

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: THE REALITIES

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Abstract

Nigeria became independent in 1960 and since then, its foreign policy like that of most other African countries, has witnessed successes and failures. Many scholars in the field were of the opinion that Nigeria's foreign policy must be anchored on a strong domestic support and understanding. But the world continues to present a dynamic environment in which the interests of nations have changed over time and still continues to change day to- day. This paper seeks to examine the specific interests, priorities and emphasis of Nigeria's foreign policy which have continued to change and evolve in the context of the domestic and international environment. The paper also discussed Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy, economic diplomacy, consolidation of democracy in Nigeria and Africa, strategic partnerships and economic diplomacy, Nigeria's international image, citizen diplomacy, etc and recommendations were made on the global challenges as well as ways of enhancing Nigeria's representation in international organizations.

Key words: Africa as centre-piece, economic diplomacy, consolidation of democracy, strategic partnership, international image and citizen diplomacy.

Introduction

Since Nigeria became independent in 1960, its foreign policy like that of most other African countries, has witnessed successes and failures. Many scholars were of the opinion that Nigeria's foreign policy must be anchored on a strong domestic support and understanding. According to them, the more of this support we get the more consensus we are able to build behind Nigeria's foreign policy exertions, the better the guarantee of its success. We live in changing times. The world continues to present a dynamic environment in which the interests of nations have changed over the years.

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The fundamental principle of Nigeria's foreign policy has been fairly consistent since they were first espoused shortly after independence in October, 1960. Yet, the specific interest, priorities and emphasis of Nigeria's foreign policy have continued to change and evolve in the context of the domestic and international environment. The main elements of the changing world and context includes: the end of the cold war, the emergence of the United State as a dominant superpower as well as the emergence of multiple centers of power, especially at the regional levels label that is devoid of reason, logic, realism and a full appreciation of the country's national interests (Ambassador Olugbenga Ashiru, 2013).

With the successful conclusion of the decolonization agenda and the emergence of a post-Apartheid geopolitical environment in Africa, it became imperative to review and re-direct the orientation and aims of the country's foreign policy. The outcome of this exercise led to the clear articulation of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives, as specified in the 1999 Constitution, which is the promotion and protection of the national interest, the promotion of African integration and support for Africa unity; the promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestation; respect for international law and treaty obligation as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication and the promotion of a just world economic order.

In pursuit of these objectives, the present Administration Dr. Goodluck Jonathan has identified, as main priorities the maintenance of unity, peace and security of Nigeria, particularly in the wake of current security challenges, job and wealth creation for Nigerians; the promotion of trade and investments, promoting the welfare of Nigerians both at home and abroad and protecting their interests. The others are improving the profile and image of Nigeria abroad; enhancing Nigeria's representation and visibility in international organizations, enhancing Nigeria's leadership role in West Africa in particular and Africa in general, among others.

Africa as the Centre Piece of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

While Africa has been the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy from the onset, successive governments have certainly adapted its principles, objectives and priorities to the prevailing circumstances. The Afro-centric posture of our foreign policy meant that the founding fathers of Nigeria had to anchor the country's

foreign policy thrust on the decolonization of the African continent and the promotion of Africa unity. Thus, the deployment of substantial resources in the eradication of apartheid in Southern Africa and other theatres of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and South Africa.

Atah Pine (2011) argued the idea of Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria foreign policy is premised on the understanding that Nigeria engagement in the international system will be looked at through the binoculars of Africa. As Hon. Aja Nwachukwu averred on the imperative on Afrocentric policy, 'charity begins at home' and therefore any Nigerian foreign policy that does not take into consideration the peculiar position of Africa is unrealistic. This enunciation is the philosophical origins of Afrocentrism in Nigeria's foreign policy thought; it was however, the Adedeji's report that coined the concept; 'Africa as centre-piece'. The issues that gave practical expression to this Africa-centeredness were the remnants of colonialism on the continents, apartheid in South Africa, liberation wars; ideological and proxy conflicts among others. Outside these political pressing factors, the issue of a shared racial universe, of cultural neighbouring, of shared historical experiences and the ideals of Pan-Africanism further lubricated the wheels of this foreign policy conceptualization. Indeed, in pursuing an Africa-centered foreign policy premised on racial and social-cultural affinity of Africans, Nigeria was carrying out an exercise in anthropological diplomacy. Under the framework of an Africa-centred foreign policy, Nigeria got involved deeply in the decolonization struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa and in the process earning for itself the appellation of a 'frontline nation', even though she was geographically far removed from the theater of the struggles which was in the Southern Africa region. Nigeria is central to the formation of ECOWAS, has contained the breakdown of social order in Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc, through its world acknowledged peacekeeping expertise, and has provided economic life wire to less economically resourceful countries. In terms of proactive engagement with major socio-political and economic issues of continental importance in the last fifty-four years, Nigeria tower far above any other Africa country.

The reason accounts for why inspite of the huge financial expenditures and massive loss of human and material resources in the Liberian and Sierra Leone wars, for instance, Nigeria has not been able to reap any economic benefits from her efforts. To date, one cannot tell one single Nigerian company that was

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involved in the post-conflict reconstruction activities going on in these two countries. What major economic niche has Nigeria carved for herself in these post-conflicts countries? There is hardly anything one can point finger towards. Yet, the Africa-centeredness framework has continued to maintain a stronghold on foreign policy thinking in Nigeria. The theories of concentric cycles and concert of medium powers all take their bearing from this perspective. In sum, the concept of Africa as a center-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy is also not grounded in consideration of economic growth and national development, and such, no matter how conceptually lush it may be, it remains substantially empty.

Economic Diplomacy

The concept of economic diplomacy as a foreign policy plank was introduced in Nigeria's foreign policy during the Ibrahim Babangida's administration. The government conceptualized economic diplomacy policy as, "the promotion of export trade, investment and increased financial assistance from friendly countries". Building on this, the then Foreign Affairs Minister, Ike Nwachukwu in his June 1988 speech entitled: "The Dynamics of Nigeria's Foreign Policy", provided the policy direction when he stated that, "it is the responsibility of our foreign policy apparatus to advance the course of our national economic recovery".

The imperative of an economic diplomacy foreign policy framework was inspired by the economic pressures that were exerted on the Nigerian economy as a result of the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The focus was on export promotion, encouragement of direct foreign investment, debt rescheduling, embracing of neo-liberal economic measures and deep involvement in the interplay of the capitalist international political economy. The political wing of economic diplomacy agenda was that Nigeria will ingratiate itself and cultivate the goodwill and friendship of the leading countries of Europe, North America and Japan.

There is absolutely nothing new about the economy being used as a major component of a nation's foreign policy endeavours. For students of foreign policy, the linkage theory is an elementary explanation of how internal factors help in shaping and giving definition to the quality and direction of foreign policy. It was mere hype. Secondly, Nigeria lacked the economic infrastructure to use economy as a major instrument of diplomatic engagement. This is so, because the productive forces in the economy are grossly underdeveloped, there is the dearth

of capital, a lack of entrepreneurial ingenuity; the economy is mono-culturally dependent on oil, politicized, corrupt and rent oriented. It is part of the problem that Nigeria has not been able to make economic gains from her foreign policy adventures, particularly in the sub-region.

Again, no foreign policy agenda can succeed on the basis of reliance on a single factor, such as the economy. Foreign policy is borne out of a multiplicity of factors, such as; culture, politics, history, patriotism, geography, military power, etc. Indeed, the very basis of embarking on economic diplomacy in the first place was the inability of the Nigeria economy to withstand pressures of the international political economy in the first place.

Today, one of the questions frequently asked is why the populace cannot derive greater benefits from the huge investments made to the cause of Africa? In response to this enquiry as well as the global realities and changing times, we now effectively make Nigeria the centre-piece of our foreign policy. This entails that every foreign policy decision must pass the litmus test of how far and by how much Nigeria's specific and general national interests are being promoted, pursued and served. We have therefore sought to deploy foreign policy to support and promote the economic development of Nigeria through job and wealth creation, empowerment and the development of critical infrastructure for the benefit of the Nigerian people. Making Nigeria our primary focus in terms of issues bordering on our national security, economic prosperity, youth unemployment and infrastructural development, does not translate to a reduction of our commitment to Africa.

Within the overarching ambit of the set objectives and the felt need for a new foreign policy thrust geared towards the maximization of benefits of good governance to Nigerians, it became imperative to prioritize our foreign policy choices. Nigeria's foreign policy will continue to be dictated by the political and economic programme at home. The current Transformation Agenda of the Government of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan on the domestic front has given the platform to execute good economic and social policies; the foreign policy of Nigeria will be more robust. The nexus between domestic and foreign policies cannot therefore be overemphasized.

Nigeria's brightening economic outlook is an accurate reflection of its positive political agenda. It is in light of the foregoing considerations, as well as the bright

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economic prospects of the country that we are encouraged by the recently released report by Price Waterhouse Coopers which forecasts the emergence of Nigeria as the 13th top economy in the world by 2050. Indeed, a recent study classified Nigeria, together with Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey, as members of MINTs, in recognition of our emerging economic prospects and as the new centres of global economic growth. These assessments are not only reassuring but are pointers that Nigeria is on the right path and must redouble our efforts in attaining the objectives of Vision 20:2020.

Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria and Africa

Nigeria's leadership role in Africa has been influenced largely by destiny. Not only must Nigeria always take the lead to ensure political stability in the region, but she must be actively involved in the economic development and integration of the continent, inspite of the recent outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgence in the North East part of the country. Nigeria's support for the promotion and consolidation of democracy, good governance and human rights in Africa is not in doubt. In partnership with the African Union, strenuous efforts at entrenching democracy in Africa are being made, including uncompromising adherence to democratic tenets and values, good governance, human rights, among others. Our stance is anchored on the firm belief that a stable and democratic Africa is in Nigeria's national interest. Consequently, Nigeria has provided material and other forms of support to the democratic electoral processes in Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Niger, among others and has recently demonstrated her belief in democratization of the African continent.

In Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria's strong voice to uphold democracy, evidenced in the support given to the winner of the Presidential election, prevented a bloodbath in that country. Our strong and unwavering support for democracy made the EU, UN and the US to follow Nigeria's lead, while the AU has no choice but to come on board and support Nigeria's position for the winner of the elections in that country. Nigeria's position was not in support of any outside power but a step taken in line with President Jonathan's policy to defend democracy in Africa. With over 3 million Nigerians, the intervention in Cote d'Ivoire are on the same side of the coin, working together to resolve the challenges in our continent. A number of Nigerian business men have since taken advantage of a very cordial relationship between both countries.

In line with the African Union and ECOWAS policy of zero tolerance for unconstitutional change of government, Nigeria condemned the recent undemocratic changes of government in Guinea Bissau and Mali. In addition, as a member of the ECOWAS Mediating Group, Nigeria was actively involved in efforts to restore security and constitutional rule in both countries, by playing a leadership role in initiating democratic transitional processes.

In Guinea Bissau, it was President Jonathan that negotiated a peaceful resolution of the crisis and prevailed on the coup leaders from executing their detained erstwhile Presidents and Prime Ministers and facilitated their safe passages out of the country. Our desire to enthrone democracy in Mali is in our national interest, as the connection between the terrorists in Northern Mali and elements of Boko Haram has been established. The plan of the terrorists and criminal gangs that took over Northern Mali was to take over the whole of Mali, and use the territory as a platform to destabilize the whole of ECOWAS region with Nigeria as the prime target. It is therefore naïve of any academician, political scientists or analyst to suggest that Nigeria should not intervene or take a back seat position in Mali. If the French had not intervened at the time they did, the situation in Mali will have been different today. Nigeria and indeed all members of the AU are grateful for the French intervention but Nigeria has risen to the occasion by talking the lead to ensure that the military campaign in Mali is now African led. Nigeria has committed over 1200 troops to the UN-mandated African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) under the command of our own major General Shehu Abdulkadir.

In post Arab spring crisis and civil war in Libya when the leadership in Africa and the Africa Union were in total disarray, with no clear path to follow, it was Nigeria's timely intervention in the recognition of the then Transitional National Council (TNC) that showed the way for other African countries to follow. Within a few days of Nigeria's announcement, majority of Member States of the Africa Union, hitherto sitting on the fence, followed our lead. The commitment to principle of defending democracy informed Nigeria's timely decision to support the aspiration of the Libyan people for freedom and democracy. Nigeria's position was dictated by our national interest and not influenced by any foreign power. The immediate result of Nigeria's action was the protection of our nationals that remained in the country during the civil war. Today, Nigeria and Libya are working together to resolve the challenges in Africa.

Strategic Partnership and Economic Diplomacy

In a bid to encourage and promote the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment into our country, Nigeria has signed bilateral agreements and MOUs with several countries in the areas of trade, technological cooperation, ICT, education, culture/tourism, etc. The increased exchange of high level visits between Nigeria and other countries of the world have enhanced Nigeria's bilateral cooperation with these countries. Such high level meetings have been able to attract considerable investment portfolios to the country.

The Bi-National Commission with the United States of America, Germany, Canada and South Africa continue to deepen the gains which the current Administration has made in Trade and Investment, Energy, Security, Agriculture, Good Governance, Health and Education sectors. The Bi-National Commission with Germany, signed on 2nd December, 2011, covers the areas of Power and Energy, Trade and Investment, Political Consultation and Education, Immigration and Cultural matters. Some of the projects under the German BNC relate to Power Generation, Re-forestation, Emission Control and Capacity Building for Research in Solar Power Energy for Universities. Some of these projects include: £65 Million 30 megawatts Kiri Dam, in partnership with the Adamawa State Government; £50 Million 20 Megawatts Yola Solar Power Station; £1.5 Billion 450 Megawatts Gombe Coal to Power Station; 450 Megawatts National Independent Power Project (NIPP), Geregu Power Station, Phase II in Ajaokuta, the Pilot Solar Power Plants for the Universities of Ibadan, Lagos, Sokoto and Bayelsa.

The Bi-National Commission (BNC) between Nigeria and the US has injected fresh confidence into the Nigerian economy to the extent that, Nigeria has become a new destination for US business and entrepreneurs. This has significantly increased Foreign Direct Investment from the US into Nigeria. The Commission operates under five (5) working groups, designed to cover literally all aspects of US-Nigeria relations, including assistance in capacity building, technical support, funding security collaboration and the environment. Several projects and investments are flowing into the country to create jobs for our youths. Proctor and Gamble is constructing a factory to manufacture health materials in Agbara, Ogun State, while General Electricity is investing USD 1 billion and has commenced the construction of a factory in Port Harcourt to manufacture GAS turbines to serve Nigerian and African markets.

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A foreign investment inflow of \$ US 54 million is being executed with Mexico to develop agriculture plantations for cultivation of pineapple and other crops for export to the European Union market. Our relations with other emerging markets and huge economies such as China have also been robust. Apart from the involvement of China in the development of infrastructure and construction, the country has granted a soft loan of \$500 million for the construction of a light rail in and around Abuja. A 50-bed capacity hospital, donated by China is currently under construction in Abuja.

From the foregoing, it is clear that quite a handful project has fallen into the basket in terms of foreign investment inflow into Nigeria. Thus, according to United Nations World Investment report for 2012, the FDI inflows into Nigeria reached about USD8.9bn, far higher than in previous years. The projects generated from these would create jobs for our unemployed youths and wealth for the populace. A component of the country's economic diplomacy is the involvement of the Organized Private Sector (OPS). More than ever before, the OPS is active in a number of African countries and continued to receive the active support of the Government abroad. From Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa, Kenya in East Africa and to Cameroun, Senegal, Ghana etc in Central and West Africa, the Ministry and its missions in these countries have been supporting the business and operations of Nigerian businessmen, especially financial institutions and factories.

Nigeria's International Image

Given that Abacha took over by force unnecessarily and at a time the world was gradually tilting towards liberal democracy, and given the opposition to such obvious palace coup on the Interim National Government of Chief Ernest Shonekan, Nigeria was generally hostile to most countries and became a pariah among the comity of nations. Thus, foreign policy during this period was "reactive and isolationist" (Akintola, 2007). For him, there was a need to fashion out a new foreign policy thrust for the country as the traditional position had become more or less in his estimation. Thus, he constituted a 50-member committee of every other interest group apart from career diplomats, intellectuals and experts in the field of international relations and foreign policy. This deliberate action showed his hand early enough that he did not want anything except to direct what should happen without recourse to what had been the tradition. Moreover, the regime was so brazen in disregard of diplomatic norms and showed marked disdain for finesse in relations with the diplomatic corps of other countries that left them stunned. The situation was not helped by such ignoble actions of Achaba as the unwarranted

and unjustified killing of the Ogoni activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others despite huge outcry and pleas from the international community. Such traditional allies as Britain, United States, France, Germany, Canada and South Africa and many others temporarily withdrew diplomatic representations and support for Nigeria; and “in response to the isolation from the West and its associates, Abacha turned to Asia” (Akintola, 2007). This further alienated Nigeria from dominant powers of the world as Asia did not really do much for the foreign policy objectives of Nigeria. This was the situation Nigeria found herself till Abacha died suddenly on 8th June 1998.

Abacha’s sudden death left Nigeria in the lurch of international isolationism, and thus the succeeding regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar knew better than to try any form of perpetuation of himself in power. He quickly started the process of transition to democracy, released almost all political prisoners and generally “embarked on a foreign policy of rejuvenation and attempted to redeem Nigeria’s image, most especially on the human rights front” (Akintola, 2007). Thus, his eleven-month regime could rightly be seen as an interregnum between military domination of Nigeria politics with its peculiar brand of foreign policy, and a democratic setting. Although, he had to grapple with the issue of conflict situations in the African sub-region, he chose the path of peaceful enforcement in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. His case was such that the domestic environment more or less dictated his foreign policy – he was more interested in salvaging Nigeria’s image abroad and preparing for a democratic transition to civil rule, national reconciliation, respect for the rule of law, and human rights of citizens (Badmus & Ogunmola, 2003). Thus, during his time, and given that it was short, the Abubakar administration recorded such little successes in the international community as the re-admission of Nigeria into the Commonwealth of Nations, the improvement in relations with the European Union, Canada and the United States of America that had severed diplomatic relations with Nigeria and peaceful leadership of ECOWAS.

When President Obasanjo became the winner of the 1999 election under the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), in his inaugural speech May, 1999, he stated:

“We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and the Organization of

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African Unity and other international bodies. We shall continue to honour existing agreements between Nigeria and other countries. It is our resolve to restore Nigeria fully to her previous prestigious position in the community of nations".
(Ezirim, 2008).

Nigeria's foreign policy after the successful transition to democratic governance was more of shuttle diplomacy beyond Africa embarked upon by President Obasanjo in order to win over a world that had overlooked Nigeria and would rather not have anything to do with her.

The shuttle diplomacy of the Obasanjo government ensured that some sort of economic development came the way of Nigeria, although it is arguable whether the President's globe-trotting yielded as much foreign investments as he made Nigerians believe. However, the fact was that a greater percentage of Nigeria's foreign debts were radically reduced through outright cancellation and rescheduling, foreign investments started coming into Nigeria and jobs were created and people began to feel the impact of good foreign interactions with other states in the international system. As noted by Adeniran (2008).

Nigeria has continued to earn more respect in the international community despite lingering domestic challenges. While we have experienced some security challenges locally, this has not affected the goodwill, friendship and partnerships that Nigeria continues to enjoy in the comity of nations. Indeed, we have continued to receive official delegations and visitors from all countries seeking to engage with us, to invest in Nigeria's economy and exchange views on important issues of common interest and concern. Hardly does any week pass without the visit of one high-level delegation or the other, just as we are also received and respected abroad.

As a testimony to Nigeria's strategic importance in the comity of nations, President Jonathan has undertaken several trips to many countries abroad, where he was received very warmly by his hosts and the resident Nigerian community in those countries. It is encouraging that, in the past two years, a good number of countries have invited President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, to undertake State, Official or Working visits to their countries. The President has, in turn played host to Heads of State and Government and delegations from all over the world including high-level visits by Prime Minister of Britain, the German Chancellor, the President of Brazil, Indonesia, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabi, the

Presidents of Lebanon and Poland, including the French Foreign Minister, the former US Secretary of State, to mention but a few of the Special Envoys and Emissaries from various countries. On 15th April 2013, the South African President Mr. Jacob Zuma was expected in Abuja to consult with President Jonathan. This is a clear illustration of the goodwill towards our country and the desire of other countries to engage Nigeria in recognition of her strategic place and role in world affairs.

One of the major challenges facing Nigeria's foreign policy is the plight of Nigerians in prisons abroad. Over 9,000 Nigerians are in various prisons all over the world, the highest number of 752 being recorded in the UK. Most of them are concentrated in the Asia-Pacific with many of them on death row. Given these alarming numbers and the imperative need to find creative solutions to the plight of these Nigerians. Regional Seminars of Nigerian Heads of Missions in six centres was convened. The Seminar for the Asia-Pacific region took place from 4 – 5 April.

At the end of the Seminar, the Heads of Mission made far-reaching recommendations, including the need to raise awareness in Nigeria on the dangers and perils of irregular migration as well as involvement in transitional crimes, especially drug trafficking. In the immediate term, the Missions have been directed to explore the conclusion of Prisoner Exchange Agreements with the various countries, to ensure that those prisoners in foreign jails are repatriated home in dignity to complete their jail terms.

Citizen Diplomacy

Citizen diplomacy is the foreign policy thrust that has been embarked upon since the advent of democratic governance in 1999. It was spearheaded by President Olusegun Obasanjo and has been in place since then through the administrations of Musa Yar' Adua and Jonathan Goodluck. Basically, citizen diplomacy contends that the citizens, that is, Nigerians are the centre piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Commenting on what the concept is all about, Ozoemenam Mbachu, posits that "the basic thrust revolve around concern for the basic needs, human rights and socio-economic welfare of Nigerian citizens in conducting bilateral and multilateral engagements with other countries.

Through the instrumentality of the citizen diplomacy, it is envisaged that Nigeria will harness the resources and potentials of her diaspora, mainstream the doctrine

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of reciprocity and create an enabling environment for her citizens to prosper and engage in broad issues of human importance at both the national and international levels. In the event too, it will enhance Nigeria's export portfolio and attract foreign direct investments.

Nigeria and New Global Challenges

It is also remarkable that with the emergence of new global challenges, Nigeria has been in the forefront of addressing such issues as international terrorism, climate change, irregular migration, human and drug trafficking and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Some of these complex issues that constitute security challenges have invariably posed serious threats to peace and security in Africa, particularly in our sub-region. While ongoing efforts are beginning to yield the desired results, Nigeria will not relent in its commitment to addressing this menace. Terrorism is an international phenomenon, gravely threatening national, regional and international peace and stability. The armed forces are also tackling the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and theft of our oil. Foreign envoys have been informed and warned that any foreign ship caught will be arrested and the crew will face prosecution in our law courts. We require the full cooperation, support and partnerships of all our law courts. We require the full cooperation, support and partnerships of all our friendly countries. (Ashiru, 2013).

Enhancing Nigeria's Representation and Visibility in International Organizations

Since President Jonathan's assumption of office in May 2011, Nigeria has maintained a strong stand in Africa. Following the formation of the AU about 11 years ago, Nigeria has not been involved in decision making at the highest level of governance in the Organization, in spite of our huge yearly contribution to the Organization. We tried three times, between 2003 and 2011 to secure one of the posts of Commissioners reserved for our sub-region, but failed. However, Nigeria won the post of Commissioner for Political Affairs in hotly contested election in July 2012. This was indeed a huge success for Nigeria's diplomacy. We broke the unfortunate chain of losing elections at the continental level and today, Nigeria's visibility at the AU is no longer in doubt.

At the United Nations and other world bodies, Nigeria has since the advent of this government, maintained a robust presence. In the past, there were criticisms that Nigerian nationals were not fully represented at various International bodies and Organizations as these compatriots will bear the national torch and advance Nigeria's interest in those organizations. Since we came on board at the Foreign

Ministry, we have secured 12 international positions to which Nigeria and Nigerians have been elected in multilateral organizations. There was no time in the history of our foreign policy that we have achieved so much within a short period of two years. These successes point to the effectiveness of our foreign policy machinery, the professionalism and the dedication of our diplomats deployed to ensure these election victories. We will therefore continue to maintain a robust foreign policy and ensure Nigeria's leadership and visibility, not just in ECOWAS but in Africa as a whole. (Atah, 2001).

We have since launched our bid for election into the UN Security Council in the non-permanent seat category for the period 2014 – 2015. We have worked hard and have received the endorsement of ECOWAS Heads of State and governments. We expect to receive the endorsement of the AU at the next summit in May 2013. Our election to this position in October 2013 was a befitting gift to Nigeria in the year of the centenary celebration of our existence as a corporate entity. It will also be the first time that Nigeria will return to the Security Council after only two years gap.

Conclusion

We have demonstrated that since independence to date, although there have been conceptual and doctrinal transitions in Nigeria foreign policy, in reality they are not grounded in deep philosophical thought, visionary imagination and broad based considerations of long lasting benefits to the national interests. Basically, they are borne out of pragmatic exigencies, political faddism, conceptual elegance and regime identity. As a result, Nigeria's foreign policy fifty-one years down the road can be summed up to be change and continuity, motion without movement, dynamism without surge. What Nigeria need is a foreign policy that will contain the crisis of underdevelopment, the challenges of poverty, leadership, political development, and a host of other maladies and launch her as a modern state in the twenty-first century in order to realize her full potentials and cravings for continental and global leadership.

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