**OBASANJO'S ADMINISTRATION AND NIGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY, 1999 - 2007**

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**GOU/11/1076**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc) IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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**JULY, 2016**

**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this research project, on intergovemmental relationship in Nigeria was written by Adol-Awan, Elvis V., with the Registration Number GOU/11/1076, a bona fide student of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu Nike Enugu, for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc), Degree in International Relations, under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Mbaeze Netchy, during the 2015/2016 academic session.

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**APPROVAL PAGE**

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**DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to Almighty God for giving me the good health, strength, courage and all it takes to write the project. And to my dear parent and siblings whose immeasurable supports moral support.

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**ABSTRACT**

Nigeria had overwhelmingly given both solicited and unsolicited supports to African neigbours: intervened positively in their internal crisis, provided humanitarian services, doled out billions of dollars as charity, sent technical aid corps, formed and sent military supports, and so on. In most cases, these flamboyant gestures were defiantly done against home interest and survival. However, there seems to be a disconnection between what is given out and what is given in return. Therefore, this paper seeks to comparatively analyse the Afro-centive foreign policy of Nigeria; a case study of Obansanjo Administration and Nigeria’s International Diplomacy.The qualitative mechanism of data collection and analysis is applied and the hypothesis was assessed based on the following interventions; Actors in Nigeria’s Foreign Policy, the African-centered foreign policy of the Nigerian government, an Overview Of Nigerian Foreign Policy (1999-2007) and Political Environment Of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background of the Study**

A [country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereign_state)'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. 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. These relations in their own way have influenced several foreign policies between nation states.

Nigeria’s foreign policy since independence has been viewed from different perspectives (Aluko, 1981); Macridis (1985:xiii),Anyaele, (2005) in recent times. One of the most prevailing perspectives of her foreign policy is that “it is chameleon in nature”, (Anyaele, 2005) a foreign policy constantly in a state of flux as a result of internal and external dynamics inherent in any given administration or regime. Some writers however maintained that irrespective of the frequent changes, the substance of Nigeria’s foreign policy has remained the same. The later parts of this study will however argue otherwise. Buttressing the above point, (Anyaele, 2005:2) upholds the view that “the protection of our national interest has remained the permanent focus of Nigeria’s foreign policy, but the strategies for such protection have varied from one regime / government to another”.

The formation and execution of Nigeria’s foreign policy from independence has been carried out in no fewer than fourteen different administrations through the external affairs ministry. From Tafawa Balewa’s administration in 1960 to President Obasanjo’s administration in 2003; from the administration of President Musa Yar’Adua to the current administration of President Goodluck Jonathan. These various administrations - including the different military regimes which took over administrative power in Nigeria for over a cumulative period of 35 years, of the entire 53 years of the existence of Nigeria’s foreign policy- claimed to pursue the same national interest with regards to the nation’s foreign policy.

The consequence of the fluxy nature of Nigeria’s foreign policy, there has been a plethora of conceptual ideological transitions in Nigeria’s foreign policy machinery ([Pine](http://www.modernghana.com/author/AtahPine), 2011). Studies (Aluko, 1981); (Vision 2020 Report, 2009); ([Pine](http://www.modernghana.com/author/AtahPine), 2011); (Akinboye, 2013); and indicate that past administrations strove towards an epistemological construction and definition of the thrust of Nigeria’s foreign policy. These conceptualizations are often regime specific and born out of a psychological and selfish hunger of various administrations or regimes to carve an identity which will leave a lasting impression in the minds of Nigerians. To this end, (Pin, 2011) laments: “...these ideologies are not necessarily products of deep and profound philosophical reflections”. This paper will argue that these ideologies are rather collections of selfish efforts by these various administrations to make a name or an identity for themselves and their regime or administration as the case may be. (Pin, 2011:1) strongly believes this factor was one of the major causative avenues / agencies of project abandonment and foreign policy failure in Nigeria. Concepts and ideologies that have been proposed over the years since independence include: Africa as the center piece of Nigeria’s foreign policy, Dynamic foreign policy, National consensus in foreign policy, Economic diplomacy, Citizen Diplomacy and The transformation agenda of Nigeria’s foreign policy are a few examples among many other ideologies which in many ways have not lived up to expectations.

While adopting the traditional critical and rationalist methods of analysis in philosophy, the study shall review and offer conceptual clarifications of relevant literature, arguments, texts, library and archival materials in the areas of the subject matter of the study, with the view to evaluate these conceptual mutations in Nigeria’s foreign policy engineering. The paper will further show how such misdirected polices breads operationally barren and philosophically vague policies which when applied resulted to more conceptual confusion and groping in the dark.

**1.2 Statement of Problem**

The main concern of Nigeria’s policy makers is how to emancipate Africa from the shackles of colonialism, apartheid, racism and imperialism. It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria focused its policy since independence on Africa.

In spite of this African policy posture, some people criticized Mohammed/Obansanjo regime as shrouded with uncertainties in relation to her African policy as fallen short of expectation considering its economic resources, others, hailed it has been dynamic and pragmatic because of its militancy. On the other hand, Babangida’s Afro centric policy style is a far departure from that of Obasanjo.

It is in light of the above observations that this study intends to find out the reason(s) for the policy shift despite the fact that both regimes pursue the same African-centred policy. To effectively do this, the following questions are posed

**1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the approaches adopted by both Babangida and Obasanjo in their separate pursuit of Nigeria Afro-centric foreign policy?
2. Does contemporary African situations promote Afro-centric foreign policy?
3. To what extent does personality of a regime leader affect a country’s policy?

**1.4 Research Hypotheses**

1. The approach of both Babangida and Obasanjo in the pursuit of Nigerian Afrocentric foreign policy were the same.
2. The contemporary African situation differs from what it was during the era of Nigerian adoption of afrocentric foreign policy.
3. Babangida and Obasanjo though pursued the same foreign document, their personality difference affected the policy implementation and outcome.

**1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective is to comparatively analyse the Afro-centive foreign policy of Nigeria; a case study of Obansanjo civil regime and Babangida.

The specific objectives include

1. To compare Babangida’s and Obansanjo’s approach to implementation of Afrocentric foreign policy.
2. To assess the contemporary African situations for possible review of Nigerian Afrocentric foreign policy.
3. To evaluate the impact of personality (character) of a regime leader on Nigerian foreign policy using Babangida and Obansanjo as a study.

**1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study will aid researchers in understanding the contributions of Nigerian’s past presidents on the foreign policies that has impacted on the development of Africa, irrespective of the situations in the country. This study will equally serve as a repository in understanding the various roles that our country’s past presidents played in improving national development in Nigeria.

Finally, politicians, stakeholders and future political aspirants intending to rule in various sectors of the government would be able to utilize the findings in this study as a guide and resource document, taking into consideration the impact of the foreign policy on the administration and the importance of making Africa a focal point of her foreign policy.

**1.7 Scope and limitations of the study**

**1.7.1 Scope.**

The scope of this study focuses on the Afro-centric foreign policy of Nigeria during the Obasanjo’s Civil Regime and Babangida’s Administration with the following it compares the contemporary afro centric situations and those of the two regimes.

**1.7.2 Limitations.**

Financial resources required in obtaining primary data are often on the high side considering the amount required in producing the questionnaires required for the study. Also considering the combination of both my studies and the project, time was not adequate for a more elaborate study.

**1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study is largely based on the theory of state relative autonomy theory, which is situated within the ambit of the neo-Marxist political economy paradigm. The theory of relative state autonomy depicts the degree of aloofness of the state in the discharge of its tasks such as mediating inter-class and intra class struggles. Thus, this theory suggests that in any state, there are two levels of contradiction, primary and secondary. Primary contradiction depicts inter-class struggle or class struggle between two antagonistic classes such as the ruling class and the ruled class or the bourgeois class and the proletariat. Whereas, secondary contradiction is the intra-class struggle, denoting class conflicts within the ruling class or between different segments of the ruling-class. Marx and Engels (1977) demonstrated this intractable nature of class struggle in the preface of their book, that “the history of all the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (Okeke and Aniche, 2012b).

The proponents and exponents of the theory hold that a state can exhibit either low or high relative autonomy (Alavi, 1972). A state exhibits relatively high autonomy when there is high commoditization of capital or excessive penetration of capital into the economy; such that the bourgeois class engages in accumulation of capital through direct exploitation of the working class or appropriation of surplus value, private capitalism, when they enter into social relationships of production. Here, the state is not interventionist; it does not intervene in the domestic economy like participating in the productive activities, public/state enterprises or controlling or nationalizing means of production. The role of state here is largely to regulate (Ake, 1976). By doing so, the state is relatively an impartial umpire mediating inter-class and intra-class struggles through harmonization and reconciliation of class interests (Ake, 1981; Okafor et al. 2012; Okeke and Aniche, 2012b). The developed capitalist states of the West are, therefore, considered to exemplify this high degree of relative autonomy, and thus the high level of human rights observance and protection. On the other hand, a state exhibits relatively low autonomy when there is low commodification of capital or low penetration of (private) capital into the economy. The ruling class is constantly indulging in primitive accumulation of capital through embezzlement of public fund. A state constituted in this way becomes the only avenue for capital accumulation. The state is, thus, interventionist for engaging in productive activities, public corporation, by nationalization of major means of production. This state does not restrict itself to regulatory role and is hence compromised, such that instead of rising above class struggle it is deeply immersed in it (Ake, 1985; Okafor et al., 2012; Okeke and Aniche, 2012b).

The Nigerian state like other developing states exhibits a relatively low level of autonomy of the state as a result of low commoditisation of capital. Under the eclectic mixture of economy, pseudo capitalism or quasi-capitalism, Nigeria experiences the phenomenon of poor penetration of (private) capital into the economy. This gives rise to a parasitic petty bourgeois class whose major source of accumulation of capital is the state. So, the Nigerian state becomes the only avenue for primitive accumulation of capital through which the governing class. petty bourgeoisie, produces and reproduces their dominance. The implication of the low autonomy of the Nigerian state is that it is heavily involved in the class struggle rather than rising above it; leading to intense struggle for the control of the state for primitive accumulation of capital (Ake, 2001; Okeke and Aniche, 2012b). The point is that the implementation of citizen diplomacy suffered as President Yar’Adua’s ill-health degenerated. Consequently, there was political intrigue, infighting and schism among the ministers, and the Northern political elite who wanted by all means to prevent the vice president from becoming the acting president. In the context of this intense class struggle for the state power everything was marginalized including citizens’ wellbeing at home let alone in Diaspora. Not surprisingly, the policy was deemphasized owing to the events leading to the emergence of the then Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan as the Acting President and later President. The cabinet reshuffled ousted Chief Ojo Maduekwe (the initiator) as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

* 1. **Literature Review**

**1.9.1 An Overview of Nigerian Foreign Policy (1960-2011)**

Nigerian foreign policy soon after independence in 1960 under Balewa’s Administration (1960-1966) was anchored on: one, Africa, the centre-piece of Nigerian foreign policy; two, the policy of pan Africanism; three, the policy of decolonization and eradication of racial discrimination and segregation; four, the policy of good neighborliness; five, the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries; and finally, the policy of non-alignment. However, the most enduring foreign policy thrust in Nigeria has been the Afro-centric philosophy of Nigerian foreign policy in which Nigeria spent enormous resources in assisting other African countries like Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, etc, under colonial domination to gain independence. Under the African centeredness of Nigerian foreign policy, Nigeria also assisted in the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa. It also contributed in peacekeeping forces in crisis regions in Africa such as Chad, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d’Ivoire, Sudan, Darfur, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc (Aniche, 2009).

Still under this policy thrust, Nigeria assisted other African countries financially and technically in their economy. Although, the foreign policy posture has been seriously challenged or criticized by scholars and practitioners alike. It was not until recently that Nigeria started rescinding and reviewing its foreign policy in line with the foreign policy reform panel set up by Yar’Adua’s Administration in 2007, soon after assuming office. The product of this policy reform is citizen diplomacy. Other foreign policy thrusts like policy of decolonization, eradication of racial discrimination and segregation, non intervention and non-alignment naturally fizzled out with time. For example, policies of decolonization in Africa, and racial discrimination and segregation naturally waned with the achievement of independence and sovereignty in all African territories and elimination of Apartheid policy in South Africa. Due to United Nations’ (UN) and African Union’s (AU) responsibility to intervene on humanitarian grounds in the crisis regions, the policy of non-intervention is falling into disuse. Policy of non-alignment became obsolete with the events of late 1980s and early1990s leading to the end of cold war and the beginning of post-cold war era Aniche,2009).

Under Gowon’s Regime (1966-1975) the policy of African centeredness was utilized and geared towards regional integration in West Africa leading to the establishment of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Whilst, under Murtala/Obasanjo’s Regime and Shagari’s Administration Nigeria continued with the policy of African centeredness assisting many African countries and contributing in the National War of Liberation in some of African territories under colonial rule and anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (Aniche, 2009).

During Babangida’s Regime (1985-1993), anew lexicon found its way into Nigerian foreign policy, the policy of economic diplomacy. The policy of economic diplomacy was aimed at achieving economic recovery and development through the collaboration of Breton Woods Institutions (BWIs), under conditionality of which, Nigeria undertook to implement Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) between1986 and 1990. The policy of economic diplomacy is another enduring foreign policy thrust of Nigeria foreign policy. Thus, under Obasanjo’s Civilian Administration(1999-2007), Nigeria revisited the policy of economic diplomacy aimed at receiving debt relief and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) through the instrumentalities of the Breton Woods institutions (BWIs). Nigeria agreed to implement the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan conditionality as encapsulated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (Aniche, 2010; Okeke and Aniche,2012a).

Citizen diplomacy is a foreign policy thrust of Yar’Adua’s Administration under which the Federal Government of Nigeria seeks the assistance of Nigerians at home and in Diaspora in its effort to develop the country economically and politically. For being people-oriented, it is a part of the broad range of Nigerian foreign policy that promotes the aspects that look into the welfare of Nigeria’s citizens and seeks to defend them wherever they are (Dickson,2010).

**1.9.2 Political Environment of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy**

Linkage politics approach assumes that domestic politics and foreign policy are organically interconnected and that the totality of the domestic structure determines or conditions the character of Nigeria’s foreign policy. In other words, the internal political environment shapes the outcomes of Nigeria’s foreign policy making. As a result the conceptualization of Nigeria’s external or foreign relations in a linkage system presupposes that Nigeria’s foreign policy is a product of the domestic structure. The underlying argument here is that the international environment influences. Domestic politics just as domestic political environment shapes international events. Thus, foreign policy is conceived as the outcome or product of the dynamic inter play between the internal and external political environments of nation-states (Idang, 1973;Philips, 1973; Akinyemi, 1974; Asobie,1980; Gambari, 1980; Aluko, 1981; Nweke,1986; Ifesinachi, 2001).

Furthermore, the linkage politics approach to foreign policy holds that there is a link or nexus between domestic political structure and external relation or foreign policy. Thus, domestic factors like religion, culture, economy, etc. are seen as considerable significance to foreign policy making. The idea of a linkage or interface between the domestic political structure and external political environment allows for an analysis that adequately examines the extent to which interaction between the two can constitute a hindrance to the formulation of effective foreign policy thrusts such as citizen diplomacy. As a result, the linkage approach provides a specific context for identifying the extent to which specific forces can positively or negatively impinge upon the achievement or accomplishment of a given foreign policy objective such as citizen diplomacy (Holsi, 1967; Rosenau, 1969;Northege, 1968; Nweke, 1988; Birai, 1991;Dauda, 2002).

Perhaps, the import of the above is that foreign policy is basically a product of complex and diversifying interrelationship of external and internal circumstances and stimuli. Hence, the actions of a nation-states determined or influenced by both domestic and external variables, and as such, foreign policy becomes the continuation or the extension of domestic policy (Idang,1973; Akinyemi, 1974; Nweke, 1985;Ogunsawo, 1986; Offiong, 2000; Okolie,2001). The point is that there is a link between internal or domestic politics and external or international politics known as linkage politics. The underlying idea of linkage politics is that the link between the internal political environment influences foreign policy making and implementation of states, Nigeria included. The Nigerian internal or domestic political environment is one where political class engaged in electoral malpractices in form of electoral rigging and violence. Under this state of affairs, Nigerian citizens are confronted with abject poverty, mass unemployment, poor standards of living, low life expectancy, low literacy rate, etc. In the human development index.

The Nigerian state is not forthcoming at catering for the welfare and wellbeing of its citizens in Nigeria, forcing many Nigerians to seek greener pastures abroad or to put more aptly, economic refuge abroad. As a result many of them are engaged in many illegal activities to survive harsh treatment abroad where they are not likely to get a decent job. Even the corruption perception index (CPI) of the Transparency International (TI) has not ranked Nigeria favorably since its inception.

For instance, Adejumo (2011) notes that with several corrupt former Governors still parading themselves imperiously on the streets of Abuja, still on the beck and call of the president, and appeared seemingly untouchable; it will be hard to convince the world that we are still waging war against corruption in earnest and with sincerity of purpose. Successive Nigerian governments have nothing to be proud of in terms of promoting positive image of Nigeria or tackling corruption. In fact, whatever little policy was made had only been there to benefit those in the government and not the Nigerian masses.

Also, the thinness of socio-economic capitalist based on community repeated premises that Nigeria has some of the worst social indicators in the world: internal insecurity, a deteriorating infrastructural base, corruption, high crime, unbridled violence; ethnic conflict; a disorganized and moribund labour sector, a poor external image crisis exacerbated by a world-wide reputation for astuteness in financial and other related crimes represent some of these problems. In addition to this, is the high mortality, whereas majority of the population ostensibly living below poverty line in a country where the life expectancy is at zero point, and you get a country with a supposedly fragile base and foundation upon which such a policy can be founded (Eke, 2009).

Adejumo (2011) further opines that for the citizen diplomacy to succeed, it must be backed up with the sincere purpose and approach to Nigeria’s entire problem at home. After fifty years as a sovereign state, and with enormous resources both human and material, Nigerians are still wallowing in abject poverty and desperation, while our leaders are looting the treasures all over the country and living unimaginable expensive lifestyles, and depositing the loots in countries we are trying to force the citizen diplomacy on.

**1.9.3 Conceptualizing the Domestic Structure of Nigerian Foreign Policy**

It has become an axiomatic truth that the FP of a country is to a large extent determined by its Domestic Structure. Many scholars and diplomats have accepted this view. They have attempted to“ demonstrate that the various constituent elements in the political system- the government, the political parties, pressure groups, the civil service, the political and bureaucratic elites, public opinion, and the press- operating within the democratic process provided by the constitution, exert direct or indirect influence in shaping a country’s Foreign Policy ( Nweke, 1986:34 ). It is line with this assertion that Akokpari (1999:24) has argued that Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries have to constantly reorient their foreign policies to reflect or accommodate domestic and external vicissitudes. Such orientation shifts have rendered SSA’s foreign policies innately malleable and pliable, deprived of coherence or consistence. Since the independence decade of the 1960s, shifts in the orientation of foreign policies of SSA states have been profoundly evident.

A lot scholars and diplomats have attempted an in-depth assessment of Nigeria’s foreign policy. Idang, Akinyemi, Gambari and Aluko perspectives in analyzing Nigerian FP focused exclusively on limited goals. Idang (1986) focused on the impacts of institutions and social forces, like parliament, political parties and Foreign Policy elites. Akinyemi on the other hand conducted a dissectional examination of the nature and character of the administrative structure in the FP process when subjected to other “pressures” of DS, particularly political parties and attitudes of political elites (1970:2). Gambari has also argued that the domestic political structure and process are of great impact on the nature and character of Nigerian FP because they serve as the channel for internalization of the international environment and events, thus making them intelligible and of value to the participants in domestic political roles (1980:1). Aluko (1976) on his part embarked on the imperative to resolve the impact of colonial heritage and the formative experience of the leadership. Other studies have focused on the evolution of Nigerian FP by demonstrating how “internal pressures” both of administrative structure and of the society as well as how organizations really affect FP formulation (Philips, 1973). Inspite of all these intellectual exercises in clarifying the link between the DS and FP, Nweke(1986:35) has pointed out that a thread that runs through all of these studies is there short comings. One of them was the issue of preference given to institutional forces with less consideration given to the impacts of socio-economic structure and social classes. Another main weakness is their failure to analyze “beyond the levels of description and explanation”.

**1.9.4 Domestic Environment**

Conventional thinking holds that foreign policies aim at enhancing a state’s ability to achieve a specific FP is “a programme (plan) designed to address some problems or pursue some goal that entails action towards foreign entities. A country’s FP is determined by two broad considerations: the domestic and the external environment. According to Otubanjo (1999:9),“the domestic environment refer essentially to features, factors and forces…peculiar to the state,…foreign policy is being made. The domestic environment includes geographical location of the state, its peculiarity, natural and human resources, the nature of the political system, quality of leadership, the nature of the interaction among groups in the society etc (p.10).

Domestic environmental factors have great impact on the decision/policy making of a country. Little wonder, Northedge (1968:15) posits that the FP of any country is a product of environmental factors both internal and external. The strength of a particular domestic factor in influencing a particular foreign policy option of a country however represents a complex calculus as evident in Babaginda administration’s involvement of human and financial resources in the Liberian Crises at a time when public opinion in Nigeria heavily tilted against an involvement in the crises (Nwosu, 1993:17). As noted by Synder (1962:5),

“…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”.

Marston (1968) on his part postulates that it is in the “home made” and aggregate of all the external conditions and influences that affect the life and development of organism, including also FP. Ogene (1998:68-81) and Kissinger (1969:503-05) in their submissions examined the role of domestic structures in a country’s relations with other nations in the world system. Modern diplomatic history has portrayed the FP of a nation as one determined by its domestic structures (Northedge 1968:20). Domestic environment as a matter of fact determines the role a nation plays in the international system. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, USSR was a champion of communist policy, but today, the effect of perestroika and glasnost has affected her role-playing in the international arena. The DS plays a crucial role in the way actions of other states are interpreted. We cannot therefore consider the DS in isolation of the international system since the technological achievement of any country has a ready impact on other states (Nwosu,1993:17).

The next sub sections shall consider the following factors: political development, economy, the press, public opinion and pressure groups as been central in the examination of the FP response of Nigeria towards Israel.

**1.9.5 Political Development**

Nigeria’s diplomatic ties with Israel had been in existence before her independence in 1960.Many contacts were facilitated in the late 1950s between Nigerian and Israeli officials through joint participation in labour and socialist movement meetings (Ojo 1986:436). Through these efforts, many Nigerian’s were encouraged to visit Israel, and at a time Israel was aggressively galvanizing friendship with the newly emergent Third World countries as to bridge the diplomatic gap between her and the Third World (Curtis and Gitelson, 1976).

The constitutional provisions of the Nigerian government allowed the regions of the federation to facilitate their own foreign policies, allow regional delegations to be sent abroad to negotiate loans and other forms of assistance for their regions as evident in a Western Regional delegation led by its Minister of Agriculture, Chief Akindeko, who visited Israel in1958 to observe cooperative movements. The delegation negotiated cooperation agreements in the field of agriculture and cooperatives, the setting up of a number of joint ventures with Israel which facilitated the establishment in 1959, the Nigers oil Construction Company and the Nigerian Water Resources Development Corporation (Ojo, 1986:437).

Counter factually, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the first republic dominated Nigeria’s domestic cum political environment (Nereus, 1993:19). The Northern oligarchy displayed a disdained attitude towards Israel and preferred external contact with Muslim countries, as shown in Sir Ahmadu Bello’s public hostility and pronouncements towards Israel. Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Chairman of NPC, and the Premier of the former Northern Region is credited with the following statement at the World Islamic League:

“It is also fitting at this juncture for me to mention the numerous attempts made by the Jews to entice underdeveloped countries to their side. Barely two years ago,they offered a sizable amount of loan to the Federation of Nigeria. The offer was accepted by all the governments except we in the North who rejected it outright. I made it vividly clear at the time that Northern Nigeria would prefer to go without development rather than receiving an Israeli loan to aid. We took this step only in good faith as Muslims (Paden, 1986:541)”.

Sir Ahmadu Bello himself had traced his lineage to Prophet Mohammed (Bello, 1962:239),and as noted in the editorial of West African (1956:606), the receptiveness of the Northern leadership to Arab pressure attracted allegations of Egyptians covert support for NPC before1960. In spite of extreme policy of Mohammedanism adopted by the Northern region, Federal Government in the first republic established diplomatic ties with Israel. Such move must have been necessitated by the adoption of non aligned policy favoured by the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), the junior partner in the federal coalition. Alhaji Tafawa Balewa therefore had no other option than to establish formal diplomatic relations with Israel when he reiterated that Nigeria would “remain on friendly terms with every nation which recognizes and respects our sovereignty and… shall not blindly follow the lead to anyone”(Balewa, 1964:56-7). Ojo (1986:437) is therefore right in his persuasive submission that Nigeria might have adopted “open door” diplomatic policy as the result of the need for national unity and economic development. Israel was therefore allowed to establish an embassy in Lagos, but the hostility of the northern elite towards her to a greater extent was responsible for a major constraint by the Federal Government’s policy towards Israel by refusing to open an embassy in Tel-Aviv in order to maintain the balance.

The Nigerian-Israeli relations equally suffered a great set back as a result of the 1966military coup d’etat (Adefila, 1979:635) and the subsequent civil war that bed veiled the nation for about 30 months. Nigeria perceived a foul play towards Israel for its alleged sympathetic role played by supporting the defunct Republic of Biafra during the country’s civil war (Aluko, 1976:92). The bloody coup against the first republic brought in General Aguyi Ironsi as the first Military Head of State in Nigeria. Before he could settle down to deal with domestic let alone foreign issues, he was brutally murdered and his regime overthrown via a counter coup (Operation Massacre) that instituted Gowon Administration. At the inception of Gowon’s regime, it was alleged that Israel was covertly giving military training and ammunition to the Ibos (New Nigerian, 1966). Israeli mission in Lagos denied the allegations but throughout the war, the suspicion remained and Israeli Foreign Minister, AbbaEban, confirmed after the war that Israel had exerted herself to a large extent in providing aid to former Biafra, that if a dozen or twenty had also extended the same gesture, the case would have been different (Aluko, 1976:50). The press in Nigeria was furious and reacted angrily to Eban’s statement.

General Gowon showed his displeasure by protesting to the Israeli government through a letter sent to its Ambassador in Lagos. Gowon however believed that Israeli aid to the defunct Biafra was less significant to that of France and for his regime to single out Israel would appear “selective” capable of causing “more problematic internal cleavages” (Ojo,1986:440). On the other hand, Mathews (1987:534) has argued that the Nigerian government engaged in a wild romance with North Africa and Arabs in the Middle East due to their military assistance during the civil war. Thus, in 1971, Nigeria joined the Arab-dominated oil cartel- the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Nigeria-Israeli relations suffered another setback due to the outbreak of the October1973 Middle East war as Gowon blamed Israel for the renewal of hostility. Despite the fact that the first shots were fired by Egypt, the Nigerian Head of State argued that the hostility could not have resurfaced if Israel had withdrawn from Arab territories in accordance with the1967 United Nations Resolution (West African 1973:1508). Yet, he never bowed to both internal and external pressures to severe diplomatic ties (West African, 1973: 1545). Israeli defiance in the Middle East, violating the ceasefire agreement and consolidating its presence on the West Bank of the Suez Canal, made Gowon to angrily accused Israel of breaking “faith with Nigeria” (Ojo 1986:440). General Gowon had no choice than to severe ties with Israel as Chairman of the Organization of the African Union (OAU).

After the Gowon’s administration was overthrown by General Murtala Mohammed, subsequent administrations in Nigeria have towed the pro-Arab FP in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite the fact that the Obasanjo’s regime renounced the use of terms like Zionismto categorize the Israeli political system, Major General Shehu Musa Yar’Adua, the second in command, declared in Saudi Arabia in 1979 that “our friends are the Arabs, we shall always support them” (Daily Times, 1979). Obasanjo’s government could therefore not do much to restore diplomatic relations Israel,-leaving the issue to be handled by second Republic Government. The leadership of Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) favored the restoration of ties with Israel (Nigerian Forum 1983:740-45). The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) leadership perceived as representing the interest of the Northern Muslims was unenthusiastic. The UPN and NPP with dominant Christian root supported the restoration of Nigeria-Israeli relations.

However, such debate was ongoing when the military ended the civil rule in 1983.

General Mohammed Buhari regime was dominated by Muslim officers, and no consideration was shown to the issue of restoring diplomatic ties with Israel. In a way to tell the world that the status quo would remain, the militarily junta appointed Ibrahim Gambari as Foreign Affairs Minister. Gambari, known for his outright criticism and condemnation of Israel policy towards the Middle East before his appointment, aggressively opposed to such move to re establish relations with Israel. The government demonstrated a total commitment to anti Israel policy by suspending the Emir of Kano and the Ooni of Ife for their visit to Israel. The Emir of Kano was also removed as Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (NigerianTribune, 1985).

Buhari regime was overthrown via a coup d’etat that ushered in Babangida administration on 27th August, 1985 condemning Buhari’s FP, and describing it as retaliatory and incoherent (Newswatch, 1985:19). In 1991, the then Nigerian Foreign Minister, Major General Ike Nwachukwu admitted that “Africa could not allow itself to be left out in the current efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and other parts of the world”. He also admitted that the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel was “aimed at getting Africa back into the mainstream of world politics” (African Concord, 1991:24). General Babangida on his part noted that Nigeria’s renewal of diplomatic relations was deliberately designed for Nigeria by his administration “to remain relevant in the world affairs”, noting “…we don’t want to be left in an empty shell” (Nigerian Tribune, 1992). He further reiterated the intention of Nigerian Government to be part of the Middle East Peace Process, speculating that Nigeria would host one of the peace meetings. Thus, the accounts between Nigerian government and their Israeli counterparts opened, culminating into the decision for the reestablishment of diplomatic ties (Nereus, 1993:21). The Foreign Minister made it clear that “diplomacy these days is not based on things that divide people but things that unite them (Nigerian Tribune, 1992). It should however be noted that Nigeria never sought for OAU consent before restoring diplomatic ties with Israel.

**1.9.6 Economy**

At independence, Nigeria depended basically on the export of agricultural produce which accounted for about 61 percent of its foreign earnings. After the Nigerian civil war, the economy experienced another economic face, with the development of manufacturing sector with a corresponding dependence on foreign inputs like capital, managerial skills and technology. This was followed by the oil boom and petrodollar inflow which made Nigeria to embark on a flamboyant FP (Olaniyan, 1988:105-8). At the close of the 1970s, majority of

SSA’s were deep in debt following the cumulative events of crushed primary commodity prices, oil shocks, discredited statist policies and dysfunctional military rule (Akokpari,1999:26). It is therefore not surprising when Nwakwo (1984) argued that, since then, Nigeria has developed a monolithic oil economy which has subjected the country to vagaries of economic downturns. The major oil glut in the world market accounted for a budget deficit of$2,899.3 million in 1982 as against a budget surplus of $1,796.3 million in 1974 thus institutionalizing poverty and turning the nation into a beggar status (Nwakwo, 1984:41).

This situation further deteriorated the economy which was dependent, disarticulated and peripherally integrated into the world capitalist economy. The government in order to address these deficiencies adopted several economic policies such as Nigerianisation and Indigenization (which created very unconducive environment for foreign investors) as to bring the nation out of its economic doldrums. The administration of Babangida sought to address these galaxies of economic challenges by adopting several economic policies like Structural Adjustment Programme [SAP] (Babangida, 1985:238) and the “use of economic diplomacy to attract foreign investors” (Nereus, 1993:18). Nigeria had been engaged in bilateral relations with Israel before 1960 in which there was economic cooperation in the areas of agriculture, cooperatives, construction and water resources etc, particularly, in the Eastern and Western regions which were pro Israeli.

In the 1990s, due to economic logjam and alarming withdrawals of foreign investment from the country in spite of the government’s adoption of new economic diplomacy, Babangida administration viewed the restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel as great agendum to stimulate the national economy so as to encourage American Jewish leaders in promoting investment in Nigeria. General Nwachukwu in his visit to Israel told his counterpart that:

“We know, for instance that you have the command of financial institutions of the world through your kith and kin in several industrialized and highly developed economies and we believe also that your influence can bring some meaningful investment to support such development programs” (The Guardian 1991).

The reluctance shown by Arab states to assist Nigeria and other African countries out of their serious economic problems left Nigeria with no other option than to extend her friendship to a “former foe” due to Babangida regime’s eagerness to improve the domestic economy. Since May, 1992, when Nigeria and Israel restored diplomatic relations, they have exchange economic delegations for the betterment of the duo.

**1.9.7 The Press, Public Opinion and Pressure Groups**

Nigeria has maintained certain level of freedom of speech even during the military era. Even during the Civil War, General Gowon often yielded to “severe press criticisms” as earlier obtained during the democratic regime of Balewa (Chick, 1971:126-27).

Counter factually, the press, pressure groups and different interest groups have been able to persuade the government and the direction of its policy. Claude (1965:2) has also acknowledged that public opinion has always been a political factor guiding a country’s FP .The Nigeria government especially has displayed this sensitivity both in its perception and conduct of its FP. Due to the Israel-South African ties in the 1970’s, Nigerian press was very critical of this relationship, and its denouncement frosted the ties between Nigeria and Israel. However, there was no monolithic voice from the press as regards how Nigeria should interact with Israel. There were different views by the Nigerian Press on the issue of Middle East crisis based on regional and religious sponsors (Daily Express, 1978). According to the New Nigerian, there was to be total disregard of restoration of diplomatic relation with Israel because of it’s role in the civil war, the need to support Egypt, and the fact that the “Israelis themselves have by their recent elections demonstrated their preference for continued occupation by voting into power the extremist Lukud Party”. In August 1991, following General Ike Nwachukwu’s visit to Israel, the same New Nigerian, in its editorial column advised Babangida regime not to consider the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel.

The New Nigerian’s view was supported by the Northern elites, who even sponsored the distribution of pamphlets creating a negative impression about Israel and the evils done by Israel in the past to destabilize the Nigerian state. On the other hand, Southern based press and individuals clamoured for restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel because some of them believed that will affect the religious climate in Nigeria. The Nigerian Tribune, The Guardian, News watch, NACCIMA, Nigeria/Israeli Association emphatically called for restoration of diplomatic ties and when president Babangida announced the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel, this was regarded as a triumph over the opposing pro-Arab group who saw such restoration as unwise.

**1.10 Methodology**

**1.10.1 Research Design**

This is a historical as well as a comparative analysis which evaluates the decisions made in the field of foreign affairs concerning a selected number of issues over a period of 1975-1979 and 1985-1993. It is a descriptive analysis of these issues evaluated in terms of the relationship between words and actions. To accomplish this task, the study will rely primarily on data collection techniques involving;

1. A careful study of Nigeria’s foreign policy by means of documentation (library research) on primary sources.
2. Content analysis of research bulletins, speeches, journals and newspapers.

**1.10.2 Method of Data Collection**

The source used in the collection of data in this work is the secondary data, whereby updates and information about this study were gotten from various textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers, bulletin, internet, directions and other publications and documents both from private and government.

**CHAPTER TWO:**

**OBASANJO REGIMES ADMINISTRATION AND NIGEIRA’S INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY IN THEIR FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES**

**Ibrahim Babangida’s Foreign Policy Initiatives**

The period between August 1985 and January 1987 could be regarded as the gestation period of Babangida’s far reaching foreign policy initiatives in Nigeria. Within this period, several unresolved domestic and external issues during the Buhari regime (1984-1985) created the premise upon which the Babangida administration contrived its foreign policy agenda. The domestic situation in the country during this period could be gleaned from the socio-economic situation in Nigeria during the Buhari led administration between 1984 and August 1985. The country’s economy was critically distressed due to the glut in supply which resulted in the collapse of the price of crude oil at the international market in the early 1980s. The country’s oil production dropped from its peak of 2.4 million barrels per day (b/d) in 1980 to 1.3million barrels per day in 1983. As a result of this, the Nigerian government was unable to generate sufficient revenue to meet up its statutory financial obligations. This is because crude oil revenue accounts for more than 90 percent to the nation’s foreign exchange earnings and substantial part of government revenue in the 1980s. The economic crisis by extension, also affected other sectors of the country’s economy. Several manufacturing companies closed down due to lack of raw materials and the huge cost of operations. In addition to this, there was massive corruption in the country. General Muhammad Buhari therefore inherited a battered economy when it assumed office via a coup de tat on December 31, 1983. The situation made Nigerians heaved a sigh of relive and went into joyous mood on January 1,1984 when the news of the military putsch on the dawn of the New Year spread throughout the nation (Obe, 1984).

General Sani Abacha while announcing the coup on January 1, 1984 claimed that the military took over because of the “... grave economic predicament and uncertainty which an inept and corrupt leadership has imposed on our beloved nation for the past four years”. Although the economy was virtually on the verge of collapse when the military took power in 1984, the Buhari regime nevertheless, was unable to resolve the economic crisis after about twenty months in power, (Omokhodion, 1985). In fact, the Buhari regime contemplated the idea of securing a bailout package from the IMF before it was toppled in August 1985, by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.

There were other lingering issues such as Nigeria’s membership of the Organisation of Islamic Countries-OIC, which the Buhari regime was unable to venture (Olojede, 1986). The strained relationship between Nigeria and Britain

over the Umaru Dikko kidnap affair also created an avenue for the Babangida regime to re-order the foreign policy priority of the country in 1986. But more importantly, the closure of Nigeria’s borders in April 1984 (Ndibe, 1985) and the expulsion of about a million illegal aliens from Nigeria in May 1985 (Obasi, 1985) by the Buhari led military government also created genuine avenues for the Babangida regime to articulate its ‘big brother Africa’ foreign policy posture in 1986.Another thorny issue unresolved by the Buhari regime which the Babangida government took ample advantage was the South African question.

The aforementioned issues apparently, formed the prelude to Babangida‘s foreign policy initiatives from the inception of the regime in August 1985. During his first major speech to the Nation in August 1985, President Ibrahim Babangida berated the foreign policy of the General Mohamadu Buhari led regime and gave clues as to the direction of his administration’s foreign policy. In his speech, he remarked among other things that:

Nigeria’s foreign policy in the last 20 months has been characterised by inconsistency and incoherence. It has lacked the clarity to make us know where we stood on matters of international concern to enable other countries relate to us with seriousness. Our role as Africa’s spokesman has diminished because we have been unable to maintain the respect of African countries. The ousted military government conducted our external relations by a policy of retaliatory reactions. Nigeria became a country that has reacted to given situations, rather than taking the initiative as it should and always been done. More so, vengeful considerations must not be the basis of our diplomacy (Babangida, 1995).

Babangida stated further that: African problems and their solutions should constitute the premise of our foreign policy. The realisation of the Organisation of African Unity of the Lagos Plan of Action for self-sufficiency and constructive co-operation in Africa shall be our primary pursuit... Our membership of the United Nations Organisation will be made more practical and meaningful... call for a new International Economic Order which lost its momentum in the face of the debt crisis will be made once again. Nigeria hereby makes a renewed request to the Non-Aligned Movement to regroup and reinvigorate its determination to restructure the global economic system, while we appeal to the industrialized nations to positively consider the debt plight of the developing countries and assist in dealing with the dangers that face us.

Within the first few months of the administration, Nigeria embarked on deft diplomatic moves to reposition itself and reclaim the country’s leadership role in Africa. On February 28, 1986, (Ojidoh, 1986) the Nigerian government reopened the country’s borders that were closed by the Buhari administration in April 1984 (Akinriande, 1986a). In another development, Nigeria made the move in January 1986 to normalise diplomatic relations with Britain (Odum, 1986).Diplomatic relations between the two countries went sour over the Umaru Dikko kidnap affair of July 4, 1984 (Soyinka,1986). Alhaji Umaru Dikko was the Minister of Transport under the Alhaji Shehu Shagari civilian administration between October 1979 and January 1984. He was among the most wanted fugitives by the Buhari administration (Akinriande,1985). Dikko and other members of the Shagari government were charged with allegations of corruption and declared wanted by the Buhari regime in 1984. But Alhaji Dikko managed to escape from the country and to asylum in the United Kingdom after the coup in January 1984. The failed kidnap attempt which the Nigerian government under Buhari denied any involvement resulted in the conviction of three Israelis and a Nigerian sentenced to different jail terms in the United Kingdom in 1985. The Umaru Dikko affair led to the expulsion of Major Halidu Hananiya, the then Nigeria’s High Commissioner to Britain. Nigeria retaliated by expelling the British High Commissioner also from Lagos (Akinriade, 1985).Efforts by the Nigerian government to secure the extradition of Alhaji Dikko and other fugitives from the United Kingdom during the Buhari regime were also unsuccessful. This was the state of affairs between Nigeria and Britain when the Babangida regime came to power in August 1985.

Development within Africa and the international arena also influenced the foreign policy initiatives of the regime. In response to this, the Babangida administration launched the novel policy of economic diplomacy, humanitarian interventionism and the regional model of conflict resolution mechanism. In all of these therefore, it is important to underscore some of the identified foreign policy dynamics of the Babangida regime. These are the Concert of Medium Powers, otherwise known as the Lagos Forum: the Technical Aid Corps programme; the Economic Diplomacy and Nigeria’s involvement in regional conflict resolution, under the instrument of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). What is of utmost importance in this part of article is to briefly highlight the fillip to each of the stated foreign policy thrusts. In October 1986 while giving the account of his stewardship, General Babangida maintained that within one year of his administration, ‘balance, credibility, clarity and consistency has been re-injected into Nigeria’s foreign policy’ (Eluemunor, 1986).

Professor Bolaji Akinyemi was the brain box of Babangida’s foreign policy thrusts. Akinyemi’s tenure as the Foreign Affairs Minister was a remarkable one in Nigeria’s foreign policy history. The duo of General Ibrahim Babangida and Professor Bolaji Akinyemi wanted to re-enact the activism of the second half of the 1970s to make a statement to the international community. The very first bold initiative that was launched by the administration in 1987 was the Concert of the Medium Powers. The principle behind the concert was to create a concert of medium power countries to act as a counter force to the ideological dominance of the then great powers in the global system. Therefore, as a foreign policy initiative, the Concert of Medium Powers, was articulated by the military administration in 1987, for meeting the objectives of giving a new burst of creativity to inform the definition and articulation of Nigeria’s role in the global village (Akinyemi,1987).

The establishment of the Technical Aid Corp Scheme (TACS) by the Babangida administration marked a new fervour in official development assistance in Nigerian foreign policy. It equally represented an innovative trend in the country’s drive towards the efficient institutionalization of aid or assistance to needy sister African countries as well as the Africans in the Diaspora (Adeniji, 2004). The programme allows young Nigerian professionals particularly in such fields as medicine, nursing, veterinary medicine, engineering, law, agriculture, surveying, education, etc, to be sent to work in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific countries (ACP), for two years to assist the host countries in their development needs. The provision of technical assistance by Nigeria to other countries especially on the continent of Africa was not a new phenomenon. Indeed, in the past, technical experts had been sent to some recipient countries. Precisely, between 1960and 1966, Nigeria had entered into secondment agreement with a number of African countries (Okochi, 1990;Akinbobola, 2001). What was new about Babangida’s TACS programme was the fact that the federal government of Nigeria pays the complete salary of the technicorpers. Unlike the 1960s assistance programmes, TACS placed less financial burden on the recipient countries.

It is therefore, quite in order to assert that Nigeria’s foreign assistance efforts coincided with the advent of its political independence. In the past, technical assistance was an objective programme in the defence of Nigeria’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, especially in the area of pursuit of good and responsible neighbourliness. It was also a manifestation of the principle of restoration of human dignity to black people all over the world. This position was given practical expression in the sustained military assistance to liberate sister African countries. The Congo and the Tanzanian missions among others are the examples that readily come to mind.

There were also assistance of various grants, investments, donations and transfers of manpower, under financial, technical, economic, bilateral and multilateral understanding. This development is derived from the principle of: creation of relevant political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world, which will not only facilitate the preservation of the territorial integrity of all African countries but also foster national self reliance in African countries (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986).

However, TACS shared the general spirit of assistance as an instrument of Nigerian foreign policy since independence. TACS therefore, in particular was a response to prevailing domestic and external imperatives. At the domestic level, it responded partly to the need to cut down on monetary and material assistance to other countries, when Nigeria itself was immersed in serious economic crisis. It was also designed to address, in some degree, the problems of graduate unemployment in Nigeria by providing highly qualified Nigerian professionals with opportunities for gainful employment abroad (Adeniji, 2004).

At the external level, the TACS filled well into the context of south-south cooperation as a strategy for promoting African and Third World Development. This was especially important considering the economic crisis that was sweeping

across Africa, and the need for these countries to design an African alternative to externally imposed programmes of economic reform. The TACS was also expected to promote the image of Nigeria abroad, particularly in the face of consistent campaign of calumny against Nigeria by the western press (Adeniji, 2004; Alabi, 1988).

The foreign policy thrust in the area of economic development and foreign direct investment was anchored on‘ economic diplomacy’. The administration’s ‘economic diplomacy’ was designed primarily to articulate the improved investment climate in Nigeria and abroad and to explain the numerous incentives Nigeria has put in place to encourage and induce the flow of capital to Nigeria for bankable and profitable investment (MEA, 1989). Although one of the guiding goals and objectives of Nigerian foreign policy since independence had been to contribute towards efforts at achieving national economic development and redressing the existing disequilibrium in the international political and economic system, the case has been that foreign policy emphasis weighted heavily in favour of political matters such as decolonisation, apartheid, non-alignment, arms race and related Cold War issues (MFA, 1992).

The period, 1985-1993, therefore changed the orientation of Nigerian foreign policy from political emphasis to economic issues. Thus, as for most dynamic foreign policy thrusts of the period, the revenue from oil has been one of the greatest catalysts that inspired economic self-confidence which eventually provided a useful plank for the country’s ‘economic diplomacy’. Other catalysts were the prevailing economic problems in the country which brought with it high rate of unemployment, leading to all kinds of social and economic vices like armed robbery incidents, economic and other financial crimes, which further soiled Nigeria’s image among its global friends and enemies alike. It is in the attempt to onfront such real and identified vices that the administration sought to operate a progressive and dynamic foreign policy.

But one of the major concerns of scholars in the field of Nigeria’s international economic relations, particularly before 1986, has been the absence of a conscious policy to attract foreign investments. Therefore, the revitalization and rejuvenation of Nigerian foreign policy in our period was basically to achieve the desired economic developments. For this reason, it became necessary that the new thrust of the country’s international economic relations be anchored on the policy of ‘economic diplomacy’, with the basic objectives of fostering greater inflow of desired Foreign Direct Investment(FDI) and expansion of foreign trade (Badejo, 1990).

**Obasanjo’s Foreign Policy Regimes (1975-1979)**

Nigeria’s Afrocentric posture was highly manifested in this regime especially in the handling of the Angolan crises which eventually launched the Murtala regime into international limelight as a regime that was firmly committed in the African cause not minding whose ox is gored. Nigeria’s interest in the Angolan struggle was mainly due to the involvement of the racist South Africa in the conflict. Nigeria had earlier supported a government of national unity in Angolan comprising the three committed liberation movements which include the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA in line with the OAU’s position (Sotunmbi, 1990). However, the preponderance of evidence at the disposal of the Murtala government that South Africa’s involvement in the conflict was at the instance of both the FNLA and UNITA made Murtala to clearly gave his support to the MPLA despite America’s wish on the grounds that the two groups “have forfeited their right to the leadership of the Angolan people by joining hands with neo colonialist and racist soldiers of fortune (Fawole, 2003). This was announced to a stunned world on 25th November 1975.

Nigeria’s recognition also came up with financial backup. The Angolans were given 20 million dollars, military hardware, fighter planes, clothing and even tons of meat. Later at the OAU’s Extra Ordinary Session on Angola which was held in Addis Ababa in January 1976, the Murtala regime lobbied other African countries to give full recognition to the MPLA. Thus, on 11th February 1976, the OAU accorded MPLA a full recognition. Ironically, Murtala Mohammed could not well savor the victory of a project which he had invested so much energy, passion and resources as he was cut down two days later by the bullets of Dimka on 13th February 1976.

In addition to this, Nigeria contributed enormously to several liberation movements in the continent. This had therefore greatly contributed towards the political independence of most African countries. For instance, on February 13, 1976, Nigeria donated the sum of two million dollars $2m to South Africa’s Africa National Congress, ANC, and 500,000 dollars to Namibia’s South West African People’s Organization, SWAPO. SWAPO was later granted permission to open office in Lagos. At about the same time, the Federal Ministry of Information inaugurated a committee for dissemination of information about the evils of Apartheid. Fundamentally, the committee was to intimate the government with current news and activities of the racist regime in South Africa and advise the government on the best way to approach her anti-Apartheid policies as well as enlighten the public on the situation in South Africa. In fact, General Obasanjo, in December 1976 launched the Southern African Relief Fund. The money collected was sent to Angola, Namibia and South Africa’s liberation forces.

In 1978, Nigeria’s big brother role in Africa was also shown by its free grant of 2 million and 5 million dollars, which the new Obasanjo government gave to Zambia and Mozambique respectively to enable the two frontline states strengthen their defense capacity against the racist forces (Aluko, 1990). Also, the Nigeria utilized her economic strength to wrestle with the British government under Margret Thatcher when it gave recognition to the Bishop Muzorewa government who was installed through a sham election organized by Ian Smith regime in April 1979. According to him, in May 1979, the Nigerian government arrested the S.K. Kulu, a tanker owned by the South African Maritime Corporation of Cape Town, but flying the flag of the Panama Republic, which was on charter to British Petroleum (BP), to lift crude oil from Bonny oil terminal to Holland. After the arrest, the government decided against selling the 1,616,636 barrels of oil in the tanker to BP and also decided to reduce to about a third BP’s take on Nigerian crude with effect from 1st August 1979. The government also in May 1979,barred British firms from tendering for contracts in Nigeria until, the British government clarified its position on Zimbabwe (Aluko, 1990).

In fact, owing to this regime’s commitment to Africa’s liberation from apartheid, on July 31, 1979, the Federal Cabinet Office in Lagos announced that the Supreme Military Council (SMC) has decided to take over the assets of the British Petroleum (BP) in Nigeria with effect from August 1, 1979 and that the government would pay compensation for British assets. The statement explained that the action was a reaction to the British government permission to BP to start exporting North sea and non- embargoed oil to South Africa and that the arrangement was a ‘mere subterfuge’ to make Nigerian oil available to the apartheid regime in Pretoria and as such, the most effective way to stop Nigerian oil from reaching the enemies of Africa in South Africa was to cut BP off from Nigeria’s crude oil supply (Aluko, 1990).

**Olusegun Obasanjo Foreign Policy (1999-2007)**

The Obasanjo’s administration, as a return and reappearance of civilian/ democratic rule marked a new face of the Nigeria’s foreign policy which clearly focused on economic diplomacy which is highly defined in terms of attracting foreign direct investments/ partnerships from the West in order to engender economic development.

However, Nigeria continued the recognition of Africa as the centre-piece of her foreign policy. In fact, Nigeria demonstrated a strong determination towards the success of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Though the initiative for NEPAD has been attributed to Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Bouteflika of Algeria, Asobie (2005) has argued that NEPAD is not entirely an **African initiative**. According to him, the Millennium Action Plan for African Recovery (later named NEPAD), was a response by Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, who said he would want to see a comprehensive development scheme for Africa by Africa themselves. Consequent upon this, Mbeki with Obasanjo and created a team that developed the plan which was approved by the OAU Summit at Lusaka, Zambia in July 2001, and subsequently presented to the G-8 at their Genoa, Italy Summit by Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Obasanjo on behalf of Africa. However, as the chairman of NEPAD Implementation Committee of Heads of States, President Obasanjo has constantly been in touch with the ‘New Partners’ of Africa towards the successful implementation of the scheme. Nigeria’s continued recognition of Africa as the centre-piece of her foreign policy also reflected in President Obasanjo’s support for and key role in the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to theAfrican Union (AU), an initiative of the Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi. Obasanjo who was the first chairman of the Union embarked upon the duty of bringing the pitiable condition of Africa to the attention of the outside world which eventually attracted debt pardon from the foreign loaners such as the IMF, Paris Club and the London Club.

More importantly too, the country’s capital territory, Abuja was made a diplomatic nest for peaceful settlement of many intra and inter-state conflicts involving African nations. This made Obasanjo to create an office in the presidency on conflict resolution with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and special Envoy on Conflict Resolution in Africa. Obasanjo himself was involved more than any other leader in Africa in ‘Shuttle Diplomacy’, travelling all over Africa in search of reconciliation for many troubled lands in Africa and beyond. Akindele (2003) noted this when he asserted that: Nigeria’s foreign policy has not restricted the need to build and strengthen capacity for conflict resolution and security management to the West African sub-region and the entire continent of Africa alone. It has always emphasized the imperative o fcapacity building and enhancement for the maintenance of peace and security all

over the world.

More specifically, Nigeria’s enviable commitment towards solving African problems could also be seen in various peace and mediation talks she hosted; these include hosting of mediation talks between Sudanese government and Darfurian rebel factions. She also mediated severally between various rebel factions in the Liberian crisis and eventually granted asylum to the former Liberian President Charles Taylor in order to end crisis in that country. Before this, Somalia’s Siad Barre was granted asylum here in Nigeria. Yormie Johnson of Liberia also found a home in this place. Further to this, the restoration to power of the President of Sao Tomeand Principe, Mr. Frederique Menezes, after military take-over in July 2003 was largely credited to Nigeria under the leadership of Obasanjo. In a similar vein, Nigeria succeeded in ensuring that due constitutional process was followed in installing democratically elected government in Togo, after the death of President GnassingbeEyadema in February, 2005. In fact, the Nigerian Army and police were massively deployed on peace keeping missions in different parts of Africa all in a bid to help bring peace and security in Africa. Thus, in the 2000, the sum of N1.8 billion was approved for a contract to supply equipment and facilities to the Nigerian soldiers in Sierra Leon and the Democratic Republic of Congo, while only the sum of N0.95 billion was proposed by the Federal Military of Finance for all the three arms of the Nigerian armed forces (Asobie, 2005).

**CHAPTER THREE**

**THE AFRICAN CENTERED FOREIGN POLICY OF THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND AN OVERVIEW OF NIGEIAN FOREIGN POLICY.**

**3.0 Foreign Policy**

The hypothesis can be assessed based on the following interventions;

1. Actors in Nigeria’s Foreign Policy
2. The African-centered foreign policy of the Nigerian government
3. An Overview Of Nigerian Foreign Policy (1960-2011)
4. Political Environment Of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy

**3.1 Actors in Nigeria’s Foreign Policy**

The policy actors in this immense task are both internal and external to the foreign ministry. Although it is primarily a foreign ministry affair, it should be mentioned that internal actors such as the president, the foreign minister, ambassadors and embassies abroad, the press and the business community are all active players in the foreign policy formulation process. The role and place of our embassies should be redefined. A dynamic and performance-oriented foreign policy leaves no room for amateurism as was the case in the past. Our ambassadors and embassies should sit up and live up to national expectations. Nigeria’s foreign policy has to produce results for the country and its citizens. The training programme for our diplomats should be reviewed to give them the necessary knowledge to practise the art and science of diplomacy because they are at the frontline of our foreign policy.

Our vital national interests have to be redefined. Does Africa still represent the cornerstone of our foreign policy when we have more respect from other countries than we get from African nations despite our whole-hearted commitment to them? If the answer to the question is yes, what are the benefits we get from this Afrocentric choice? If the response is no, then we should reorient our foreign policy towards more profitable ventures like economic, scientific, cultural and technical cooperation with more advanced countries including Asia.

The economic development and well-being of Nigerians should henceforth be the mainstay of our foreign policy. We should revive and reinforce what was termed economic diplomacy by General Ike Nwachukwu. For instance, why would we continue to sit aloof and see Cameroun lay claim on Nigeria’s territory? In the name of African unity and good neighbourhood, Nigeria has sacrificed a lot and continues to sacrifice for our continent. This act, this paper agrees, is praiseworthy but most southern African countries have forgotten the policies and sacrifices made by Nigeria to bring them out of their woes. Sierra Leoneans and Liberians have forgotten the loss of lives by Nigerian soldiers in their efforts to defend unity and peace in these countries. Though Africa should not be forgotten, Nigeria’s interests should come first in all our foreign policy analysis and decisions. Retired General Danjuma wasn’t saying anything different when he said "Right now, we are becoming the United States of ECOWAS at very great cost to us. We think this is unaffordable to us now" (Vanguard, 1999: 12). It is therefore pertinent that regarding important sensitive internal policy issues that would have effect on our foreign policy, the policy formulations process should include all the major actors for a more global approach to policy issues than was the case in the past. For efficiency, Nigerians would need to put in place new foreign policy objectives.

**3.2 The African-Centered foreign policy of the Nigerian government**

This was chosen as a foreign policy thrust of the erstwhile military regimes, notably pursued by the Murtala/Obasanjo government apparently to immune the nation against the danger of falling prey to colossal alignment during the apogee of the bipolar cold war between United States and the Soviet polar epicentres. As a nation organized around geopolitical strange bed-fellows between the nationalistic North and the ethno-political South (Dinneya, 2006), compounded more so by an abhorred era of military dictatorship in the African regional political landscape, African-centeredness became a safety-net for “legalizing” a military de facto among “new nations” of the African region most of which were apparently in dire need of external economic and social support. African-centeredness became a vehicle for wooing external recognition through its megalomaniac spending of available national resources in the prosecution of seemingly unimportant African economic, social and political courses albeit without any recourse to the economic impact on the domestic subsector of the national interest. With an unspoken but tacit national approval, the African-centered foreign policy for decades became an economic and political negation under the frivolous guise of being a “big brother” to other Africa regional states in their time of need. Against the current background of a realistic global economy, the relevance or not of the African centered foreign policy in Nigeria in the 21 century in her spectrum of national development, represents an implicit research problematic for the academic and policy makers alike.

**3.3 An Overview Of Nigerian Foreign Policy (1960-2011)**

Nigerian foreign policy soon after independence in 1960 under Balewa’s Administration (1960-1966) was anchored on: one, Africa, the centre-piece of Nigerian foreign policy; two, the policy of panAfricanism; three, the policy of decolonization and eradication of racial discrimination and segregation; four, the policy of good neighbourliness; five, the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries; and finally, the policy of non-alignment. However, the most enduring foreign policy thrust in Nigeria has been the Afro-centric philosophy of Nigerian foreign policy in which Nigeria spent enormous resources in assisting other African countries like Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, etc, under colonial domination to gain independence. Under the African centeredness of Nigerian foreign policy, Nigeria also assisted in the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa. It also contributed in peacekeeping forces in crisis regions in Africa such as Chad, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d’Ivoire, Sudan, Darfur, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc (Aniche, 2009).

Still under this policy thrust, Nigeria assisted other African countries financially and technically in their economy. Although, the foreign policy posture has been seriously challenged or criticized by scholars and practitioners alike. It was not until recently that Nigeria started rescinding and reviewing its foreign policy in line with the foreign policy reform panel set up by Yar’Adua’s Administration in 2007, soon after assuming office. The product of this policy reform is citizen diplomacy. Other foreign policy thrusts like policy of decolonization, eradication of racial discrimination and segregation, non intervention and non-alignment naturally fizzled out with time. For example, policies of decolonization in Africa, and racial discrimination and segregation naturally waned with the achievement of independence and sovereignty in all African territories and elimination of Apartheid policy in South Africa. Due to United Nations’ (UN) and African Union’s (AU) responsibility to intervene on humanitarian grounds in the crisis regions, the policy of non-intervention is falling into disuse. Policy of non-alignment became obsolete with the events of late 1980s and early 1990s leading to the end of cold war and the beginning of post-cold war era (Aniche, 2009).

Under Gowon’s Regime (1966-1975) the policy of African centeredness was utilized and geared towards regional integration in West Africa leading to the establishment of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Whilst, under Murtala/Obasanjo’s Regime and Shagari’s Administration Nigeria continued with the policy of African centeredness assisting many African countries and contributing in the National War of Liberation in some of African territories under colonial rule and anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (Aniche, 2009).

During Babangida’s Regime (1985-1993), a new lexicon found its way into Nigerian foreign policy, the policy of economic diplomacy. The policy of economic diplomacy was aimed at achieving economic recovery and development through the collaboration of Breton Woods Institutions (BWIs), under conditionality of which, Nigeria undertook to implement Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) between 1986 and 1990. The policy of economic diplomacy is another enduring foreign policy thrust of Nigeria foreign policy. Thus, under Obasanjo’s Civilian Administration (1999-2007), Nigeria revisited the policy of economic diplomacy aimed at receiving debt relief and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) through the instrumentalities of the Breton Woods institutions (BWIs). Nigeria agreed to implement the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan conditionality as encapsulated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Citizen diplomacy is a foreign policy thrust of Yar’Adua’s Administration under which the Federal Government of Nigeria seeks the assistance of Nigerians at home and in Diaspora in its effort to develop the country economically and politically. For being people-oriented, it is a part of the broad range of Nigerian foreign policy that promotes the aspects that look into the welfare of Nigeria’s citizens and seeks to defend them wherever they are (Dickson, 2010).

**3.4 Political Environment Of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy**

Linkage politics approach assumes that domestic politics and foreign policy are organically interconnected and that the totality of the domestic structure determines or conditions the character of Nigeria’s foreign policy. In other words, the internal political environment shapes the outcomes of Nigeria’s foreign policy making. As a result the conceptualization of Nigeria’s external or foreign relations in a linkage system presupposes that Nigeria’s foreign policy is a product of the domestic structure. The underlying argument here is that the international environment influences domestic politics just as domestic political environment shapes international events. Thus, foreign policy is conceived as the outcome or product of the dynamic interplay between the internal and external political environments of nation-states ( Ifesinachi, 2001).

Furthermore, the linkage politics approach to foreign policy holds that there is a link or nexus between domestic political structure and external relation or foreign policy. Thus, domestic factors like religion, culture, economy, etc. are seen as considerable significance to foreign policy making. The idea of a linkage or interface between the domestic political structure and external political environment allows for an analysis that adequately examines the extent to which interaction between the two can constitute a hindrance to the formulation of effective foreign policy thrusts such as citizen diplomacy. As a result, the linkage approach provides a specific context for identifying the extent to which specific forces can positively or negatively impinge upon the achievement or accomplishment of a given foreign policy objective such as citizen diplomacy (Dauda, 2002).

Perhaps, the import of the above is that foreign policy is basically a product of complex and diversifying interrelationship of external and internal circumstances and stimuli. Hence, the actions of a nation-state is determined or influenced by both domestic and external variables, and as such, foreign policy becomes the continuation or the extension of domestic policy (Okolie, 2001). The point is that there is a link between internal or domestic politics and external or international politics known as linkage politics. The underlying idea of linkage politics is that the link between the internal political environment influences foreign policy making and implementation of states, Nigeria included. The Nigerian internal or domestic political environment is one where political class engaged in electoral malpractices in form of electoral rigging, snuggery and violence. Under this state of affairs, Nigerian citizens are confronted with abject poverty, mass unemployment, poor standards of living, low life expectancy, low literacy rate, etc. in the human development index. The Nigerian state is not forthcoming at catering for the welfare and wellbeing of its citizens in Nigeria, forcing many Nigerians to seek greener pastures abroad or to put more aptly, economic refuge abroad. As a result many of them are engaged in many illegal activities to survive harsh treatment abroad where they are not likely to get a decent job. Even the corruption perception index (CPI) of the Transparency International (TI) has not ranked Nigeria favourably since its inception.

For instance, Adejumo (2011) notes that with several corrupt former Governors still parading themselves imperiously on the streets of Abuja, still on the beck and call of the president, and appeared seemingly untouchable; it will be hard to convince the world that we are still waging war against corruption in earnest and with sincerity of purpose. Successive Nigerian governments have nothing to be proud of in terms of promoting positive image of Nigeria or tackling corruption. In fact, whatever little policy was made had only been there to benefit those in the government and not the Nigerian masses. Also, the thinness of socio-economic capital is based on community repeated premises that Nigeria has some of the worst social indicators in the world: internal insecurity, a deteriorating infrastructural base, corruption, high crime, unbridled violence; ethnic conflict; a disorganized and moribund labour sector, a poor external image crisis exacerbated by a world-wide reputation for astuteness in financial and other related crimes represent some of these problems. In addition to this, is the high mortality, where a majority of the population ostensibly living below poverty line in a country where the life expectancy is at zero point, and you get a country with a supposedly fragile base and foundation upon which such a policy can be founded (Eke, 2009).

Adejumo (2011) further opines that for the citizen diplomacy to succeed, it must be backed up with the sincere purpose and approach to Nigeria’s entire problem at home. After fifty years as a sovereign state, and with enormous resources both human and material, Nigerians are still wallowing in abject poverty and desperation, while our leaders are looting the treasures all over the country and living unimaginable expensive lifestyles, and depositing the loots in countries we are trying to force the citizen diplomacy on.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

Hypothesis 1: The approach of both Babangida and Obasanjo in the pursuit of Nigerian Afro centric foreign policy were the same.

Babangida administration on 27th August, 1985 condemning Buhari’s Foreign Policy, and describing it as retaliatory and incoherent (News watch, 1985:19). In 1991, the then Nigerian Foreign Minister, Major General Ike Nwachukwu admitted that “Africa could not allow itself to be left out in the current efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and other parts of the world”. He also admitted that the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel was “aimed at getting Africa back into the mainstream of world politics” (African Concord, 1991:24). General Babangida on his part noted that Nigeria’s renewal of diplomatic relations was deliberately designed for Nigeria by his administration “to remain relevant in the world affairs”, noting “…we don’t want to be left in an empty shell” (Nigerian Tribune, 1992). He further reiterated the intention of Nigerian Government to be part of the Middle East Peace Process, speculating that Nigeria would host one of the peace meetings. Thus, the accounts between Nigerian government and their Israeli counterparts opened, culminating into the decision for the reestablishment of diplomatic ties (Nereus, 1993:21). The Foreign Minister made it clear that “diplomacy these days is not based on things that divide people but things that unite them (Nigerian Tribune,1992). It should however be noted that Nigeria never sought for OAU consent before restoring diplomatic ties with Israel.

The administration of Babangida sought to address these galaxies of economic challenges by adopting several economic policies like Structural Adjustment Programme [SAP] (Babangida, 1985:238) and the “use of economic diplomacy to attract foreign investors” (Nereus, 1993:18). Nigeria had been engaged in bilateral relations with Israel before 1960 in which there was economic cooperation in the areas of agriculture, cooperatives, construction and water resources etc, particularly, in the Eastern and Western regions which were pro Israeli .In the 1990s, due to economic logjam and alarming withdrawals of foreign investment from the country in spite of the government’s adoption of new economic diplomacy, Babangida administration viewed the restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel as great agendum to stimulate the national economy so as to encourage American Jewish leaders in promoting investment in Nigeria. General Nwachukwu in his visit to Israel told his counterpart that:“We know, for instance that you have the command of financial institutions of the world through your kith and kin in several industrialized and highly developed economies and we believe also that your influence can bring some meaningful investment to support such development programs” (The Guardian 1991).

The reluctance shown by Arab states to assist Nigeria and other African countries out of their serious economic problems left Nigeria with no other option than to extend her friendship to a “former foe” due to Babangida regime’s eagerness to improve the domestic economy. Since May, 1992, when Nigeria and Israel restored diplomatic relations, they have exchanged economic delegations for the betterment of the duo.

During Babangida’s Regime (1985-1993), anew lexicon found its way into Nigerian foreign policy, the policy of economic diplomacy. The policy of economic diplomacy was aimed at achieving economic recovery and development through the collaboration of Breton Woods Institutions (BWIs), under conditionality of which, Nigeria undertook to implement Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) between1986 and 1990. The policy of economic diplomacy is another enduring foreignpolicy thrust of Nigeria foreign policy. Thus, under Obasanjo’s Civilian Administration (1999-2007), Nigeria revisited the policy of economic diplomacy aimed at receiving debt relief and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) through the instrumentalities of the Breton Woods institutions (BWIs). Nigeria agreed to implement the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan conditionality as encapsulated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (Aniche, 2010; Okeke and Aniche,2012a).

Hypothesis 2: The contemporary African situation differs from what it was during the era of Nigerian adoption of afro centric foreign policy.

We noted earlier that imperialism bequeathed Africa with two main unforgettable experiences namely the denial of African identity and the tendentious imposition of western thoughts and cultural realities and perspectives. African achievements of the Nubian culture were appropriated as European. Nwala notes:

African achievements in science and philosophy were appropriated as European achievements. Thus, we read about such African philosophers like St. Augustine, Origen, Philo, Plotinus, Porphyry, etc as part of Western intellectual tradition and achievement. The great achievements of Egyptian thought were largely appropriated as European achievements. This is a phenomenon which GGM James called Stolen Legacy

Thus, it did not take long for European perspectives to triumph over those of Africans. Hence, what is today referred to as colonial mentality took sway and Africans took to denying and rejecting their intellectual and cultural prowess. Those who got trapped in Europe and America during the slave trade were consequently made to develop low self esteem. This consignment as vagabonds on the part of the African Diasporas in the face of racial discrimination forced them to self emancipation. This flaming spirit of freedom and nationalism took two forms namely the struggle and subsequent freedom of Africa politically and the search for African identity in the pages of antique history.

A variety of intellectual materials emerged in the course of this search for identity. Among those pioneers of Afro centric ideas are William Dubois, GGM James, Anta Diop and Martin Bernal.

What then is Afro centrism? This concept which means African centeredness was created by Afro-American intellectuals in asserting that Africans should be given their intellectual pride of place as the originators of civilization. Gordiano Bruno accepts this intellectual debt: “We Greeks owe Egypt, the grand monarchy of letters and nobility to be the parents of our fables, metaphors and doctrines” Onyewuenyi writes copiously the aims and objectives of the Afrocentric movement:

The Afro centric movement is a series of activities by concerned African and African-American scholars and educators and directed towards achieving the particular end of ensuring that the African heritage and culture, its history and contribution to world civilization and scholarship are reflected in the curricula on every level of academic instruction…..Advocates of Afro centrism demand a reconstruction and rewriting of the whole panorama of human history in its account of the origin of mankind, the origin of philosophy, science ,medicine, agriculture architecture etc.

Hypothesis 3: Babangida and Obasanjo though pursued the same foreign document; their personality difference affected the policy implementation and outcome.

The regime of Babangida set out early to repair the damages done to Nigeria’s foreign policy by the Buhari administration. Both the IMF loan stalemate and the frosty relations with the West were quickly resolved. Nigeria soon resumed its diplomatic relations with Britain. In the same spirit, the closure of Nigeria’s borders with her neighbours together with the vexing issue of illegal aliens, which had converged to worsen relations between Nigeria and her neighbours were astutely reversed to the admiration of West African countries (Saliu,2006a), culminating in the provision of economic assistance to these countries, which won him the Chairmanship of ECOWAS for three consecutive terms (Adeniji, 2005: p. 6).

In essence, this era, not only marked a high point of the country’s rising international profile, it also conferred commensurate prestige to Nigeria in her foreign policy. Saliu (2006) attributed the success of Babangida’s foreign policy initiatives to the crop of intellectuals whom he assembled as members of his “kitchen cabinet”.

Among them were personalities such as Elaigwu, Obiozor, Of oegbu, Akinyemi, Chime, Olagunju, Oyovbaire, Ogunsanwo, Oshuntokun, among others. Despite the remarkable contributions to Nigeria’s foreign policy by these intellectual giants, Osaghae (2002) argued that the foreign policy arena under Babangida nonetheless, suffered great confusion and incoherence resulting in the arbitrary change in the ministers of external affairs.

This confusion was greatly reflected in the regime’s bid to elevate religion as a conscious guide to Nigeria’s foreign policy. This was demonstrated by the circumstances that surrounded Nigeria’s membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1987. The regime decided to change Nigeria’s status from that of an observer status to a full-fledged member without due consideration of both domestic and international concerns.

The direct result of this was a serious and lasting dent on the regime’s credibility. For instance, Fawole (2012: p.156) argued that the decision by Babangida to make Nigeria a full member of a largely Islamic grouping of states generated considerable opposition at home and remains one of the most highly contentious and unresolved issues in the country till date. It was all the more so, with the unending transition programme of the administration that permanently eroded the gains made at the external context (Olukoshi & Agbu, 1995; Akinboye, 2013: p.34).

This deliberate subversion of its own transition programme by the government became evident when the June12 1993 presidential election was annulled. The emergence of Abacha administration in Nigeria on 17 November1993 could be traceable to the annulment of June 12, 1993 election, adjudged to be the “freest and fairest” ,by the Babangida regime. The political instability that arose from the incident made the military believe Nigerian needed a more “radical” approach to reverse the dangerous political trend in the country (Saliu, 2006a).

In the late 1970s when the then Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo became the Head of State after the assassination of Gen. Murtala Mohammed, he inherited a foreign policy that was virile, dynamic, and proactive as exemplified by the support given to the communist backed MPLA of AugustinoNeto as opposed to the West-backed UNITA in 1975. Nigeria’s position in the Angola’s case was a study in independent foreign policy formulation and implementation. When Obasanjo became the Head of State, he followed the footstep of his former boss by continuing the foreign policy thrust of the administration which gave unflinching support to the liberation movements in different parts of Africa in countries that were still under white domination. The key points of his foreign policy then are as follows:

• Total support to all liberation movements in Southern Africa

• Proclamation of Nigeria as a distant frontline state in furtherance of this objective

• Open support for armed struggle against the white minority rule in Southern Africa including South Africa

• Denouncement of the apartheid regime in South Africa and subsequent refusal to have any relationship with that regime at a great cost to Nigeria estimated at about $50 billion

• Forceful nationalization of the British Petroleum and renaming it African Petroleum, as well as Barclays bank because of Britain’s support for Apartheid system

• Assistance to a lot of indigent African States in cash and kind.

It cannot be over emphasized therefore that under his regime as a military Head of State, Nigeria witnessed a lot of pro-active initiatives which won the respect of the international community such that Nigeria’s input and participation were highly sought in the resolution of African conflict. For instance, Nigeria was part of the United Nations’ committee that saw to the resolution of the Rhodesian conflict. Obasanjo’s dynamism also earned him enduring friendship of world leaders like President Jimmy Carter of America and Chancellor Schmidt of Germany. This “golden age” of Nigeria’s foreign policy marked the true emergence of Nigeria as the giant of Africa.

These achievements were possible due to a number of factors which include Obasanjo’s personal dynamism, the oil boom which enabled Nigeria to back up its “power diplomacy” with financial muscle because a nation is emboldened by a strong and vibrant economy and stable polity to assert itself in the international arena. Besides ,the military hierarchical structure which made policy decisions unencumbered because the Head of State’ sanctions could not be queried by his subordinates and he did not necessarily need the permission or even support of his subordinates in government to do whatever he deemed right aided a vibrant foreign policy.

According to Joe Garba, Obasanjo’s External Affairs commissioner between 1976 and 1979, “With the death of Murtala in February 1976, most people thought that our foreign policy would lose its dynamism. But that did not happen. Indeed, Obasanjo to my mind was particularly impressive in applying his intellect as well as his energy to our international interests.” (Garba, 1987:15).

During this period, Obasanjo also displayed a radical approach to foreign policy implementation and strong anti colonial sentiment, while putting Nigeria’s national interest in the front burner. Garba further alluded to this when he wrote “As for Obasanjo, he had strong anti-colonial credentials. In 1974 he had written a thesis at the Royal College of Defence Studies contrasting the paucity of British economic assistance to Nigeria with what the British were gaining from Nigeria economically. His courageous and decisive approach to asserting Nigeria’s interest over foreign convenience had dramatically emerged in May 1975, when as Federal Commissioner for Works, he forcibly took over a building occupied by the Us Embassy” (Garba, 1987:11).

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 SUMMARY**

It is apparent that the successive Nigerian leadership has overwhelmingly recognized Africa as the centre piece of Nigeria’s foreign policy. Thus, this directed their foreign policy thrust over the years. However, our study has found that this over burdensomeness of Nigeria’s foreign policy towards the cause of Africa at all times has not really benefited Nigeria; as such they have inadvertently acted against Nigeria’s national interest rather, as Joe Garba (1991) noted “…in bilateral terms which are, after all, the core of relations between states, we gave and gave to Angola, and in return got nothing”.

In fact, the era of decolonization has gone and as such Nigeria should seek effective trade engagement with other African countries if it must, and such engagement should foremost portray our national interest with some concomitant pay offs. Nigeria should in fact, seek a more global partnership that will ensure human development and economic prosperity for the country. However, while we accept and encourage Nigeria’s active involvement in a productive engagement/ commitment in Africa which would yield to development in the region such as Nigeria’s role and initiative in drawing up the Constitutive Act of African Union (AU), The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism, Nigeria should seek first economic development after which every other thing shall be added unto her. Nigeria’s attention should be more focused towards achieving our vital national interests such as socio-economic growth and development so as to improve the standard of living of the populace. In this respect, Africa should no longer be the only reason for the existence of our external relations.

Lastly, there is an urgent need for the government to convene a foreign policy summit to, among others, address issues such as re-defining our national interest, refocusing our foreign policy in such a way that it will radically shift from focusing on Africa as the centrepiece of its foreign policy but to a purely national interest driven foreign policy thrust which we will minimize loss and increase gains as well as tying it to the socio-economic growth and development of our great country. Therefore, it is clear that the Nigeria’s acclaimed big brother role in Africa, which encourages her to flamboyantly waste scarce resources on unfruitful brotherly missions in Africa only gained her a cheap popularity as the giant of Africa without any recorded tangible economic prosperity. Hence, we strongly recommend that Nigeria should seek first ‘economic development’ and then every other things shall be added unto her.

**5.2 Conclusion**

Domestic factors have been central, though not the only factors conditioning Nigeria's Foreign Policy positions, especially towards Israel. The early years of Nigerian-Israel relations were friendly, and though at the beginning there were Nigerian Christians who advocated that such a relationship would benefit both countries, later the majority of Moslems and their leaders joined in. During the first 13 years (1960-73), many Israeli experts were sent to all parts of Nigeria, at the request of the Nigerians, helping to modernize agriculture, building new housing projects, highways, universities and assisting in laying foundations for a modern communication system. Nigerian scholars, agriculturists, educators and students were sent to study in Israel and major Israeli companies and private entrepreneurs became involved in Nigeria’s development. However, this fruitful and meaningful relationship came to a halt in1973, when Nigeria adhered to the decision of the OAU, which under hard pressure of its Arab members, called upon its members to break off diplomatic relations with Israel following the Yom Kippur War. It took 19 years until the Moslem Nigerian Head of State ,General Ibrahim Babangida decided to restore and normalize the relations between the two countries.

To establish the relationship on a reciprocal basis, Nigeria took an unprecedented step and established, for the first time, an Embassy in Israel, headed by one of its most experienced Ambassadors. The two countries were preparing for closer cooperation when the Nigerian crisis erupted during the Abacha’s regime, deteriorating the internal situation, and as in many other cases, causing a decline in the mutual cooperation. Under the Obasanjo’s government, the relationship has been strengthened for the mutual benefit of the two countries. Nigeria and the State of Israel have inaugurated a mechanism of holding annual dialogue aimed at strengthening the existing diplomatic and political relations between the two countries. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to that effect was signed in Jerusalem by their preventatives of the two countries, in which details of the agreement were outlined. Under the terms of the agreement, the two Ministries agreed to establish a procedure “for bilateral consultations at diplomatic level that will constitute a useful mechanism in order to promote their bilateral dialogue”. With the recent election of Alhaji Umar Musa Yar’ Adua, a Muslimas the President of Nigeria, we can only hope that the relationship will not nosedive again.

Clearly, the world has become a global village, and interdependence is been emphasized by foreign policy makers. There is no doubt that Nigerian’s decision to severeand eventual restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel facilitated by both the senior player slike (President, the External Affairs Ministers etc) and other players (members of business sector, press, religions leaders etc), constitute important elements on the issue in focus’. We can therefore confidently assert that the DS is of fundamental importance in the FP orientation of Nigeria towards Israel

**5.3** **Recommendation**

The Nigerian state exhibits low autonomy and as such is immersed in the class struggle rather than rising above it leading to intense struggle for the control of the state for primitive accumulation. In the context of intense struggle for state power every other thing including citizens’ welfare or wellbeing was marginalized both at home and abroad. Thus, by adopting linkage politics approach we arrived at the conclusion that the internal political environment in Nigeria hindered the implementation of Nigerian foreign policy thrust embedded in citizen diplomacy. On the basis of the above conclusion or main finding we recommend, one, and more fundamental that the Nigerian state should be reconstituted in such a way as to float above class struggle necessary for increasing its autonomy, and two, that there is need to improve or transform positively Nigeria’s internal political environment required for boosting its image abroad and achieving its foreign policy objectives.

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