

# Nigeria's Image, Democracy and Foreign Policy, 1999-2007

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## Abstract

Nigeria's image was negative prior the return of democracy in 1999. The major cause of this was the long period of military rule which not only dismantled democratic institutions, but made Nigeria a pariah State as a result of corruption and draconian policies. The protracted military rule led to plethora of sanctions which led to hardship on the populace. The return to democratic governance reinvented the State and ushered in diplomatic shuffles which culminated to the eliminating of the sanctions which eventually readmitted the country into global reckoning. This study reviews Nigeria's image, democracy and foreign policy, 1999–2007, adopting content analysis in the scrutiny of our data and political economy perspectives as a paradigm for our analysis. It recommends effective Executive – Legislative Collaboration as a panacea for achieving effective and stable foreign policy.

**Keywords:** corruption, democracy, image, foreign policy, Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

'Foreign policy', as a concept, is nebulous and defies a generally-acceptable definition (Aluko, 1981). Though different scholars have defined it from different points of view, each of these definitions could be said to have stemmed from, and influenced by, peculiar ideological strands. The concept of foreign policy is of utmost interest and importance to every nation, since, according Dunmoye, Njoku & Alubo, eds. (2007:12), 'it connotes formal decisions/positions of sovereign states towards their counterparts, defined in terms of political, economic, cultural/social and strategic realms of inter-sovereign relationships, bilaterally and or multi-literally.' Foreign policy essentially deals with the relations between sovereign actors in international system. Foreign policy objective therefore can be understood as a range of intended actions as well as set strategies adopted by some sovereign actors with the purpose of influencing the behaviour of other sovereign actors within the international system. Accordingly, Ogwu (2006:6) argues that the ultimate objectives of any foreign policy are to achieve short-range or long-range goals that ensure the superiority of one sovereign national actor over another. That is, foreign policy could be perceived as the pursuit of national interests. The milieu within which foreign policy is contrived and executed could be dichotomized into three main realms; the psychological, the domestic and the external. The psychological realm denotes the mental process of the decision maker(s) and all the factors that shape the conception of the policy. The domestic realm on the other hand is beyond the decision maker(s), but within the territorial bounds of the state. The external realm deals with the international system into which the policy is directed and this could be significantly unpredictable. The interface of the trio therefore is essential in the formulation of foreign policy.

The Principal objective of Nigeria's foreign policy is as provided for in Section 19 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic and others that predated it. These objectives are as follows:

- (a) promotion and protection of the national interest;
- (b) promotion of African integration and support for African unity;
- (c) promotion of international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations;
- (d) respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and
- (e) promotion of a just world economic order. (FGN, 1999)

These objectives are to protect the country's national interests in its interaction with outside world and relationship with specific countries in the international system. Thus, Olusanya and Akindele (1986:2) opine that the national interests of Nigeria consist of:

- (i) the defence of the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;
- (ii) the restoration of human dignity to black men and women all over the world, particularly the eradication of colonialism and white minority rule from the face of Africa;
- (iii) the creation of the relevant political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will not only facilitate the preservation of the territorial integrity and security of all African countries but also foster national self-reliance in African countries;
- (iv) the promotion and improvement of the economic well-being of Nigerian citizen and policy; and
- (v) the promotion of world peace and security.

Conscious of the fact that Nigeria exists within the frame work of law, the pursuit of these objectives earlier highlighted were (and still are) to be guided by principles such as "non-alignment, legal equality of states, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states, multilateralism and Africa as the cornerstone or nerve centre of Nigeria's foreign policy. Based on the foregoing therefore, especially as the most populous black nation in the world, Nigeria wittingly or unwittingly, has shouldered the leadership role of the black world; this has predicated her responsibility far beyond her territorial borders.

Prior to May 1999, Nigeria was a pariah state in the Comity of Nations; ruled consecutively for fifteen years by military dictatorship. Fawole (2000:20) argues that Nigeria which was previously celebrated as the foremost African State in the world fell into the pit of infamy, especially between 1993 and 1998. This was due to a combination of domestic and external circumstances and the personal idiosyncrasies of the different rulers, which occasioned policy shift, twist and turns. The conduct of foreign policy was adversely affected by the military rule. Nigeria's external image was smeared; Nigerians locally and internationally were subjected to all forms of inhuman treatment abroad. There was loss of self-worth and self-esteem by Nigeria. The words of Shonekan in Saliu (2006:197), that our country's (Nigeria) external image was not in a good shape at that time is not at all in doubt. Nigerians traveling outside the shores of this country are daily undergoing harrowing experiences.

In alignment with this view, Garba in Saliu (2006:197) observes that 'Nigerians abroad, I mean everybody now has his head low. In the olden days, you were proud to be a Nigerian', the external image of Nigeria consequently put an irritating value on Nigerians because the way a state is perceived to some extent determines the leverage it enjoys, hence, lending credence to the urban sociologist who maintain that the entire urban life revolves around impression management. Nigeria thus, incurred unsavoury cost due to her poor image, which led to global isolation and dwindling threat to her leadership role in Africa.

The military sentenced Nigeria to years of isolation which was later to be revived by the civilian government of General Obasanjo. The Obasanjo's coming was amidst skepticism and unpredictability judging from the character of the Nigerian Military that had tasted power, drunk in power and never willing to quit to its legitimate functions as enshrined in 1999 Constitution and others that predated it.

General Abubakar's transition programme opened the gate of heaven for the triumph of Nigeria into political reckoning. A process of healing old wounds with Nigeria's friends and allies commenced and indications of what to expect came during the inauguration of President Obasanjo on May 29, 1999. The event attracted over forty Heads of States and Governments, thus, signalling the country's resumption of prominence in Africa and World affairs. The inauguration remains the largest gathering over four decades of Nigeria's existence as a State. The transition of Nigeria from military to civil democracy in 1999 flog-jumped her foreign policy posture from State of alienation to State of acceptance. Ogwu and Agbu (2006:249) observe that 'All hitherto closed doors are being opened within a short period of five years, Nigeria as a country appears to have been welcomed back to the comity of nations.

Unlike the military leaders, president Obasanjo mounted the leadership position of a depressed state with impressive and intimidating credentials. He was not only cerebral but also vastly experienced for the job; having once been a Head of State under one of the military juntas between 1966 to 1999; thus, he could be adjourned to have vast knowledge of the intricacies of power, politicking and diplomacy having served in many international bodies, attended countless conferences and delivered papers as well as written books on vast array of issues. He had equally sat at global forum with world leaders. Therefore, the challenges of the new job may not be too problematic.

At this juncture, it is significant to state that no single person or institution makes the state's foreign policy; Obiozor (2003) opines:

Why the President is the principal foreign policy actor, he as a matter of routine, relies on the advice from the Minister of Foreign Affairs who in turn relies on the advice from the professional Foreign Service Officers in the Ministry. Other actors whose opinion build into the foreign policy process include the legislative arm of government, the echelon of the military, the press, academic and students of higher institutions, trade unions and many professional and economic associations. All these contributions have at one time or the other influenced the course of Nigeria's foreign policy.

In agreement with the foregoing therefore, Akindele in Ogwu (2005:53) states:

Foreign policy making structure must take cognizance of the fact that, in a Presidential system of government where a popularly elected President is the Chief Executive, as it is in Nigeria, the conduct of foreign policy, as of any other public policy, must, in the final analysis, also be examined in the wider context of the larger institutional interaction between the executive and the legislature.

It is significant to state that the executive has always been a dominant player in Nigeria's foreign policy. The role of the legislature had most often been invisible. Consequent upon this therefore, this study attempt to present a rounded understanding of the relationship between the legislature and executive in the formation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999 to 2007; that is the Obasanjo's years as President of the Federal Republic. We hope that at the end, we would make recommendations that would engender greater efficiency that would further boast Nigeria's external image.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In this research, we adopted the political economy perspective as our conceptual frame work. The origin of the term "Political Economy" dates back to the period when it was used to study the way production was carried out in countries born out of the new capitalist system. More specifically, it was the relation between the production system and law, customs and the government. Theories of political economy were used to study the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services and their effective management in a country or a government system.

Wikipedia (as retrieved 19/12/2017) explains political economy as 'the study of production and trade, and their relations with law, custom, and government, as well as with the distribution of national income and wealth.' It is the relationship between economics and politics in nation states or across different nation states and draws extensively on the subject of economics, political science, law, history and sociology or different closely related branches of economics to explain the politico-economic behaviour of a country. The theory of political economy now encompasses a wide range of subjects from anthropology to history, from psychology to human geography, and from law to ecology. Thus, political economy is one of the most comprehensive perspectives in the world which can become a successful tool in combating the complex and serious issues threatening to nullify the bounties of liberalization and globalization.

Understanding politics as a process of bargaining among rational decision makers trying to attain and maintain political power, political economy is not a fixed subject or discipline but a recurrent mode of conceptualizing social life. Its scope or field of vision has broadened and narrowed at different times as economic belief systems have alternately displaced or rekindled interest in fundamental issues such as human equality and growth. Contributing to the fore-going.

The modern usage of political economy perspective was a creation of third world scholars as a response to the poverty of adequate explanation to peculiar problems that confront periphery social formations. It was championed by the works of progressive scholars like Andre Gunder Frank, G. Arrigli, Wellersterin I. Samir Amin, Claude Ake, Okwudiba Nnoli to name but a few. The approach not only focuses attention on the management of the society's material wealth and distribution among the various classes, it also reviews conflicts which arise from these processes.

The model emphasizes the curious issues of change, liberation, oppression and exploitation and these are core sociological, political and economic issues that shape international relations which foreign policy attempts to address. At this point, it is important to note that government is established to provide services and protect the lives and properties of its citizens; the legislature which make law and the executive which implements the laws made are very essential in this respect. In analysing Nigeria's domestic and external image, democracy and foreign relations in states with capitalist inclination like Nigeria therefore, an understanding of the fact that conflict may arise if there are no clear cut separation of the powers between these organs of government is

important; therefore, the knowledge of the theory of separation of power is imperative because it delineates the boundaries of the power of each of the organs of government. However, being a market oriented commodity driven system, the capitalist society invariably evolves an executive force seemingly standing above society and appearing as guarantor of the collective interests of the people (Ibeanu, 2002:6). Once capitalist production relation are constituted by an initial act of force (primitive accumulation), they are reproduced more or less automatically, essentially as a result of generalization of commodity production and exchange. In such society, people are first and foremost commodity bearers, even if the only commodity they bear is their labour power, and market norms such individualism, profit motive, competition, formal freedom and equality dominant social life (Ibeanu, 2002). Mbah (2009:194) avers that in the West, separation of powers was particularly important at the phase of competitive capitalism for it served to balance conflicting interests of the functions of the ruling class, for example, the estates in the medieval Europe, because these interests were usually inscribed in the arms of government, the liberal state which corresponds to capitalism, appears as non-arbitrary, impartial and therefore capable of guaranteeing both the interest of the dominant and dominated classes and fractions. It is clear therefore that the legislature in this society appears to be dominant over the executive because it is the popular representatives of the people and the sanctuary of law.

The political economy model provides a good paradigm for this analysis, because it directs discourse on how goods and services are distributed at both the domestic and external fronts. It is also valuable in analyzing resource allocation and service delivery in the relationship between organs and institutions of the State. Furthermore, it reviews issues of governance, inequality, democratization, economic and social relations which shape the internal and external relations of State. This paradigm therefore provides us with direction for the analysis of Nigeria's image, democracy and foreign policy.

### **3. Overview of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Formulation and Implementation Pre 1999**

The concept - foreign policy, is nebulous and defies a generally-acceptable definition. Though different schools of thought have defined it from different points of view, each of these definitions could be said to have stemmed from, and influenced by, peculiar ideological strands. It is of utmost interest and importance to every nation. Modelski (1962: 6-7) has this to say, 'foreign policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment'. In other words, foreign policy must throw light on the ways in which states attempt to change, and succeed in changing, the behaviour of other states.

Ogwu, (2005:6-20) conceptualizes it as 'policies that deal with relations between sovereign actors in the international system'. That is, it connotes the official conduct of external or international relations by designated political office holders and bureaucrats of States. It outlines the objectives of states in political, economic, cultural and security relations with the outer world. These policies assist the domestic ministries to plan and shape policies. She argue that a country's foreign policy is basically an extension of its domestic policy demarcated by identical divides viewed by three dominant environments, viz – psychological, domestic and external milieus; both domestic and foreign policies have to grapple with these three essential policy exigencies. Foreign policy therefore is the totality of a State's official actions and relations with other State, undertaken not only by the Ministry of External Affairs, but also other ministerial and quasi- ministerial departments, like Defence, Information, Education Transport, Communication and Finance.

The former Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Aminu Jubril conceptualizes foreign policy as a contraction of domestic policies which, to all intents and purposes, enables any nation's relevance and participation in the international system (PAC, 2005:23). That is, it is the decisions a nation takes in respect of its relations with another nation or the aggregate of a country's policies in its interaction with other member of the international community and taking considerations of certain variables of domestic and external environment. Aminu further states that, no nation can pursue a meaningful, certainly successful, foreign policy removed from its actual status, politically, economically and socially.

The foreign policy of states the world - over are not only determined and shaped by factors of geographical location, population, economic endowment, national ideology, personality and the perception of policy makers etc, but are increasingly affected by the structure and configuration of powers in the international system. The foreign policy of any Nation therefore may represent a reflection of its domestic reality.

The business of foreign policy is to protect the national interest of the sovereign state actors within the global community, in whatever manner the national interest is understood and articulated. Thus, national interest of a state usually is as defined by its government and used by politicians in seeking support for a particular course of action, especially in foreign policy. The term is used to seek support for domestic policy objectives. In foreign

policy matters, it invokes an image of the nation, or the nation-state, defending its interest within the anarchic international system where dangers abound and the interests of nations are always at risk. Foreign policy pragmatically speaking, deals with the perennial controversy over the limits of enlightened self-interests of each actor in the international system. The pre-occupation of foreign policies include the survival of the nation itself, the enhancement of national security, prosperity or economic interests, protection of national prestige and, promotion of national peace (Obiozor, 2003:34).

In the process of policy making and implementation, institution matter a great deal (Olusanya and Akindele, 1999:532). These institutions legitimize both the policy process and outcomes. Thus, in the formulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy, the seemingly anarchical but definitely pluralistic institutional structure that emerged since 1960 confront scholars with the tantalizing challenge of providing an informed analysis and evaluative examination of the organizational paradigm through which specific decisions are processed, made and implemented by the relevant actors. There is no doubt therefore, that the institutionalization of structures and process enhance prospects for administrative modernization, hence, assist in consolidating development.

The analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy according to Salami (2007:71) is generally influenced by some seemingly accepted precepts and practices to the extent that any deviation from the precept and practices appears out of standard and fashion. The mechanism for the administration of Nigeria's foreign policy commenced fully in the late 1960. At independence, Prime Minister Balewa created the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986:17). Arrangements began to be put in place for the conduct of modern diplomacy through the training of the initial staff that manned the various diplomatic missions (Adeniji, 2000:5). These staffs however, were recruited in 1957. Among the officers were Messrs Tayo Ogunsulire, Philip Asiodu, Aminu Sanusi, John Garba, Leslie Harriman, Adedokun Haastrup, Chuks Ifeagwu, Chika Chukwura, Dickson Igwe, John Ukaegbu, Olu Omololu and Soji Williams (Vanguard on line, 2009:1). They were the nucleus of Nigerian Foreign Service. The staff were trained in West - Minster model and this influenced the early foreign policies of the young states.

Olusanya and Akindele (1960:72), observe that in terms of the processing of foreign policy decision making, six patterns in Nigeria's foreign policy history can be readily identified. This is the decision making input by the Presidency, the Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the foreign policy elite, the national elite and popular cultural groups. However, it is important to state that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in co-operation with its external arms all over the world remains the dominant agency in foreign policy decision making. That is, foreign policy advice and foreign policy implementation constitute its broad twin responsibilities. Ogwu (2008:53), argues that foreign policy making structures must take cognizance of the fact that in a Presidential system of government where a popularly elected President is the Chief Executive, as it is in Nigeria, the conduct of foreign policy, as of any other public policy, must, in the final analysis, also be examined in the wider contest of the large institutional interaction between the executive and the legislative.

What is obvious, therefore, is that no single person or institution makes the states foreign policy. While the President is the principal foreign policy actor, he as a matter of routine, relies on the advice from the Minister of Foreign Affairs who in turn relies on the advice from Professional Foreign Service Officers in the Ministry; other actors whose opinion build into the foreign policy process include the legislative arm of government, the high echelon of the Military, the press, academics and students of higher institution, trade unions and many professional and economic associations. All these contributors have at one time or the other influenced the course of Nigeria's foreign policy.

Diplomacy, intelligence, aid and Military force in the extreme are major means of the implementation of foreign policy of any nation. The most commonly employed is the combination of diplomacy and economic and other assistance and the skillful use of intelligence. While intelligence is secret, and sometimes prohibited, it is in use by practically every nation. Nigeria's short exploit at democratic rule and long period of military rule adversely affected her foreign policy posture.

At independence in 1960, Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa created the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, the Ministry has metamorphosed in its nomenclature to Ministry of External Affairs (1963-1992) and lately the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry remains the basic machinery for the conduct and management of Nigeria's external relations. The Ministry has Missions and Agencies abroad which assist in the shaping and management of Nigeria's affairs. In designing the strategy for Nigeria's bilateral and multilateral relations, the Ministry relies heavily on advice from and actions by the country's Missions abroad. This explains why it becomes necessary for such Missions to be well organized and funded to enable them cope

with their diplomatic tasks, particularly policy formulation and implementation. Here therefore, is the importance of the National Assembly, whose statutory duty is, to appropriate funds for the efficient and effective functioning of these Missions and to a greater extent the Ministry. The Ministry has been reorganized and restructured three times viz 1972, 1981 and 1988. The aim is to reposition it for policy advice and policy implementation in foreign affairs. This was due essentially to the fact that the functions and responsibilities of the Ministry and its staff were not clearly defined (Fafowora, 2001:39).

Before the period under review, Nigeria had eleven different Heads of governments as follows; Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi, General Yakubu Gowon, General Murtala Muhammed, General Olusegun Obasanjo, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, General Muhamadu Buhari, General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief Ernest Shonekon, General Sani Abacha and General Abdulsalami Abubakar. Three out of the eleven were civilians, the rest being military dictators. Even the three leaders mentioned, one – Chief Ernest Shonekon was not democratically elected, but, was an imposition of the dictatorship of the military led by General Babangida. Shonekon remains the shortest serving Head of State, having been removed through a bloodless palace coup by Babangida's compatriot, General Sani Abacha. The other two heads of government that went through democratic process were not allowed to conclude their tenures in office. While Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was brutally murdered in 1966 by Major Chukuma Nzeogu and his cohorts in a bloodful coupe, Shehu Shagari was ousted from office by General Muhamadu Buhari at the early days, to be precise three months into his assumption of office for a second term of four years as the democratically elected President of Nigeria. Under each of the governments, the conduct of Nigeria's external relations has been publicly declared to be guided by the same well-established principles as highlighted in the introductory part of this paper. Thus, from Sir Abubakar through General Abdulsalami, Nigeria has made it clear in her foreign policy pronouncements and actions that in spite of her comparative advantage in size, population and resources over other African countries, she would neither seek to dominate nor seek to carry out aggressive military action against them. Undisputedly, Nigeria is a giant and primus inter pares in Black Africa. Successive Nigerian leaders have been very careful to draw a distinction between 'domination' and 'leadership'; she has preferred to play a leadership but not an imperial role.

The First Republic (1960-1966) sought to pursue a policy of non-alignment in the face of bitter East-West rivalry. At the same time, we were careful not to antagonize our friends in the West on whom much of the success of the First National Development Plan depended on Iroh in (Ogwu, 2005:343). Two foreign policy issues stand out during this period; the Anglo-Nigeria Defense Pact of 1961, and the French Nuclear Task in the Sahara Desert. Through deep public opinion, the Balewa government was able to scrap the Anglo-Nigeria Defense Pact.

The regime of Gowon (1966-1975) was significant in institutionalizing Regional cohesion; during this period, a policy objective of making Africa as the centre piece of our foreign policy and liberation movements in Africa received tremendous support.

The pro-active government of Generals Murtala/Obasanjo brought vigour and vitality into the realization of our foreign policy objectives. A lot of attention was focused on Africa. In the area of decolonization, not only was Nigeria recognized as a credible voice of Africa internationally, she devoted enormous resources to the attainment of independence of the frontline States. She served as Chairman of the UN's Committee against Apartheid. Nigeria further consolidated her stands on African brotherliness and cohesion with the formation of regional organizations; she played a pivotal role in the formation of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975. The hosting in 1977 of the 2nd Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) was a manifest expression of Nigeria's commitment to promoting and advancing the cause of the blacks in Diaspora (PAC, 2005:30). This period despite being managed by military dictatorship may be heralded as the brightest in Nigeria's foreign policy process.

At the rebirth of democracy in 1978 – 1983, the new President, Alhaji Shehu Shagari continued with the promotion of African brotherliness and unity and commitments were made to promote total political, economic, social and cultural liberation in Africa. His foreign policy outlook was characterized by indecision and ambivalence. The excessive pro-western posture of this administration coupled with domestic instability often made it look like a throw-back to Balewa days Mamman in (Nigerian Forum, 1999:16.). However, it is important to state that there was downward slide in Nigeria's vibrant and dynamic foreign policy consolidated by the predecessors to this regime. 1976-1979 was marked the beginning of the gloomy foreign policy process.

The Buhari's junta started with the War against Indiscipline (WAI) at the domestic level and the campaign against trafficking was to open the doors of the country to international acceptance. The period of discord came with the attempted extradition of Alhaji Umaru Dikko to answer corruption charges leveled against him. This face-off strained Anglo-Nigerian relations. Perhaps in so many ways the West saw in Buhari's foreign policy the

bete noire of radicalism and anti – imperialism (Asobie & Ibeanu, 1988:9).

In his determination to re-brand Nigeria and revert the somewhat 'isolationist' posture assumed by the Buhari's regime towards the international community, General Badamosi Babangida seized power through a palace coup on 27th August, 1985. The Babangida's coup was, in more general terms, a coup for peripheral capitalism. A regime was needed to once again bring closer and re-hegemonize the two factions of capital whose co-operation made peripheral accumulation possible: foreign capital and local compradors (Asobie and Ibeanu, 1988:9-10). Thus, the administration started a restructuring of the foreign policy potentials of Nigeria. At the domestic front, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced. SAP met the admiration of the Western Capitalist nations and they became the most vocal praise singers of the programme; while at the foreign front, Babangida adopted economic diplomacy as the thrust of its foreign policy. During this period, it could be said rightly too that Nigeria contributed to the beginning of the end of colonialism and apartheid in the continent. Namibia was liberated and Nelson Mandela was released. Also, ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), a Regional intervention mediation force to end the protracted civil war in Liberia and Sierra Leone was formed. Nigeria further established ties with Israel broken since 1963 and instituted the Technical Aid Corps Scheme (TACS).

The Shonekon Interim National Government (ING) (September, 1993-November, 1993) did not make any landmark achievement of note because the government was still understudying the system before it was ousted by General Abacha.

The regime of General Sani Abacha (1993-1998) sets Nigeria back as a pariah State. Its isolationist posture towards the International community, inability to reach agreement with the multilateral credit institutions of the West and insincerity on the return of the country to democracy, finally, the brutal hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his kinsmen forced the West to slam partial sanction on the country. Commonwealth of Nations suspended Nigeria. However, Abacha could be credited to making commitment to ECOMOG and Regional brotherliness.

The Abubakar's Administration of (8th June, 1998-May 29, 1999) was remarkable. Realizing the causes of the failure of his predecessor, at domestic front, the Government commenced convincingly the process of return of the country to democratic rule, he expanded the frontiers of international co-operation, and doors were opened for dialogue with major actors in world arena. Emphasis was placed on multilateral co-operation and participation in regional activities. Nigeria was finally returned to civil democracy.

At this juncture, it is important to highlight the role of the Legislature in foreign policy. The legislature is a law making assembly of elected members in a formally equal relationship to one another (Iain, 1996:280). Being a law making assembly, the legislature in a democratic government enacts the general rules of society in the form of laws. (Kapur, 2001:544) states that the laws of the State prescribe the manner in which the people are expected to live in a politically organized society. The legislature could be bicameral or unicameral, and according to (Egobueze, 2019, 83) can function either in 'transformative' manner or act simply in 'arenas'.

In terms of the participation of the legislature in the shaping of Nigeria's foreign policy within the period under review – 1960-1999, the record has not been satisfactory. To begin with, in the First Republic, Sir Abubakar's government management of the country's external relations was obviously based on the premise that the conduct of external relations is an executive activity to be left in the hands of a very few individuals in the cabinet (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986:26).

The non-involvement of the parliament in foreign policy matters was visible in 1960-1966 as a motion calling on the Balewa government to establish a Parliamentary Committee on the floor of the House failed. This committee was to examine matters connected with Foreign Affairs. According to Olusanya and Akindele (1986:26), Jaja Wachuku's argument in Parliament was indeed a strange and curious one that the creation of the committee would result in the control of the conduct of foreign relations being taken away by the cabinet. Parliament and Cabinet at this period were apparently seen to be engaged in a zero-sum game in which the gains of one were equal to the loss of the other. A good idea may be assassinated by the weight of Parliamentary votes. The military interregnum of 1966-1979 had no legislature to work with but depended heavily on ideas from various think tank groups in the Nigerian society on foreign policy matters. It may be said that Mohammed – Obasanjo regime triumphed in foreign policy issues and further set Nigeria in good historical landmark in the comity of nations.

In the Second Republic, 1979-1983, the presidential system of government adopted emphasized the theory of separation of powers and checks and balances, thus, in the field of foreign policy, as in other areas of public policy, the National Assembly had a vital role to play not only as law makers, but also as the body that appropriates expenditure for public activities. The 1979 Constitution expressly forbids the President to declare a state of war between Nigeria and another country without the approval of the National Assembly. This means that the President can only use war as an instrument of his foreign policy with the prior approval of the National

Assembly. While the negotiation of treaties is the undisputable responsibility of the Executive, ratification is the prerogative of the National Assembly. Thus, no treaty between Nigeria and any other country can have the force of law until it has been enacted into law by the (Senate). It is against the background of this constitutional provision that the Senate in November, 1981 requested the Executive "to lay before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations all Treaties that have been signed or about to be signed by the Executive since the inception of this Administration (Akindele, 1982:476).

Again, all Ambassadorial appointment (career and non-career) proposed by the President must receive the approval of the Senate. This further underscores the interdependence of the President and the National Assembly with regards to the conduct of external relations. The Senate spent considerable time screening the list of nominees submitted by the President and in fact rejected some of the President's nominations (Akindele, 1982:496).

To maintain an effective profile in external relations, Special Committees on foreign relations were created in both chambers of the National Assembly. The House of Representatives established a twenty-five member Foreign Affairs Committee under the Chairmanship of Alhaji Abubakar Sani, while the Senate also constituted a committee on Foreign Relations consisting of nine Senators with Alhaji Jallo Waziri as its Chairman (Akindele, 1982:496). The Committees at both Houses were free to examine matters and referrals to them on foreign affairs. This was a departure from the Nigerian Parliament 1960 – 1966. (Akindele, 1983) advanced that it is debatable whether the committee made an impact on the conduct and control of the country's foreign policy. Besides the issues raised above, some of the challenges faced by the Foreign Affairs Committees at both Chambers were that they were not supported adequately with research staff, they met rather infrequently and took too much time to report to their respective parent bodies (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986:27). The military juntas that followed thereafter lacked legitimacy and mandate of the people, hence, could not establish the symbol of democracy – the legislature which would have established committees on Foreign Affairs. As usual, the legislature was sacked.

#### **4. Nigeria's Foreign Policy, 1999-2007**

The restoration of democratic rule in May, 1999 was a watershed in Nigeria's foreign policy. A new constitutional democracy headed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was born. The premonition that Nigeria might once again bounce back to prominent global reckoning was obvious from the volume of goodwill that General Abubakar's transition programme generated for the country. One fact that cannot be denied the new President is that he went into office as President with a lot of understanding and experience in international relations. Having once served as Head of State for three and half years (1976 – 1979), his coming in 1999 had a background of an activist foreign policy expert which most foreign policy analyst have associated with his first coming to office (Akinyemi, 1999:6). At the inception of the Obasanjo Administration in May, 1999, the foreign policy issues confronting the Government included the following:

- i. the re-integration of Nigeria into the international community after pariah years occasioned by the Abacha military dictatorship;
- ii. conflict prevention, management and resolution;
- iii. regional integration;
- iv. resuscitation of the Nigerian economy;
- v. fighting war on corruption;
- vi. rebranding Nigeria, and;
- vii. other emerging international issues.

On assumption of office, therefore, Obasanjo embarked on a revitalization drive in order to boost the country diplomatic image abroad brought about by over fifteen years of military rule. Consequently, in his inaugural speech at Eagle Square, the President stated *inter alia*:

Nigeria, once a well-respected country and a key role player in international bodies, became a pariah nation. We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, and International Bodies. We shall continue to honour existing agreements between Nigeria and other countries. It is our firm resolves to restore Nigeria fully to her previous prestigious position in the comity of nations. (Ogwu and Alli, 2007:23).

As the chief image maker for the country, the President himself flagged off the war against negative image in the country by embarking on diplomatic shuttles. He visited all the continents and countries of interest to Nigeria,



the aim was to readmit Nigeria into a state of reckon, jettison the filthy image of yesterday, re-brand and market the country to the civilized countries of the world. Sule Lamido, the first Foreign Affairs Minister under Obasanjo has this to say on the resort to shuttle political diplomacy. Nigeria has got in President Obasanjo the man to accomplish this task of conveying our problems, hopes, fears and expectations to the international system. Arguing in concord with the fore going Fawole (2000:25) posits:

Since coming to power as a democratically elected President, Obasanjo has travelled the globe seeking to restore Nigeria to its place of pride in the international community, while also seeking external support in the form of foreign investment, debt forgiveness, and the return of Nigeria's stolen billions.

Regardless of the divergent views of Nigerians on this matter, the inescapable reality is that the country once again returned to global reckoning within the first two years of the Obasanjo Administration.

The domestic and foreign policies of the Abuja government 1999-2007 re-launched Nigeria to global reckoning; the once battered image was cleared and there was a rejuvenation of hope and trust in Nigeria and Nigerians. Many of the domestic policies especially, the establishment of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) geared towards the revitalization of Nigeria from corruption to glory set the nation ahead in its war against corruption. The Commissions under the Law have power to investigate cases of corruption, economic crime referred to or uncovered by it. The EFCC made indelible marks in the fight against corruption. Casualties such as the former Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun, Senate President, Senator Adolphus Wabara, Cabinet Ministers of Education Professor Fabian Osuji, and the Ministry of Health Prof. Greenge as well as the Permanent Secretary of that Ministry and Senator Iyabo Obasanjo. Others are scores of ex - Governors and many others have been detained and prosecuted. The Transparency International itself has accorded recognition to the efforts of the structures and the political will of the President in fighting corruption, a major pillar on which Nigeria's negative image is based (Saliu, 2006:256). However, critics of the government see the war as selective and targeted only against perceived enemies of the Obasanjo Government. Furthermore, his sensitivity to the wishes of Nigerians through the retirement of political military officers from Armed forces in order to ensure the permanent subordination of the military to government authority attracted the admiration of the international community.

The consolidation policy in banking and insurance which was aimed at separating the wheat from the chaff as well as the war on counterfeit and fake drugs by National Agency for Food and Drug Administration were policies put in place to put Nigeria in the front burner and make the country more admirable and trusted by our foreign friends.

Consequently, several world leaders reciprocated the gesture of President Obasanjo from 1999-2007 by visiting Nigeria, some three to four times (Egobueze, 2010:32). We note in particular that the last two Presidents of the United States of America have both visited Nigeria, a feat that was hardly associated with military regimes. One makes bold to say that the Roll Back Malaria meeting, the Commonwealth and All African Games all hosted within this period were all facilitated by the re-branded image of the government.

Nigeria during the period under review was the force behind the new brand of OAU, christened African Union, a motivating factor behind the formation of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). She chaired the Group of 77, confronted the coupist in Sao Tome with military precision that left them with no option than to vacate the political scene and return power to the displaced President. Through diplomacy, the same therapy was applied in Togo.

The government rampant involvement in conflict management activities in Africa particularly in Sudan, Chad, Congo, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe and others as well as peace keeping activity scattered across the world and finally ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone were foreign policy instrument that elevated Nigeria in the comity of nations.

To a large extent, Nigeria's foreign policy 1999-2007 was dominated by President Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo personalized foreign policy decision making as the Ministry witnessed a significant diminution of its statutory role and responsibilities. This was accentuated by other challenges especially funding and paucity of resources. This led to many Nigerian Missions facing the problem of huge debt and being unable to meet their financial obligations and functions. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007:5). Obasanjo basically operated with Personal Advisers rather than through Foreign Minister, supposedly the most senior aide to the President on Foreign Policy matters, has literally remained in the background. The traditional functions of the foreign affairs Minister have been thinly distributed among a plethora of presidential aides and advisers including foreign affairs minister, the Ministry of States for foreign affairs, the Minister of Integration and Co-operation in Africa, the Special Adviser to the President on International Relations, which are all competing for his ears. This is without

considering other significant Ministries like Finance and Defence that are also relevant to external affairs (Fawole, 2000:28).

### 5. Concluding Remarks

A discussion of the Nigeria's foreign policy, 1999 -2007 is an annotation of the eight years of Obasanjo's foreign policy, given that he superintended over the nation in the period under review as the Chief diplomat, he more or less dominated Nigeria's political scene so frighteningly that it is pointless listing his casualties not only among his rivals but also within his friends of yesterday demonized into the poisonous enemies of today. It is important to state that before the period under review, Nigeria had been a pariah State, but through the efforts of the legislature and executive, Nigeria was launched back into global reckoning. The hitherto closed doors became opened. The National Assembly, the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its agencies and other institutions of the State facilitated the process.

The Obasanjo led Federal Government was able to achieve that feat because of his dexterity and assumed war against corruption through the setting up of anti - graft Institutions like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the strengthening of anti – corruption Institutions.

Other factors that enhanced the success of that regime were the openness introduced in public finance management through the enactment of Public Procurement Act, The Fiscal Responsibility Act among others. This was a novelty that showed exhibited fiscal responsibility that endeared the administration to point eminence, where most of our foreign debts were cancelled.

We trust that the Buhari's administration is learning from that experiment and improves upon what that regime achieved in order to continue to keep Nigeria in global reckoning. To this end, the anti-graft drive in Nigeria should be reawakened and the practical independence of the agencies charged with maintaining moral rectitude and probity in governance should be upheld to the extent that it is obvious to a common observer that, the country is serious and ready to break its unenviable romance with corruption. The fight should not be witch – hunt as was associated with the Obasanjo's regime, but a genuine effort predicated on fighting corruption. The time is not to be later but now.

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