose of harmful poisons. Contributors to realist theory emerged in the decade after World War II, which including Hans Morgenthau, Arnold Wolfers, George F. Kennan, Robert Strausz-Hupé and Kissinger, among others. According to realism, States exist within an anarchic international system where they are ultimately dependent on their own capabilities, acquired abilities, or power, to further their national interests. The most important national interest is usually the survival of the state among comity of nations, including its people, political system, and territorial integrity. Other major interests for realists include preservation of the culture and the economy. As Burchill (2001) noted there is no opportunity for moral or ethical concerns, prejudice, political philosophy or individual preference in the determination of foreign policy, actions are constrained by the relative power of the state. Thus, the national interest ought to be the sole pursuit of statesmen.

The common phrase associated with the theory of realism is power politics. Realist theorists make several key assumptions which differentiate an assumption to the current existence (Wolfrum, 2011). It assumes that nation-states are unitary, geographically-based. Actors in an anarchic international system with no authority above, are capable of regulating interactions between states as no true authoritative world government exists. Secondly, it assumes that sovereign states, rather than International Governmental Organizations, National Governmental Organizations or Multinational Corporations are the primary actors in international affairs. As a result, a state acts as a rational self decided actor in pursuit of its own self-interest with a primary goal to maintain and ensure its own security and also its sovereignty and survival.

Realism holds that in pursuit of their interest, states will attempt to amass resources and that relations between states are deterrence by their relative levels of power. The level of power is in turn determined by state's military and economic capabilities (Donnelly, 2000). It therefore means that, foreign policy is the means to advance national interest.

thus, needs to be defined much more specifically than through the overarching goals of self-imposed continental responsibilities that have become the hallmark of Nigerian foreign policy.

Morgenthau (1948) cited in Encyclopædia Britannica (2012) wrote about realism, he insisted that it based upon an intrinsic nature of humans. In this work, Morgenthau maintained that politics is governed by distinct immutable laws of nature and that states could deduce rational and objectively correct actions from an understanding of these laws. Central to Morgenthau's theory was the concept of power as the dominant goal in international politics and the definition of national interest in terms of power. His state-centred approach, which refused to identify the moral aspirations of a state with the objective moral laws that govern the universe, maintained that all state actions seek to keep, demonstrate, or increase power. Fizouni (2004) remarked that:

Morgenthau could legitimately limit the scope of his explanatory claim by maintaining that based on the observed recurrence of historical patterns, his universal generalization on power optimization only explains an important range of political phenomena and behaviour.

Therefore, in context of realism, as long as the world is divided into nation-states in an anarchic setting, national interest will remain the essence of international politics. The struggle for power is part of human nature and takes essentially two forms: collaboration and competition. Foreign policy is seen as an instrument at the disposal of a country employed to promote and protect its national interest (Teryima, 2014). However, while national interest is foreseeable, its content varies with time and circumstances. It follows that the policy has to be flexible, and must be in tune with changing environment which accounts for the choice of the concentric circle focus in Nigeria's foreign policy.

Methodology

The methodology adopted uncovers the perception of Nigerians on Africa as a centre piece foreign policy. It gives answers to the questions of what is the extent of implications the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy has on Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development despite the internal security challenges. To what extent had African appreciated Nigeria's Africa as the centre piece policy despite the internal security challenges in Nigeria?

To what extent had African states recognises this policy in respect to the present internal security challenges? The research conducted by afrobarometer round six (6) in 2015 is interrogated; validated and interpreted. The total sample size is two-thousand four hundred (2400) participants across the country.

The sample selection technique is simple proportionate purposive random sampling. Simple percentage, ratio and graphical illustrations (descriptive statistics) were used to analyse the result. This research is appropriate as it reflect the true mind set of Nigerian populace on the Africa as a centre piece foreign policy. The relevance of Nigerian borders openness to Africans base on the foreign policy of Afrocentrism, regional responsibility to prevent abuses and respect sovereignty of nations and the perceptions of Nigerians on the Africa union reciprocal gesture to Nigeria's Africa as its centre piece foreign policy are considered to answer the research questions.

Brief History of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

The speech of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa on October 8, 1960 at the United Nations General Assembly had been a point of reference by scholars in Nigeria's international relations studies which defines and kick starts Nigeria's foreign policy. He dwelt upon the cardinal principles that form the bedrock which scholars such as Aluko, (1973); Akinyemi (1974); Gambari (1980); Saliu (2010) have generally agreed are the basic principles of the pronouncements.

The Principle of Non-Alignment: The policy of non-alignment rejects formal alliance with the existing ideological and military power blocs of the Capitalist West led by the United States and the Communist East led by the Soviet Union in the post World War II international system. It is noteworthy to say that this policy was adopted by Nigeria and other newly independent states of Africa and Asia to help promote international peace and security in view of the Cold War conflict between the two super power blocs of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Non-Interference in the Domestic Affairs of all other States policy: Nigeria upheld the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries so as to allow other states to develop at their own pace. During the Nigeria Civil War of 1967 – 1970, the then General Gowon's regime maintained that the war was an internal affair and therefore vigorously discouraged other countries from encouraging the secession of

Factors Depreciating Nigeria's Foreign Policy Empire

There are many factors that affect the foreign policies of a country. However, certain basic factors influence a state's foreign policy than the others. As Northedge (1961) clearly stated, "The foreign policy of a country is a product of environmental factors both the internal and external to it".

In Nigeria, the factors are not different from what Northedge suggested. This include: (i) Political structure; this may be either autocratic government or democratic one.

- i) (ii) Economic structure; this may be an accountability and corrupt free one or an unaccountable to its citizens' government.
- ii) Political institutions; this can be failed, weak or strong institutions that controls and regulates the internal processes.
- iii) Character of political leadership; this indicates the personality of the president in charge of the execution of external relations. This can be proactive, reactive, dormant and or unconcerned.
- iv) Military factor; the military capability and strength determine the extent of respect the state will command among comity of nations.
- v) Demographic factors; this include the access to natural resources and human population strength.
- vi) Domestic political situation; is the extent of trust and support the people of the state gives to the government to pursue any agenda on their behaviour.

Africa continent security issues are the primary focus of the Nigeria government. Nigeria played unmatched role in restoring peace to conflict-ridden African countries such as Congo, Sudan, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In these endeavours, Nigeria committed huge human and material resources. Playing the big brother role in Africa, Nigeria has not been accorded the appropriate recognition for its leadership role in the continent in the recent times. Instead, Nigeria has been the butt of derision by several African states. For instance, some Francophone African countries brazenly disdain Nigeria and exhibit hostility by subjecting Nigerians living in their midst to varying degrees of torture and humiliation. The poor perception of Nigeria in the international community is attributed to ineffectiveness in political leadership and economic comatose into which the country has been steeped for several years.

More than external challenges such as pressure on terms of foreign trade and external image depreciating, internal challenges dampen Nigeria's

attainment of great power status and proper recognition in Africa and the world at large. Key internal challenges include Poor governance, insecurity of lives and property, power supply (Olutokun, 2013; Nwankwo, 2013), the quality of the nation's educational institutions; its capacity to innovate; the quality of its democracy and the ability to reach consensus and resolve conflicts (Okere, 2012).

More specifically, the insurgency in the North, growing unemployment, oil dependent economy and dilapidated economic infrastructure among others are major issues that deserve attention if not radical government intervention. This poor impression and reduced confidence by many Nigerians in Diaspora on Nigeria's Foreign Service as a result of mediocre work ethic, poor relationship with the public and citizen's protection are major challenges. Multi-varied players in modern diplomacy are major challenge. A key feature of modern diplomacy is the involvement of myriads of actors and the growth of multilateral diplomacy. Non-state actors have occupied the foreign policy scene with various interests such as economic interest groups, environmental interest groups, humanitarian interest groups, criminal interest groups and global governance interest.

The Extent of Depreciation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Empire

Nigeria had, no doubt, spent both material resources and human life resources for the good of Africa as inscribed in its foreign policy. However, against the current backdrop of a realistic global economy, the relevance or not of the African centred foreign policy in Nigeria in the 21 century in her spectrum of national development, represents an implicit research problematic for the academic and policy makers alike. Nigerians are hardly acknowledged by African States and the international community at large for their roles in the past and present.

Angola for example, despite all the assistance Nigeria rendered for her independence, Nigeria's name was conspicuously absent from the list of countries that Angola paid tribute to for assisting them in their independence struggle in their first appearance at the OAU Summit in Mauritius in July 1976. To cap it all, after Murtala's death, it took Angola the whole of three weeks to express their condolence over the death of their benefactor. Nigeria tried so very hard, but quite unsuccessfully to conclude an agreement with the Angolan government to allow Nigerian trawlers fish off the Angolan coast. Despite the numerous delegations that went for this agreement, their

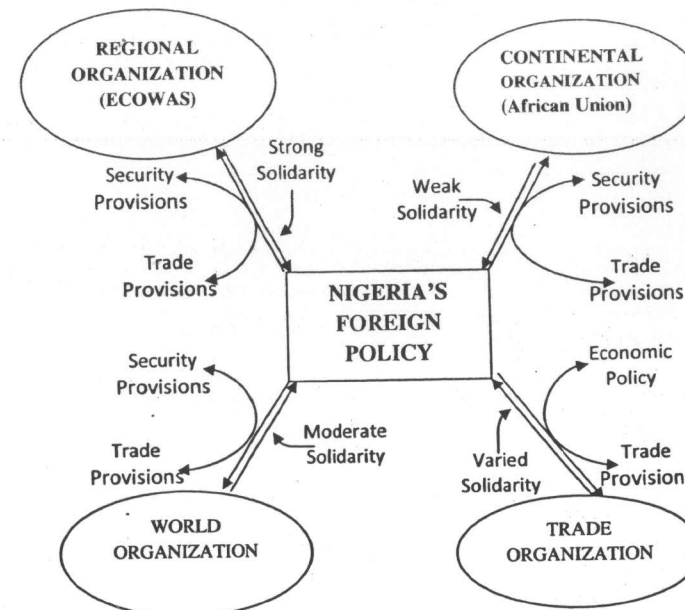
discussions were inconclusive. Later, the Angolans granted the Russians exclusive fishing right in the coast.

In the 2007, 2008 and 2013 xenophobic attacks, many Nigerians were brutalized in South Africa. This makes one to ask if Nigerians deserve such brutality taking into consideration the fundamental role played by Nigeria's government in clearing off apartheid in South Africa. Eke (2009) informed that Nigeria-South Africa's relations have been marked with discrimination against Nigerians in South Africa. He noted that the Nigeria's consulate in South Africa confirmed that many Nigerians were killed in the 2007 extrajudicial circumstances, besides cases of harassment, intimidation and brutalization by South Africa police and security agencies.

Considering the domestic realities, it seems that there is apparent disconnection between the national interest and external interest of Nigeria-Africa relations. It is apparent that the nation is doing too much in the African continent without corresponding positive outcome on its national interest. The current relevance of the Africa Centrepiece is nothing but a strategic investment which at present it is seen as wasteful.

Figure 1 below shows the gains and pains Nigeria had derived from her foreign policies.

Figure 1: The gains and pains of Nigeria's foreign policies



The figure above can be succinctly and widely used to explain all the foreign policies Nigeria camped in her national interest and in the quest for her relationship with other states of the world. However for the case of this work, the Africa as a centre piece foreign policy is x-rayed. The Africa as a centre piece policy had generated a number of expenses in terms of security provisions, free movement and 'unlimited' trade platforms especially for the states in the regional organization- ECOWAS. This invariably had generated a significant regional respect for Nigeria states in terms of brotherhood and collective security. The effects of this policy on Africa as a continent had likewise gulped a lot of resources from Nigeria in terms of armed security provisions for African Union (AU) and trade diversifications. The gains derived are a weak and an antagonist-solidarity from most Southern and Northern African states.

Analysis of Findings

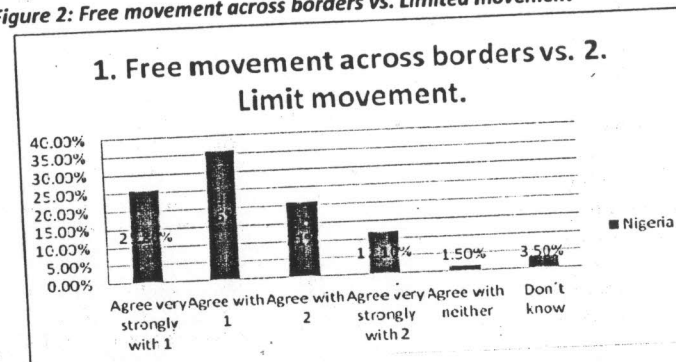
This section of the paper analysed the data from Afrobarometer survey on Nigeria. The research questions are: what is the extent of implications the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy has on Nigeria's socioeconomic and political development despite the internal security challenges. To what extent had African appreciated Nigeria's Africa as the centre piece policy despite the internal security challenges in Nigeria? The following are examined so as to provide answers to the research questions: the implementation of the free movement across borders policy, regional responsibility to prevent abuses with respect to sovereignty of each nation and the extent of help received from African Union by Nigeria government.

Table 1: Free movement across borders vs. limited movement

Free movement across borders vs. limit movement	Nigeria
Agree very strongly with 1	25.8%
Agree with 1	36%
Agree with 2	21%
Agree very strongly with 2	12.1%
Agree with neither	1.5%
Missing	0%
Don't know	3.5%

Source: Afrobarometer Round Six (2015)

Figure 2: Free movement across borders vs. Limited movement



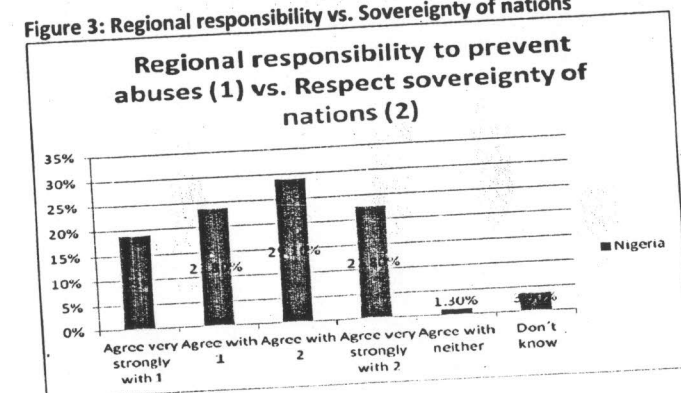
From the table I and figure I above, it is observed that about seventy two percent (72%) of Nigerians perceived that Nigeria border is open for free movement of persons and transactions with the neighbours in West Africa, Africa and the rest of the world. Only thirty three percent (33%) perceived that there is a restriction in the border movements. From the above analysis, the extent of implications the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy have on Nigeria's polity is significantly high. To this extent a significant number of Nigerians felt its impact.

Table II: Regional responsibility to prevent abuses (2) vs. respect sovereignty of nations (2)

Regional responsibility to prevent abuses (1) vs. Respect sovereignty of nations (2)	Nigeria
Agree very strongly with 1	19%
Agree with 1	23.8%
Agree with 2	29.1%
Agree very strongly with 2	22.8%
Agree with neither	1.3%
Missing	0%
Don't know	3.9%

Source: Afrobarometer Round Six (2015)

Figure 3: Regional responsibility vs. Sovereignty of nations



power realist game of Nigeria within the continent despite her internal security challenges. The paper also revealed that the Africa as a centrepiece policy of Nigeria did not yield the desired outcome for the country as expected in the modern Africa setups.

Nevertheless, the Africa as Nigeria's centrepiece policy had yielded some dividends in term of historical and psychological wealth to the country. Many Africa states still perceive Nigeria as a giant state that its past and present potentials and decision making can make or mar Africa. In essence, Afrocentrism policy for Nigeria can be sustained but adequate bargaining with any recipient states should be done, written, transmitted to the relevant execution bodies, monitored, reviewed and finally renewed or stored in historical retrievable database.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed to the President who is in charge of the affairs of the national interest, the government officials at all levels and the general populace:

The security of lives and properties within the country should be of the utmost priority to the government. Therefore the president should ensure the various internal insurrections and external aggression against the sovereignty of the country are clamped down right on time so as to prevent repeated attacks and escalations. This will enhance the rebuild of the image of the country both externally and internally.

The president should champion the campaign of re-orientating the Foreign Service Officers in the direction of moral decency, integrity, loyalty, good conduct and hard works at every point in time. This is critical in managing the nation's foreign policies as a tool of development. As is well known, education of the young ones is the bedrock of any nation. The orientations of the national interest should be taught at all levels of education. As the heartbeat of any nation these youths are the hopes for the realization and sustenance of the country's policies.

Diversifying the economy will bring fresh oil on the wheels of the economy which currently is driven by oil. In this regard, there has been more words than action as, comparatively, there has been not much investment in the non-oil sector. The president should reequip the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the coordinating Ministry, re-positioning it so as to be able to cope with the dialogue and rigmaroles of international relations.

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