

**NIGERIA FOREIGN POLICY UNDER GENERAL SANI ABACHA,
1993-1998**

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BECEMBER, 2022

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**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.)
HONOURS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
AND DIPLOMACY,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, NIGERIA.**

DECEMBER, 2022

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was undertaken by **Gift Ighalo** with Matriculation Number **ART1701020** in the Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, Benin City, under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project first and foremost to God Almighty who has been there right from the beginning to this very point. Specially dedication also to my ever supportive parents, for their relentless support and compassion towards me during the course of my years in the University of Benin. Furthermore, I want to dedicate this project to my lecturers for their continual impact of knowledge. To God is the Glory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I would like to express my gratitude to God Almighty, who gave me the opportunity to be alive today despite all circumstances. Also I would like to appreciate my parents, who were my strong support system throughout my years in the University, they never failed in encouraging me no matter the odd.

Lastly, I want to sincerely appreciate my supervisor who helped in his guidance throughout the project work.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

A country's foreign policy consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve its goals within the international relations milieu. It is the aggregate of a country's national interest which results from the interaction of internal and external forces as perceived by the foreign policy decision makers.¹ The approaches used are strategically employed to interact with other countries. In recent times however, due to the deepening level of globalization and transnational activities, relations and interactions have been known to exist between state and non- state actors in the international political arena.² These relations in their own way have influenced several foreign policies between nation states.

When talking about the Foreign Policy of a country, it is usual and indeed desirable to focus on the aspects of those policies that have endured over time. In the case of Nigeria, policies or principles of the various administrations at the realm of foreign relations which have endured over time are usually regarded by writers as constituting Nigeria's foreign policy; Africa being the centre piece of Nigeria's foreign policy; non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries; a strong support for international and regional organizations such as the UN and OAU; resolution of disputes through the peaceful means of arbitration and negotiation, etc. However, it is equally true that, one can also talk about the Foreign Policy of a

specific administration of any given country. For the purpose of the study, therefore, Nigeria's foreign policy 1993-1998, essentially refers to the series of articulated demands, the administration of General Sani Abacha made on the international system of foreign states and the series of responses to external events and situations, which results from the response and demands of the international environment.³

The foreign policy of General Sani Abacha's regime no doubt was undertaken at a time of intense international hostility against Nigeria.

Ogunsanwo asserts that, "to every nation-state the international environment is hostile. Hostile in the sense that nation-state are sovereign entities and each pursues its objectives and priorities most often in ways and manner that are contrary to the desires and comfort of others. For Nigeria, apartheid South Africa pursued policies that were irksome to her. Britain, the United States and other Western countries' lukewarm or even at times collaborative attitude towards South Africa under apartheid constituted a source of discomfort for Nigeria. The recognition of Biafra by some countries particularly those from Africa (Gabon, Tanzania, Zambia and Cote d'Ivoire) at the height of the Nigerian civil war crisis in the late 1960s is another example of international hostility towards Nigeria. Many other examples abound.⁴

However, there comes a time, when nation-states are confronted with hostility of profound magnitude from the international environment that can clearly be distinguished from the routine 'on' and 'off' type that is common to all nation-states. Nigeria under General Sani Abacha can be said to have faced such monumental

hostility from the international community as was exemplified by the economic and other sanctions canvassed and imposed on her by certain countries. She has had to contend with this hostility since 1993, when General Ibrahim Babangida's Administration annulled the June 12 Presidential Election. Subsequent issues binding on human rights abuses such as the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-activists in 1995, compounded the situation.⁵

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to establish clearly the link between the hostility of the international community against Nigeria and her reaction at the level of foreign policy formulation and implementation during the regime of General Abacha.

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide a detailed background to Nigeria's foreign policy;
2. Examine the role of the personalities of these leaders on Nigeria's foreign policy;
3. Discuss the contributions of Nigeria under the administration of General Sani Abacha's regime on the country, Africa and the world at large
4. Also the constraining measures from the international environment which served to hinder or enhance the success or failure of Nigeria's response during General Abacha's regime, and
5. To discern the benefits and pains of these policies within the period under study to the Nigerian people.

Scope of Study

The study covers the period 1993 to 1998 terminating with the death of General Sani Abacha on the 8th of June, 1998. The central focus is on Nigeria's reaction to the hostility toward her by the international community.. It also looks at the influence of personality on the conduct of foreign policy. Other areas which this study covers include the domestic factors that influenced the foreign policy of the two administrations. Moreover, the key achievements of their foreign policy as regards domestic economic growth, political stability, regional security, and international participation are covered in this research.

Methodology

Historical research method is used in carrying out this study. However, materials are sources from primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources include written documents such as government publications, letters, correspondence, documentaries and newspapers. Moreover, this study depends on secondary sources such as books, journals, conference proceedings and internet sources which are to be explored to enrich this work.

Literature Review

Review of literature in historical research is *sin-qua-non* in determining the nature of the research as it provides the basis for the understanding of what other have said or written about the subject matter. It therefore becomes imperative to review

what other scholars have written about Nigerian foreign policy since 1960 with special attention on General Sani Abacha's foreign policy from 1993 to 1998.

One of the most important works on Nigerian foreign policy is Ufot Bassey Inamete, *Foreign Policy Decision-making in Nigeria*,⁶ which examines Nigeria's foreign policy decision-making system together with the other factors that shape and determine foreign policy. It gives the reader an understanding of the foreign policy structures, processes, dynamics and outputs in Nigeria. It also looks at how personalities affect foreign policy decision making in Nigeria. The reader also gains an understanding of how foreign policy decision-making system impact on foreign-policy outputs in medium-sized countries. Although, no special attention was given to the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo which is the major concern of this study, this work is of importance to this study as it discusses the issues of personality in the development of Nigerian foreign policy.

Bassey Ate's *Decolonization and Dependence: The Development of Nigeria – US Relations, 1960-1984*⁷ is a good contribution to the study. Despite the variations in the years, the work systematically analyses the development of the relationship between Nigeria and the US during the dynamic era of decolonization with special attention on General Olusegun Obasanjo first outing as head of state. This study serves as a basis for analyzing Nigeria's stand on some key issues with the major world powers. Although, Bassey is not directly connected to the present study, it gives a vivid background on the historical past of the friendly Olusegun Obasanjo when he

was the military head of state between 1976 and 1979 and how this later helped in running the affairs of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007.

Another literature of relevance is Ikedinachi Ayodele and Muyiwa Adeniyi's, *A Critical Evaluation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy at 53*.⁸ The work depicts Nigeria's foreign policy as being chameleon in nature, a foreign policy constantly in a state of flux as a result of internal and external dynamics inherent in any given administration or regime. In the case of Nigeria, the formation of Nigeria's foreign policy has gone through 14 different administrations through the external affairs ministry in the past 53 years, out of which 35 years were during military regimes.

Consequently, there has been a plethora of conceptual, ideological and psychological postulations of policies in Nigeria's foreign policy machinery, most of which were born out of a crave and selfish hunger for an identity that would leave a lasting impression about the various administrations or regimes in question. While adopting the traditional critical methods of analysis in philosophy to analyze relevant data, archival materials, texts and the major conceptual and ideological constructs proposed as foundations which upholds the main trusts of Nigeria's foreign policy, the paper shall strive to show via contextual and conceptual analysis of all the data collected for the study, the reason for policy failure and abandonment in Nigeria's foreign policy machinery. The ideological and psychological crave by each administration to formulate unique foreign policies are also identified as inimical to the policy formulations initiatives since they are not grounded in deep philosophical

thought. The study recommends a strong paradigm shift and a positive transformation plan which will have the capacity to reverse the degeneration that presently looms the diplomatic practice in the face.

Ray Ofoegbu's *Foreign Policy and Military Rule*⁹ examined three military governments in Nigeria and played much emphasis on the third Military Government (1975-1979). To Ofoegbu, it was the third Military Government that brought radicalism into Nigeria's foreign policy. The radicalism which was introduced into Nigeria's foreign policy led to confrontation with major powers which invariably caused diplomatic conflict especially with the United States in 1975. From 1977, the relationship began to normalize. Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, being the new leader of Nigeria, renewed Nigeria's radical foreign policy and once again, began to make close ties with President Jimmy Carter of the United States. Ofoegbu's work will be of immense value to this study. Once again, one notices that the work does not centre on President Olusegun Obasanjo but did provide a detailed background of his past activities which will make us to understand his policy positions.

Olayiwola Abegunrin, *Nigerian Foreign Policy under Military Rule, 1966-1999*,¹⁰ provides a significant and comprehensive examination of Nigerian foreign policy (1966-1999) during the almost 33 years of military rule, punctuated by the four-year civilian interregnum, 1979-1983. He analyses what led to the military rule in 1966, and the foreign policy performance of each military that ruled the country since 1966. He also discusses extensively the economic dimension of the nation's foreign

policy. He shows that the last 15 years, the period of Generals Babangida and Abacha, were the most corrupt and brutal that Nigeria had seen since independence. The mysterious sudden death of General Sani Abacha led to the appointment of General Abubakar, who handed over to an elected civilian government in May 1999, led by President Olusegun Obasanjo. Of particular interest of scholars, students, and other researchers involved with African politics and foreign policy and the role of the military in political affairs. This work is directly useful to this study as it help in providing information regarding Nigeria's political and economic situations before 1999.

Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu Mustapha (eds.), *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War*¹¹ examine Nigerian foreign policy during the first 12 years after the end of the Cold War in order to answer questions with changes in the global arena and determines whether Nigerian foreign policy remains relevant in this new period of international relations. Its sixteen chapters provide incisive analytical coverage, conceptual insights and empirical richness, pointing to the factors and imperatives which have shaped Nigeria's foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. That it succeeds so admirably is a tribute to the editors and well-chosen authors. Each chapter helps to impose order on this complex mosaic.

Nicholas A. Audu's book titled, *A Critical Analysis of Nigeria's Foreign Policy During the Abacha Regime: 1993-1998*,¹² critically examined the foreign policy of the Abacha regime, 1993-1998, a period coinciding with immense

international hostility against Nigeria. Both primary sources, through interviews with foreign embassies and government institutions, and secondary sources by way of content systematic analysis, were used for the conduct of the study.

The study recommends that people far removed from the theory and practice of international relations should not be used in the conduct of Nigerian foreign policy. Government should not shun dialogue in its future dealings with foreign states. The little gains made in the area of regional security by Nigeria as a consequence of international hostility is commendable and should be maintained and improved upon.

The international hostility that came against Nigeria was most profound and first of its kind in Nigeria's history; and though average Nigerians went through much hardship as a result, the government refused to compromise with the international community; the sanctions themselves failed to change the attitude of the Abacha regime, an indication that they failed to have their desired effect. The regime continued to snub dialogue with sanctioning states. However for economic reasons sanctioning states refused to apply sanctions that would probably have brought down the regime.

Osita C. Eze, *Beyond 50 Years of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Issues, Challenges and Prospects*,¹³ looks at fifty years of Nigeria's relationship with the rest of the world and how it has generally reflected its efforts at promoting Africa's interests and at the same time grappling with its domestic development. The work examines how other institutional actors affect Nigerian foreign policy under Obasanjo. The foreign policy

implementers and monitors identified in part two are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Directorate of Technical Aid Corps, the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa, and the Mass Media. The issues and challenges with which they are faced are explicated. For instance, Ummuna H. Orjiako of the Foreign Ministry, analyzed some major constraints facing the Ministry and noted that ‘to stem the tide of the eroding professionalism and decline, to take advantage of the prospects and opportunities present by a changing domestic and external environment, the Nigerian foreign policy establishment must seek to confront and address the litany of known challenges in the Foreign Ministry’.¹⁴

Characterization

Chapter One: Background to Study

This chapter intends to give a general introduction of the topic of this research. It provides a detailed background to Nigeria’s foreign policy under General Sani Abaca, 1993-1998.

Chapter Two: Historical Background of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy

This chapter examines the conceptualization of the term ‘foreign policy’. It also traces the evolution of Nigeria foreign policy. The chapter discusses Nigeria’s foreign policy objectives and the instruments by which she conducts her foreign policy. It provides a detailed background to Nigeria’s foreign policy and also examines the principles of Nigeria’s foreign policy.

Chapter Three: Nigeria's Foreign Policy under General Sani Abacha

This chapter discusses the contributions of Nigeria under the administration of General Sani Abacha's regime on the country, Africa and the world at large. It also looks the constraining measures from the international environment which served to hinder or enhance the success or failure of Nigeria's response during General Abacha's regime.

Chapter Four: An Assessment of Abacha's Foreign Policy 1993 – 1998

This chapter examines how effective was the policy of General Sani Abacha. It also evaluates the domestic policy on how its influence the foreign policy of the country at large.

Chapter Five: Conclusion In this chapter, the whole work will be summarized and concluding remark will be given. Hence, the chapter is just all about summary and conclusion.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Introduction

Nigeria was created in 1914, but became an independent sovereign state on October 1, 1960. As an independent political entity, Nigeria is a hundred years old in this present year, 2014. However, as a sovereign, diplomatic and international legal subject, Nigeria is part of the comity of Nations in 1960. Nigeria's diplomatic history in the first half of a century, may be divided into five distinct periods. The first period, 1960-1974, may be characterized as "age of innocence". The second, 1975-1984, was the "era of awakening". The third, 1985-1992, was the "epoch of Realism", the fourth, 1993-1998, was "the Dark Age". And the fifth, 1999-2010 may be described as "The Renaissance".¹ However, even with these distinct periods, Nigeria's foreign policy still remained that of being the leader behind the drive for Africa renaissance, The mother of Africa.

In analyzing the foreign policy of Nigeria, questions like, how have the changes in the international system in the last fifty years been perceived and interpreted by the policy makers? How has Nigeria's "national interest" been defined, in the context of those changes? What specific policies have been formulated and implemented to respond to the changes? What has been the impact of the changes and Nigeria's responses on Nigeria's national development? Often arises, and at times leaves a puzzling reaction on scholars and political fanatics.²

Nigeria like any other state, has the primary responsibility articulate in clear terms her country's national interest, and to relate them to those of other nations, within the international community.³ The foreign policy of a state refers to the plans of the state, details of a state on how it relates with other states. It is both the intention of a state with other states, and the actual relations with other states. The foreign policy of a state is a reflection of the state's national interests. It is the country's response to the world outside, it is beyond its boundaries. These response could be friendly or aggressive, simple or complex and comprises of elements such as diplomacy, military, trade, economics, cultural, educational, sporting, etc and varies in form and focus according to circumstances. It is a states behavioural attitude towards the global community.⁴

F. S. Northedge describes the foreign policy of any country as a product of environmental factors, both internal and external.⁵ He furthermore stated that describing and identifying the factors that shape the foreign policies of African state, Nigeria for instance, is not precise or simple Professor Richard C. Synder said: "The number and complexity of factors that influence national action in the international arena are not only enormous, but the task of identifying the crucial variables is also unfinished."⁶ In this study, the foreign policy of Nigeria is our case of interest, and what better way to fully understand these policies with their crucial variable, than going back in time, back to the declaration of independence, back to the independent Nigeria of 1960 under Sir Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and progress further from there.

Perception and reality in Nigeria's foreign policy after independence, molded the first phase of the history of Nigeria's diplomacy as an "age of innocence". Nigerian leaders viewed the international community with coloured idealism. This was also a period when consequently Nigeria's faith in multilateralism as the central approach to the achievement of national goals was very strong. Nigeria because of this became a member of several multilateral organizations; the UN, the Commonwealth of Nations, the non-aligned movement, the Group of 17 etc.⁸ In the initial phase, the international system was "bipolar". It was characterized by the cold war era, between two antagonistic military, ideological bloc. However, among the leaders of newly independent Nigeria, they viewed the international system with blurring eyes; there was the image in their minds of the romantic notion of the structure and functioning of the major international institutions. They viewed the United Nations for example, as a circle of sovereign states, interacting freely and harmoniously on the basis of equality and in frankness with one another. They also regarded the UN in its theoretical forms being its supreme goal of attaining peace and progress for all mankind.⁹

The United Nations and its policies, and agencies, was thought, would be the ideal forum when African problems and aspirations "would be considered on the basis of justice divorced from selfish consideration".¹⁰ It shocked the government of Nigeria, who had harboured an idealistic notion of the structure of the United Nations, and by implication, of the international system as a whole, to discover later that in reality, the UN operated as a patch work of blocs of states or an "arena where party (sic) politics

could be portrayed and played at the highest level (Balewa's first speech at the UN). This made it difficult for Nigerian leaders to adjust to the fact that the United Nations was a forum where "ideological differences" tended to "obscure the objectives of peace among the nations and stability of the world at large" (Prime Minister A.T. Balewa at the UN)⁵.

Furthermore, the break of the Nigerian civil war 1967-1970, saw a shift in relations between Nigeria and the foreign powers. Nigeria before the civil war associated more with the West, after the war, there was an obvious shift to the East, and not only that, Nigeria began to view the western powers with suspicion. The "Era of Awakening followed immediately after this period, in the course of mobilizing external support to preserve the unity of Nigerians, and the territorial integrity of the Nigerian state, Nigerian government officials gained tremendously useful experience, in international diplomacy.

The post civil war period, never forgot the civil war experience of playing bloc politics at the UN and other multilateral forum and this altered Nigerian leaders' perception of Nigeria's friends and foes in the international system. They were gradually awakened to the intricate network of diplomatic ties, military-ideological alliance and socio-economic polarizations that characterized the international system of the 1960's and 1970's".

By the early part (1985-1992) in the third diplomatic phase "the epoch of Realism", there was a new realism in third world approach to global issues, there was

the acceptance by the Nigerian political leadership, of a long standing western view that Africa's economic crisis was the product, not of inequalities of the old world economic order, but of the structure imbalances in African nation's economies. This saw the Nigerian leaders playing down their demands for a New International Economic order, Nigeria accepted the IMF/IBRD – inspired and supervised Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). On reality, however, for Nigerian and many other African countries, the main attraction of SAP, in contrast to say the Lagos plan of Action was promise of increased external (especially, multilateral) financial aid even if it landed the country in a state of disenchantment among the Nigerian people, it was still an attempt by Nigeria to develop her economy and that of Africa as well.¹²

The fourth diplomatic phase (1993-1998) was the “Dark Age” in Nigeria's history in several senses. Nigeria became a pariah state, isolated, despised and ridiculed in the international community. She became primarily an object rather than a subject of international diplomacy. She was rejected and abandoned by some of the most prominent of her own citizens. Her leadership was tried in the court of international public opinion, found guilty and sanctioned for international bad behaviour. It was a period in Nigeria's diplomacy when national interests was recklessly sacrificed on the altar of the selfish ambition of a few.

This research work falls within the concept of the fourth phase of Nigerian history. The aim of this chapter is to examine the foreign policy of General Sani Abacha, 1993-1998. Foreign policy as we know it is the projection of a country's

domestic policy. The work also aims at examining the foreign policy strategy of General Abacha and his role in Nigeria's pariah status during his reign.

There were specific issues in Nigeria's foreign policy and they include:

A. The African Unity and Integration Project:

This was already stated in both the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, promotion of Africa integration and support for African unity. This was a key foreign policy objective. The creation of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) in 1963 and its transformation into the African Union (AU) in 2002, was a step in that direction. So was the creation of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOAWS) in 1975.¹³ The OAU embodied several objectives, but two primary objectives defined its character and main line objectives, which are very similar to the interest of Nigeria with regards with her foreign policy. These are: the promotion of unity and solidarity of African state, as well as serving as the collective voice of Africa in the international community; eradicating all forms of colonialism and racism in Africa. The creation of the ECOWAS owed much to the governments and peoples of Nigeria headed by General Yakubu Gowon. The challenge for successive governments was how to sustain the momentum and grow ECOWAS into a really effective instrument for economic integration in the sub-region.¹⁴ Much was achieved by Nigeria, in maintaining peace and stability in the sub-region, through peace-keeping, conflict resolution, and peace-building through ECOWAS. The pursuit of the objective of promotion of African integration and support for African

Unity was taken seriously by successive Nigerian governments. Nigeria's activist role in pushing forward the cause of decolonization and eradication of the apartheid regimes was critical in strengthening the capacity of the OAU to achieve its objective.

Another credit to the foreign policy of Nigeria, was helping to weld together the two rival blocs-Monrovia and Casablanca respectively, and thus bringing the dream of a united Africa into a near reality.¹⁵ Nigeria's policy for a united Africa through economic and political considerations was on the basis of the anarchic structure of the international system, singular weak states are preyed upon by powerful and mighty of the international system, and for the issues of African to be heard and for these African states to play active roles in the international system, there has to be a united stance among these sovereign independent African states, Nigeria being at the front of this stance, gives her more recognition amongst her fellow African states and in the global scene. Let it not be forgotten that at independence, a lot of these newly independent states feared the unknown intentions of Nigeria. To some it was thought that Nigeria would become an imperialist state, considering her size and vast resources. But in due time, these fears were addressed.

Nigeria's policy on colonialism and realism was publicly inaugurated in 1961 by Dr. Jaja Amucha Nuchuku, foreign minister (1961-1964). The Federal Government declared "colonialism in all its manifestations anywhere in Africa, must be ended, and that Nigeria would utilize its full resources, mental, moral and material in struggle for the emancipation of all dependent territories of the continent. It also

declared its commitment to “the total eradication of all forms of racial discrimination”, insisting that it would never regard racial discrimination as an international affair of any state. Nigeria funded and aided liberation movement in Africa.¹⁶ Indeed those were her years and she showed no signs of slowing down.

Nigeria’s foreign policy at independence, also clearly expressed the governments opinion towards taking sides with any of the super powers, and their various allies. Other principles which have imbued Nigeria’s policy since independence include: The protection of the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Nigerian State, promotion of socio-economic well-being of Nigeria, enhancing Nigerians image and status in the world at large, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other status.¹⁷ It should be noted that irrespective of the changes in government over time, military or civilian, the principles and objectives of Nigeria’s foreign policy which was laid down by late Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, has remained the same Africa has always remained the centerpiece of Nigeria’s foreign policy.

The decade of the 1980’s witnessed the emergence of three regimes. One civilian regime under Shehu Shagari (1979-1983) and two under military dictatorship (Muhammadu Buhari, 1984-1985), and Ibrahim Babangida 1985-1993).¹⁸ This period, 1980-1993 spanned the era of awakening and epoch of realism in Nigeria’s international diplomacy. At the rhetorical level, there appeared to be no difference in the foreign policy pursued under Mohamed/Obasanjo and that pursued under Shagari,

Buhari and Babangida.¹⁹ All declared their commitment to the completion of the process of decolonization and the dethronement of apartheid regimes and bringing an end to racism on the continent.

B. Mobilizing External Resources for Economic Development:

Nigeria has always sought for foreign investment. But it was in the third diplomatic period, the epoch of realism, that the search for direct foreign investment became an integral part of Nigeria's foreign policy. It also became an obsession. In 1988, when "economic diplomacy" or the diplomacy of SAP, was officially proclaimed, the Nigerian President at the time, Ibrahim Babangida, asserted that, by implementing the World Bank macroeconomic reform known as SAP, the Nigerian government had "succeeded in restoring the confidence of foreign investors in Nigeria's economy". In the same year, Ite Nwachukwu then Nigerian foreign minister, explained that "economic diplomacy" would entail "negotiations and activities that would attract foreign investment and other assistance."²⁰

Nigerian leaders were, however disappointed and frustrated at the result of their efforts in implementing a foreign policy that had as its key strategic doctrine "Winning the confidence of those whose support you seek... through friendliness and loyalty to their causes". The Nigerian foreign minister lamented: "while we have made courageous structural adjustment sacrifices, the expected international support has either turned out to be a trickle or even non-existent" (African Concord, 18 February, 1991). But what is the impact of the inflow of foreign capital to the

Nigerian economy. The effect is not very positive, with illustrations, one can see the movement of poverty level over years. Although it was between 1993 and 1998 that Nigerian received the highest proportion of FDI to GDP in several years, poverty level in Nigeria rose from about 30% in 1992 to 64% in 1996, under Sani Abacha. It fell to 54% in 2004; but that was still much higher than it was in 1980. Yet, the period which we dubbed the renaissance saw a lot of inflow of foreign capital to Nigeria.²¹

In conclusion, colonial rule has been eliminated in Africa; and while racist regimes no longer exist in the continent, Nigeria contributed to these positive development through her foreign policy. However, neocolonialism remains alive and well, and under development and poverty remains a serious challenge to Nigerians and Africans. Insecurity and conflicts in Africa derive largely from adverse economic conditions and extra-African interference in African affairs.²² Nigerian foreign policy over the years have experienced changes slightly due to change in leadership and the changes in the global arena, especially with the growing popularity of the phenomenon of globalization. However, the foreign policy of the country is lie's at the heart of Africa and the sustenance of the integrity of the sovereign independent state of Nigeria, and for positive change in the quality of Nigeria's foreign policy of the future to be strengthened, institutions as the legislature and political parties, as well as civil society ought to participate more actively in providing regular institutional forums for popular participation in the formulation of foreign policy and

definition of national interests. The future foreign policy of Nigeria must reflect the basic concerns of Nigerians, namely the persistent high level of poverty and financial equality among Nigerians.²³

Endnotes

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CHAPTER THREE

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER GENERAL SANI ABACHA

Introduction

According to Professor F. S. Northedge, the foreign policy of any country is a product of environmental factors with internal, and external. How to identify the factors that shape the foreign policy of any state is not precise nor simple. Professor Richard C. Snyder has said that the number and complexity of factors that influence national action in the international arena are not only enormous, but the task of identifying the crucial variables is also unfinished.¹

Nigeria foreign policy at independence was that of an open declaration by the federal government under the command of Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, for the emancipation of all African State from colonialism and white minority regimes, and for the protection and substance of her sovereignty and independence. The federal government declared that “colonialism in all its ramifications anywhere in Africa must be ended, and that Nigeria would utilize its full resources, mental, moral, and material in the struggle for the emancipation of all dependent territories of the continent.² The government also declared its commitment to the total eradication of all forms of racial discrimination, insisting that it would never regard racial discrimination as an internal affair of any State.

However, Nigeria's foreign policy had moved through a number of major phases since independence – 1960-1965, have been regarded as one of uncertainty and

timidity. Even with her confidence as she took stance against colonialism and fought for the total emancipation of Africa, Nigeria did not speak with one voice and when she spoke, she leaned toward the right. The Aglo-Nigerian Defence pact, the Congo crisis and African unity, negotiations for associate status with European Economic Community (EEC), the Rhodesian crisis and Commonwealth relations, and the Arab-Isreali antagonism and search cohesive policy toward the Middle East, are example of issues upon the official foreign policy declaration itself which has some influence by the West.³ The greatest threat to the achievement of the countries “Africa” policies comes from the West. As long as Nigeria’s civilian regime are economically dependent on the West, and on the other hand, while looking to the Eastern bloc for models of social national liberation, the idea of non-alignment would not be effectively anchored and the issues of tier sovereignty would always be questioned.

The politicians of Nigeria’s second republic generally failed to meet the foreign policy challenges they all confronted. The economy deteriorated weighed down with huge internal and external debts of about 16 billion, accumulated amidst changes of mismanagement and large scale fraud. The nation’s social services were in shambles. There were serious threats to domestic peace and stability, especially after the 1983 elections which were accompanied by wide spread dispute and violence.⁴ Nigeria’s stance as the “Giant of Africa” was beginning to face scrutiny by both the peoples of Africa and the international society. Events over the cause of history have carved out and molded the Nigeria we know today. Nonetheless, the most prominent

era of event in terms of the administration of Nigeria has got to be the Nigeria of General Sani Abacha, 1993-1998. This is the area of our study. Nigeria's foreign policy experienced a dramatic turn from Giant of Africa and the liberator of the people of Africa to a "pariah" state. The transition from Giant of Africa to pariah state under General Sani Abacha is one that gradually been eating at the administrative ways of country, like a cancer until it grew fatally out of hand. In order to fully understand the turn of events in the country, one has to take into considerations the antecedents that led to pariah state of Nigeria, and as already stated earlier, Nigeria was going through financial crisis already from embezzlement and fraud to the threats posed to the peace and stability in the country especially after the 1983 elections; which put the social services in shambles.

The "June 12" crises and the pressure from within and externally made Babangida who was the captain in charge of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He handed over the realms of authority to an Interim National Government (ING) under Mr. Ernest Shonekan. From the onset, it was clear that the interim government of Mr. Ernest Shonekan would be a short reign, by not deriving its power from the electorate, but imposed on the country against the democratic wishes of Nigerians consequently, the administration was immersed in domestic and international problems. The main problem was that of acceptance and legitimacy.⁵ During this period, the international environment had changed again. Adopting democracy and with good governance as the hallmark of international acceptability. It was against this background that General

Sani Abacha and his colleagues took over power on November 17, 1993. General Abacha installed himself as the Head of State and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces. This was to be the beginning of the prestige and image decline of Nigeria which was to last for six years.

General Sani Abacha was the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He was born 20 September 1943 in Kano State, Nigeria, and embraced Islam as his religion. He attended the “Nigerian Military Training College and Mons officer cadet school” before being commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in 1963.⁶ Abacha’s military career is distinguished by a string of successful coups. He was by some records the most successful coup plotter in the history of Nigeria’s military. He took part in the countercoup of July 1966, from the conceptual stage, and may have been a participant in Lagos or Abeokuta phases of the January 1966 coup.⁷ He also was a prominent figure in every single successful coup in Nigerian history, two of which brought and removed General Muhammadu Buhari from power in 1983. When General Ibrahim Babangida was named President and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In 1985, Abacha was named Chief of Army Staff. He was appointed minister of Defence in 1990.⁸

Looking into the background of General Sani Abacha, it is crystal clear that he was a determined human being, setting aside goals for himself and attaining them at all cost. It is also clear that he knew what he wanted and was not one to be taking for a joke. However, the fundamental basis from which Abacha came into power was in the

events of the June 12 elections of 1993.⁹ To this effect, Chief M.K.O. Abiola of the ‘Social Democratic Party (SDP)’ emerged the winner beating his oppose, ‘Alhaji Bashir Tofa of the ‘National Republican convention (NRC)’. Petitions alleging irregularities in the primaries that now reduced Abiola as the winning candidate were made and thereafter, the case was taken to an Abuja High Court, where the election was annulled on the premise by the federal government¹⁰. The international community, the annulment itself was perceived as a subversion of the democratization process on the part of the military, it was amidst these uncertainties and irregularities of the administrative arm of government that Abacha seized power in a bloodless coup in 1993.¹¹

The effects of this take over was to deny office to the newly elected president Chief Moshood (MKO) Abiola, the victor of the first democratic elections to be held in Nigeria in over 15 years. As the new Head of State of Nigeria, Abacha’s first move was to place the Supreme Court and other parliamentary bodies beneath him. He took over the position of legislator, judiciary, and executive, and soon after, set for the right to imprison and pass judgment to whomever he pleased. He exercised this new embodied authority with the unlawful jailing of Chief M.K.O. Abiola. Abiola was never released, and sadly, he died in 1998, still in jail, just two weeks to his release. Reactions from both internal and external societies were of utmost shock and disappointment.

Nigeria's former colonial master Britain had a lot to say on the issue as she demanded the immediate release of Moshood Abiola, to no surprise, Abiola ignored the demands from external powers. To him, this was an internal issue, and the sovereignty of Nigeria had to be respected at that. Scholars have examined the Abacha era and often, similar conclusions about the two dimensional stage of Nigeria in that era were met. There was the issue of "tyrant" Abacha and "Abacha the protector of the sovereignty of Nigeria". It was also deduced that Nigeria's integrity as a sovereign state, was at most very effective. To an extent, the Abacha era saw progress in the economic growth of Nigeria, true this was done through bizarre and uncarry means, for instance, personalizing the central Bank of Nigeria, to this effect, there were no irregularities on the allocations of funds at the least if there was any it could be traced.¹²

The Abacha administration was more ideological. In this sense he found it necessary to organize the sate to his own satisfaction. He saw it necessary to rule with an "iron fist", looking at Nigeria as a child that needed to be molded to his own satisfaction probably from the point of view that the country in the past suffered a number of domestic crises, signs of future domestic crises were still very much present. With the vast population of the country and multi-ethnic groups, Nigeria has found difficulty being a unified body. Things would be different in his time, it would his own way at his command. It would be "his Nigeria" and nobody else.

With a number of coups and military takeover's in past years Abacha administration was a potential victim itself, and what better way of defending his administration, than to attack first. General Sani Abacha became an "absolute" ruler, no one dared to question his actions or criticize it at that. There were severe consequences to doing that. For the first time there was a marked discontinuity, in the foreign policy of Nigeria as being the "mother of Africa" since independence, for the first time, Nigeria lost her relevance in the international community.¹³

The Nature of Policy Shift in Nigeria, Under the Abacha Administration From "Giant of Africa" to a "Pariah State"

Asides the illegal jailing of M.K.O. Abiola, and other prominent politicians who to him, was a threat to his administration, there was also the execution of the "Ogoni nine" which left the entire worlds shocked with their jaws dropped. Let it not be forgotten that upon his takeover of the administration of Nigeria, Abacha placed himself above the Supreme Court and any other governmental body. So did not come into total shock the drastic decisions that were taken in his administration.¹⁴

Kenulle Beeson Sarowiwa was a popular Nigerian writer, television producer and an environmental activist. His homeland in "Ogoniland" in Niger Delta has been targeted for crude oil extraction since the 1950's and has suffered severe environmental damage. Sarowiwa and is fellow Ogoni indigenes organized a non-violent campaign against the government and for this they were jailed and later executed against the wishes of the international community, nine of them in 1995.¹⁵

Also in 1995, General Abacha's government alleged that some military officers and civilians were engaged in a coup plot, including distinguishing personalities as former military Head of State General Olusegun Obasanjo and his Deputy retired General Shehu Musa Yar'adua, where after a secret tribunal also changed, convicted and sentenced. Prominent human rights activities, journalists and others, suspected of anti-regime activities were also sentenced.¹⁶

The assassination of Kudirat Abiola on "June 4 1996" by henchmen of Abacha, left the streets of Lagos terrorized to their bones Alfred Rawane, a 71 year old frontline nationalist and prodemocracy activist was also assassinated by detachment of Abacha's henchmen. The issues of civil right abuse did not end there at all. There was the Gani Fawehimi incident, a civil rights activist, who was clamped and jailed numerous times and so were his equally dynamic compatriots. Femi Falana, to Beko Ransome Kuti.

Journalists were habitually arrested for holding anti-government views and were often tortured. Media houses were closed down and residences of pro-democratic activists were also closed down or even burnt. Alani Akinrinade and Dan Suleiman who were forced into exile, had their homes bombed. Popular newspaper "Guardian", also a respected media house was torched and its publisher, Mr. Alex Ibru was attacked and almost killed by operatives who eventually turned out to be Abacha henchmen. Renowned poet and pro-democratic activist Wole Soyinka had his home in Abeokuta raided, and was exiled as well.¹⁷

Three “NADECO” members namely Abraham Adesanya, a senator in the second republic, and Ganiyu Dawody were all detained. Anthony Enahoro who moved the nation for national independence in 1953 was unceremoniously forced to flee the nation.

“Tom Ikimi”, the Nigerian minister for foreign affairs under Abacha, went overseas, claiming that the Nigerian judiciary was a model of excellence and that the Nigeria press enjoyed considerable freedom, yet “Nosa Igiegbo” the editor in chief “TELL” news magazine was hurled in detention in 1995 and released only seven months later without any charges leveled against him.¹⁸

Abacha’s reign was that of full terror. The “Armed forces” and other national security agencies, were often his tools in intimidating and executing bizarre human rights violation. As practiced a “personified policy” and there was nothing any one could do about it, except they wanted to be killed, exiled or jailed.

The foreign policy of Nigeria at independence was to be a role model to other newly independent sovereign state, protecting the integrity of her territory and her people. True that the Abacha regime depicted strongly the “Sovereignty” of Nigeria and all it had to embody, sadly the peoples of Nigeria were not favoured in these terms. However, Nigeria was able to emerge from the Abacha regime with spirited campaign for democracy, which over time brought the emergence of democratic government in 1999, ending the 16 years of consecutive military dictatorship. The administration of Abacha forced a lot of sanctioning and criticisms from the external community, but

some credits should be given to the Abacha administration because, “the sovereignty” of Nigeria very functional and tested, and it portrayed Nigeria’s genuine independence.¹⁹

The trial of the “Ogoni nine” was a well published trial and very well condemned as well, but to Abacha, this was an internal affair, and the rest of the world had to stay away, South African president Nelson Mandella condemned this move of Abacha, so did Britain and her allies, this only angered Sani Abacha even more, because it meant they were questioning his authority and infringing on the sovereignty of Nigeria to handle her internal issues without external interference. Request from the international community for the release of the “Ogoni nine” only angered the head of state even more, and to prove to them all that Nigeria was a sovereign state, and he was in charge, and answered to no one, and that all their threats were futile, he passed the death sentence to the ‘Ogoni nine’ with Ken Saro-wiwa hung in 1995. Abacha perceived the requests and threats from the international community as a threat to his government, and his point had to be made clear.²⁰

Nigeria faced its darkest time, yet, the United States, Britain, the European union, all broke of ties with Nigeria. The pressure was so intense that for the first time, the “United Nations”, on the premise of the execution of the “Ogoni Nine” passed a resolution against Nigeria, condemning the execution. Nigeria became a pariah nation facing intense black age both economically and politically.

The Commonwealth leaders suspended Nigeria's membership in the organization for two years, and threatened to expel Nigeria if the junta had not transferred power to civilian by that time. Other countries, including the United States and members of the European Union, imposed or tightened various non-economic sanctions, involving restrictions on diplomatic privileges and military cooperation.²¹

It should be noted that the commonwealth and the United Nations are the two most important international organizations apart from those whose memberships are restricted to African memberships are restricted to Africa - member – states, to which Nigeria belongs. African State comprise nineteen of the fifty one Commonwealth members. The execution of the “Ogoni Nine”, provoked an unprecedented decision, with only one dissenting vote (that of the military government of the Gambia) to suspend Nigeria from the organization for two years, pending ‘its’ return to compliance” with the principle of the “Harare Declaration of 1991”, in which all member states pledged to foster democracy, human rights and judicial independence. This punitive response was promoted strongly by the presidents of South Africa and Zimbabwe, as well as the British Prime Minister, who denounced the Nigerian government for having perpetrated “judicial murder”.²²

General Sani Abacha might have had his short comings, but it is naïve to refuse to acknowledge that the Abacha regime or his administration was grappling with the legacy. It inherited from previous administrations. It was in a bid to preserve

the external sovereignty of Nigeria and to protect and preserve the independence of the country that Abacha so acted. In his own words, he said:

The overriding aim of Nigerians foreign policy must be to protect and safeguard our national interests at all time, against the background, of our experiences. The main trust of our foreign policy has been a struggle for determination, the alleviation of poverty and the pursuit of set reliant development. In response to the challenges of emerging globalization of the international system and expressing our right to self-determination. We have in relevant times, been looking beyond our traditional allies to diversify and cultivate new ties with countries that we consider not only friends but display honest desire to cooperate with us in the pursuit of our development objectives, we should always welcome genuine and friendly relations on mutual trust respect and equality.²³

Diplomatic and Economic Relations from West to East

Nigeria having a mono-economy, built a strong relationship with her and the country's oil client. It also became a huge problem as the economy crashed. Trade relations with Britain and the United States, who were her major clients, had crashed. Nigeria found herself in a state of paranoia that her economy would be devastated, being that United States, could decide to withdraw its cliental ship from the country. However, relations among and between nations, must be governed by principles of mutual respect. Thus, not only economic conditions but also consideration of prestige and self determination were the promptings that rightly made Abacha to turn to the East.²⁴

The nature of policy shift was that Nigeria began to develop ties with “the people’s Republic of China. Although Nigeria and China have had diplomatic ties for a long time, the abandonment of the West was to bring about intensified relations. The Abacha administration also began to count the very patient Russia in her foreign policies, and of course, Russia in her foreign policies, also responded quite favorable by appointing a young radical of ministerial rank, General “Sergel Shogu” to head a newly created commission on Nigeria. Western hostilities towards Nigeria made her pay more attention to, and became new friends with India, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, Turkey, Syria.²⁵

As the international environment changed and stigmatized Nigeria, there was also a shift in the country’s foreign policy. Nigeria’s traditional allies were overlooked in favour of new and uncharted areas, such as North Korea, China and Russia.²⁶ It should also be acknowledged that the Abacha era, even with the flawed administration, experienced true sovereignty, and also the issue of fraud and embezzlement by governmental bodies was addressed, being that it was a personified regime, the country belonged to him, and so did the institution of the country, and stealing from the country would mean stealing from General Sani Abacha, and this was something that would never be attempted by any one or body of institution, giving the personal nature of Abacha, a “Tyrant”, the reasons are not farfetched. But in the words of “Douglas Hard”, British foreign secretary, ‘military dictatorship cannot solve

Nigeria's problems". This is a serious step backwards, not only for Africa as a whole.²⁷

Endnotes

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CHAPTER FOUR

AN ASSESSMENT OF ABACHA'S FOREIGN POLICY 1993 – 1998

Introduction

General Abacha unambiguously personified Nigeria's foreign policy during his tenure, and acted without due regard for the nation's vital interest and standing in the committee of nations. What followed under General Sani Abacha were five years of unbridled dictatorship, economic mismanagement, gross human rights abuses and virtually a negation of government.

Coming into power due to the military overturning of the mid-1993 election results, General Sani Abacha took the presidency after a simple palace coup that removed the interim government installed by General Babangida immediately after stepping down as president of Nigeria. Abacha outlawed political parties and labour strikes, seized government offices and returned Nigeria to Military rule.

Aiming from the outset to perpetuate his rule, Abacha first dissolved all the elected state and federal legislatures and sacked the governors. He then re-enacted the tortuous and wasteful transition to civil rule including the formation of new political parties, the fashioning of new constitution (1995), election of new local government councils, state and federal legislature and governors and finally, the unprecedented, forced adoption of himself as the sole presidential candidate by the five government approved political parties.

On the foreign scene, the Abacha regime virtually isolated Nigeria from her traditional friends, especially in North America, Europe and Australia. Nigeria went from being the “Giant of Africa” to Pariah State.

Nigeria Fends Off Sanctions

Every so often, a sovereign state incurs the wrath of other states, which resort to collective, punitive measures, which usually fall short of military combat. Nigeria, which is by far the most populous country in Africa, was targeted by a formidable coalition, including the European Union, South Africa, Canada, and the United States, in November and December, 1995. The ruling military regime in Nigeria resolved to resist the pressure from demands of its adversaries, both foreign and domestic. This episode in Nigeria’s history is significant as an instance of successful resistance to coercion by a pariah government that proved to be diplomatically adept.

Heretofore, studies of collective action against an offending ‘targeted’ state have focused on two concerns:

- (1) The effects or outcome of initiatives by a coalition of states that seek to impose and enforce sanctions;
- (2) Factors that condition or influence the adoption and implementation of coercive measures, e.g., domestic pressure groups and international organizations to which members of the coalition belong (Mansfield, 1995). This is concerned with the target state’s initiatives and resources, and its ability

to resist coercion and counter attack effectively. This period emphasizes on the sovereignty of Nigeria under General Abacha.

The current crisis stems from a decision by the military regime, in June 1993, to annul a presidential election and terminate abruptly a newly concluded six-year transition period to civilian and constitutional government. Nigerian monitors and foreign observers alike had pronounced the election free and fair, finding that was tainted with far less corruption, malpractice and violence than any previous presidential or national legislative election since the country attained independence. Afterwards, Britain, the United States, and the European Union then imposed various sanctions on Nigeria, including the suspension of military assistance and American economic aid, and denial of entry into the United States for Nigerian officials.

Subsequently, in 1993, the military ruler resigned under pressure from other members of the junta in favour of an interim government that, in turn, ceded power to the incumbent ruler, General Sani Abacha. Despite its indubitable validity, the relevance of the ill-fated election to a resolution of the prolonged crisis was diminished by the circumstance of two consecutive transfer of power within six months of the June 1993 Fiasco. Abiola allegedly urged Abacha to depose the interim government. In June 1994, Abiola was arrested and charged with treason when he claimed the presidency upon his return to Nigeria after a six month absence abroad, during which time he had solicited support for his cause in Britain and the United States. Despite ill-health in prison, he has refused to accept bail in return for the

renunciation of his claim; meanwhile, his trial has been delayed by legal manoeuvres, wrangling among the lawyers who were engaged by rival factions of his family, and the regimes apparent reluctance to set him free.³

Many other critics and opponents of the regime have also been arrested and imprisoned. Estimates of the number of political prisoners held at various times during 1996 have varied from a few hundred to a few thousand. Some were sentence to long prisons terms by military tribunals; others were sentenced to death.

In October 1995, Abacha announced that, in deference to pleas from Abroad, and in the spirit of national reconciliation, the death sentences imposed at these trials would be commuted to life imprisonment, while the terms of other prison sentences would be reduced.

However, in November, the regime incurred unprecedented opprobrium when it executed nine persons, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, a champion of the Ogoni people, who inhabit a portion of the Niger–Delta, where oil production has resulted in severe environmental degradation.⁴

The defendants were alleged to have caused the deaths of four Ogoni Chiefs, who were their political opponents. In defiance of appeals for clemency from many governments, the regime executed these persons in November 1995, while leaders of the commonwealth were assembled for their biennial summit outraged by the regime's rush to execute the 'Ogoni nine', and its flagrant disregard for due process, the commonwealth leaders suspended Nigeria's membership in the organization for two

years, and threatened to expel Nigeria if the junta had not transferred power to civilians by that time. Other countries, including the United States and members of the European Union, imposed or tightened various non-economic sanctions, involving restrictions on diplomatic privileges and military cooperation.

The Commonwealth and the United Nations

The Commonwealth and the United Nations are the two most important international organizations, apart from those whose memberships are restricted to African member-states, to which Nigeria belongs. African states comprise nineteen of the fifty-one Commonwealth members. The execution of Saro-Wiwa and eight of his fellow Ogoni activists on November 10, 1995, while the Commonwealth leaders were assembling in Auckland, New Zealand, provoked an unprecedented decision, with only one dissenting vote (that of the military government of the Gambia) to suspend Nigeria from the organization for two years, pending its 'return to compliance' with the principles of the Harare Declaration of 1991, in which all member-states pledged to foster democracy, human rights, and judicial independence. This punitive response was promoted strongly by the presidents of South Africa and Zimbabwe, as well as the British Prime Minister, who denounced the Nigerian government for having perpetrated 'judicial murder'.⁵

In order to facilitate a diplomatic resolution of the problem, the Auckland Summit created a special agency, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) on the Harare Declaration. The group's purpose was set forth in general,

rather than country-specific, terms, thus: “to deal with serious of persistent violations of the principles of the Harare Declaration by assessing the nature of the infringement and by recommending measures for collective Commonwealth action aimed at the speedy restoration of democracy and constitutional rule”.⁶

Accordingly, the group turned its attention to three Commonwealth countries that were under military rule, namely, Nigeria, the Gambia, and Sierra Leone. CMAG expressed its approval of various punitive measures, including visa restrictions, exclusion from sporting events, suspension of all forms of military cooperation, and restriction on development assistance, which had been taken by Commonwealth members and other countries. However, tough economic sanctions, including an embargo on Nigerian oil, experts, favoured by South Africa, were differed pending the outcome of a proposed ministerial mission to Nigeria. Openly indignant, the Nigerian government refused to receive the CMAG mission, although it did offer to send a delegation of its own abroad for meetings with CMAG and Commonwealth officials.

Meanwhile in April, the Nigerian government did receive a fact-finding mission appointed by the UN Secretary General to report on both the executive of the Ogoni nine and the governments ‘declared commitment to restore the country to civilian democratic rule’.⁷ The mission lasted the span of two weeks and discovered that a miscarriage of justice had occurred;

As a matter of fairness, the mission urged the government to offer financial compensation to the dependants and families of the deceased.

The mission also found a consensus among Nigerians on three aims: Military rule must end and ‘civil democratic rule’ be established; international monitors and observers should participate in the electoral process; persons detained without charge and others who had been imprisoned for either political reasons or the commission of political offences should be released before elections are held. Despite many legitimate complaints about political conditions during the transition in progress, the mission did not favour its abandonment.

In its view, ‘any attempt to interrupt or reverse the momentum that is being generated could prove counter-productive and further delay the realization of the goal to bring about civil democratic rule’.⁸

The United Nations mission provided an opportunity for the Nigerian government to regain the initiative in its confrontation with the Commonwealth. In June 1998, the foreign affairs ministers, Tom Ikimi, led a confident and well-prepared Nigerian delegation to a meeting with CMAG in London. Reports of the CMAG in Nigeria dialogue attest to the persuasiveness of senior advisors to the Nigerian head of state.⁹ Britain and Ghana were identified publicly as opponents of new sanctions, while Canada and South Africa wished to impose them. At the conclusion of its third meeting, the CMAG announced that it would ‘hold in reserve’ additional sanctions pending its next meeting in September.¹⁰

Emboldened by this success, the regime refused once again, to permit a Commonwealth “fact-finding” visit by CMAG foreign ministers. Although the visit

was planned for two days only, the ministers proposed to meet with private citizens as well as officials. Further attempts were made by the mission to visit Nigeria but they failed.

In April 1997, the UN Commission on Human Right, comprising of 53 member-nations, sternly rebuked the Nigerian government for its continued ‘violation of human right to respect due process of law’. The commission decided to appoint a special investigator for human rights issues in Nigeria, who would report to the next session of the UN General Assembly.¹¹ It was approved by twenty-eight members of the commission, while six members cast opposing votes and nineteen abstained. Significantly, only two of the fifteen African members of the commission, namely South Africa and Uganda, voted in favour of the resolution; three; including Benin, a leader in the movement for democratization, voted against it. Ten, including Cape Verde and Mali, also known for their strongly democratic tendencies, abstained. All but two of the condemnatory votes (Japan and Korean) were cast by American and European member state.

Economic Actor and Extra-Continental States

At the time of independence in 1960, agriculture accounted for three-fourths of the values of exports. In the early 1970s, an oil boom transformed the nature of the country’s economy. By 1975, oil sales, earning, immense profits due to the collusive pricing policies of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), accounted for 80 per cent of the value of Nigeria’s income from exports, while

agriculture's share had declined to 10 percent. In 1995, the percentage of exports attributable to oil, extracted mainly from the Niger Delta, the adjacent coastal swampland, and deep-water deposits offshore, had risen to 97.3 per cent. In recent years, receipts from the sale of oil has accounted for some 80 per cent of all revenue accruing to the federal government. The United States imported nearly 48 percent of Nigerian oil exports in 1995, which amounted to approximately 8 percent of U.S. oil consumption; European importers took about 31 percent of Nigeria's exported oil, Asian importers nearly 12 percent, while African importers accounted for less than 5 percent.

For three decades, Nigeria has wasted the natural gas produced bountifully as a by-product of oil. Furthermore, the constant flaring of gas in the oil fields has polluted the air in oil-production regions. Recently, Chevron, Mobil, and Shell have organized separate consortia of investors, in partnership with NNPC, to build plants for the production of a marketable product - Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Shell's venture in this field, in which it holds approximately 25 percent of the equity (with NNPC holding 49 percent, while Elf has 15 percent and Agip 10 percent), was fiercely criticized by political opponents of the military regime during the Ogoni troubles of 1993-1995. They alleged that in addition to decades of environmental neglect, the company has connived with military authorities to repress Ogoni dissidents, who have agitated for local political autonomy, as well as compensation for the pollution of farmland and rivers. As a direct result of the November 1995 executions, the World

Bank cancelled a planned investment in this project that would have been equal to 2 percent of the equity, as well as an anticipated loan of \$100 million.

Outside of Africa, Canada, the United States and Sweden have been especially hostile to the Abacha regime, while Nigerian dissidents in exile have been particularly active in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and South Africa.¹²

In the United States, opposition to military rule in Nigeria has been organized by Trans-Africa, the influential lobby for pan-African cases, and the congressional Black Caucus.

In 1996, Nigeria's international position was bolstered by strategic support from countries in Asia, including China, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey. China concluded an agreement to upgrade the Nigerian railway system; the Korean Daewoo Corporation began negotiations to enter the oil sector, the new Turkish Prime Minister, who leads an Islamic political party and tends to criticize the West, visited Nigeria and concluded a substantial trade agreement. Malaysian economic advisors and business executives have been active in Nigeria; as a member of CMAG, Malaysia strongly favours early restoration of Nigeria's normal Commonwealth status.¹³

Conclusion

Abacha had won his contest against the combined forces of the Commonwealth, the European Union, South Africa and the United States. That formidable combination of adversaries was unable to compel Abacha's ruling junta to

cede power to its domestic opponents, or even to a coalition of civilians controlled by its supporters, any sooner than it wished to do so, if at all. Despite Nigeria's interminable and debilitating political crisis, and related threats of sectionalist separatism, the junta has been able to withstand the assault mounted by leading Western powers and their allies. The evidence presented herein shows that the junta's resilience is attributed to the combined support of a broad based domestic political coalition and trans-national business groups, mainly oil companies, which sustain the third largest national economy in Africa, after South Africa and Egypt.

Endnotes

1. Richard C. Sklar, "Nigeria Fends Off Sanction", *The Cameroonian Journal Of Political Science*, Yaounde, Vol. 4, No. 2, November 1997, pp.259-287.
2. C. E. Welch, "The Ogoni and Self Determination: Increasing Violence in Nigeria", *the Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1995, p.90.
3. *Ibid.*, p.97.
4. C. E. Welch, "The Ogoni and Self Determination, Increasing Violence in Nigeria", p.23.
5. E. D. Mansfield, "International Institutions and Economic Sanctions", *World Politics*, Vol.47, No.4, July 1995, pp.575-605.
6. Bukar Bukarambe, *Nigerians foreign Policy in Africa, 1960-2010*, Lagos: National Institution of International Affairs, 2010, p.39.
7. *Ibid.*, p.42.
8. *Ibid.*, p.43.
9. M. B. Ogunbajo, "Theoretical Perspectives on Nigeria Foreign Policy" *Monograph Series*, Department of Political Science and Sociology, Babcock University, Illisan Remo, 2002, No. 2, pp.31-39.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p.40.
12. Vermon, Raymond, "Seeds of Conflict", *Harvard International Review*, Vol.17, No.3, Summer 1995, p.12.
13. Mathews, Jessica, "Power Shift, Foreign Affairs", *NIIA*, Vol. 76, No.1, 1997, pp.50-66.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Every so often, a sovereign state incurs the wrath of other state, which results to collective, preventive measure, which usually fall short of military combat. Nigeria, which is by far the most populous country in Africa, was targeted by a formidable coalition, including the European Union South Africa, Canada, and the United States, in November and December 1995. The ruling military regime in Nigeria resolved to resist the pressure from demands of its adversaries, both foreign and domestic. This episode in Nigeria history is significant as an instance of successful resistance to coercion by a pariah government that proved to be diplomatically adept.

Amidst the economic sanctions and isolation by the international community, it should be noted that Nigeria in the Abacha administration, was indeed a true sovereign state, she refused to be intimidated and stood her ground against all odds. Gen. Sani Abacha unambiguously personified Nigerians foreign policy during his tenure, and acted without due regard for the nations vital interest and standing in the committee of nations. Indeed what followed under General Sani Abacha were five years of unbridled dictatorship, economic mismanagement, gross human rights abuses and virtually a negation of government, but Nigeria was undoubtedly a true sovereign state under the Abacha administration.

Coming into power due to the military overturning of the mid-1993 election results, General Sani Abacha took the presiding after a simple palace coup that

removed the interim government installed by General Babangida immediately after stepping down as president of Nigeria. General Sani Abacha outlawed political parties and labour strikes, seized government offices and returned Nigeria to military rule. The Abacha regime caused a lot of uproar within the country and outside the country not to make mention of the immense violation of human rights. There was the intention of General Sani Abacha to ensure that the self determination of the country which was one of the very key policy in Nigeria's foreign policy since independence was not tarnished. This tyrant ruler also wanted to ensure that Nigeria as an independent sovereign entity, could make her own decision without intruders judging her every move. Indeed Abacha's was a very proud man, confident as well, and he expressed these qualities with the kinds of decision he took in his administration and in his relations with other states.

To my own understanding, Abacha's irrational behavior to the peoples of Nigeria and Nigeria itself could be as a result of his understanding of the phases of past administrations. The domestic crises since independence, due to the different ideologies, caused by the vast level of ethnic differences, and the several coups, which he himself, being regarded as a brilliant coup plotter, partook in, he knew his administration was a potential victim of such, and to ensure that his regime would stand out from the rest and all their baggages, he had to make certain that things would be done in his own way, under his microscopic supervision and that it would be his Nigerian, and nobody else. The Abacha administration was more ideological in Nature,

in the sense that he thought it necessary to organize the state, to rule with an iron fist, looking at Nigeria as a child that needed to be molded to his own satisfaction, “Tyrant God”, as I like to call him, his regime truly stands out from the rest.

The Abacha administration also marked a discontinuity in the foreign pursuit of the country since independence. There was a drastic and radical change from “giant of Africa” to “pariah state” and all through his regime, Nigeria faced immense, sanctions and isolation from the international community on the foreign scene. The Abacha regime virtually isolated Nigeria from her traditional friends especially in North America, Europe and Australia. Nigeria’s suspension from the commonwealth of Nations, was also a blow to her image. The suspension was as a result of the outrage of the commonwealth leaders on the premise of the execution of the “Ogoni nine” as a matter of fact, this unlawful and jaw dropping execution opened a can of worms in the Abacha administration: other countries, including members of the European Union, imposed or tightened various non-economic sanctions, involving restrictions on diplomatic privileges and military sanctions.⁸

As the international environment changed and stigmatized Nigeria, there was also a shift in the country’s foreign policy. Nigeria’s traditional allies were overlooked in favour of new and uncharted areas such as North Korea, China and Russia. But these were not to last. As Nigeria democratized the foreign policy directions shifted back to the traditional allies. It was all forgotten.

Indeed, the outcome of Abacha's behavioural attitude towards the international system brought about global outrage on Nigeria and the subsequent isolation of the country, and it was also under the Abacha regime that the nation's image reached zero level and the character of the state as a pariah became much more pronounced and Nigeria lost respect and prestige internationally, however, it should not be ignored that Abacha had won his contest against the combined forces of commonwealth, the European Union, South-Africa and the United States. The formidable combination of adversaries was unable to compel Abacha's ruling junta to cede power to its domestic opponents, or even to a coalition of civilians controlled by its supporters, amidst all of this political crisis, and related interest of sectionalist separatism, the junta has been able to withstand assault mounted by leading western powers and their allies. This was the evidence of true independent sovereignty of Nigeria under the Abacha administration, and due credit ought to be given to him, instead of general criticisms.

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