

Re-Thinking Nigeria's Foreign Policy Beyond "Big Brotherism" Towards Economic Diplomacy

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Abstract

Nigeria's leadership role within the West-African sub-region and on the continent of Africa is incontestable given her tremendous and unparallel financial and human capital contributions to the freedom, peace and stability of brother and sister nations in Africa. Its favourable geography, population and immense natural resources naturally destined for the country to play leadership role on the continent of Africa and this it has done by constantly according special attention to the plight of its brothers and sisters in Africa. However, Nigeria's leadership is yet to come to terms with the obvious that economic interests matter even when peace, freedom, sovereignty and security issues seem paramount. Nigeria's foreign policy is conducted on the pedestal of "Big Brotherism" without concomitant and lucidly wrapped economic agenda that benefits the people and government of Nigeria. This paper examines the logic and reasonability of Nigeria's tremendous human and material contributions to the political stability of other African states within the context of pan-Africanism without concrete strategy for economic gains to the people and government of Nigeria. The methodology of the study is mainly descriptive and analytical drawing data largely from documented materials.

Key words: Nigeria; Foreign policy; Big brotherism; National interest; Economic diplomacy

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INTRODUCTION

In the international system, nation states coexist, compete and cooperate in the exploitation and distribution of their natural resources. These states also have various capabilities and resources which are usually transferred or shared amongst nation states. In the process of such transference or sharing, international relations/cooperation as well as social and cultural relationships are enhanced. Nigeria's involvement in international relations started as a colonial territory and even the earliest recorded history of the regions now known as Nigeria interacted with the outside world in trade and through other social relations. Great empires like Benin Kingdom, Oyo Empire, Kanem-Borno as well as the coastal kingdoms had various commercial, economic and social relations with other nation-states. After the attainment of independence, Nigeria's relation with other states was entirely in its hands to decide in terms of which nations in the world we wanted to associate with on matters of trade, technical support, financial aid and in other forms of relations generally.

Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has always seen itself as a major power in Africa due largely to its abundance of human and natural resources, and this has influenced its decision of making Africa the centre piece of its foreign policies (Bello-Imam, 2010). This suggests that Nigeria's foreign policy interests are best realised within the African continent as a platform for launching itself into global reckoning and remain a force in international affairs. Nigeria is also the preponderant political leader of the West African sub-region owing to its

natural resource endowments and demographic statistics. This reflected in Nigeria being the founding force behind the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with enormous responsibilities. The impact of Nigeria in other organizations including the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Organizations (UNO) especially on issues of peace and stability on the African continent and other parts of the globe is manifestly visible. Remarkably, Nigeria has participated in peacekeeping operations in many African countries including Angola, Somalia, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Mali, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau (Adeniyi, 2015). It also actively participated in waging war against Apartheid regime in South Africa and the subsequent liberation of the country. It has equally deployed unparalleled political diplomatic resources in the resolution of disputes in Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo while its efforts in the promotion of cooperation with other African nations in all fields of human endeavour through economic exchanges and regional integration of members are outstanding. This has been achieved through the deployment of more Technical Aide Corps (TAC) volunteers whose services have been in high demand by other countries to assist in the areas of their manpower needs (Okunnu, 2010). These include but not limited to medical and paramedical officials, judicial officers, military and civilian personnel. Within the context of these souring records of Nigeria's pan-Africanist efforts, the domestic environment in terms of security and economic growth remains unattractive because the foreign policy objectives projected by the Nigerian state are not situated within any lucidly defined national interest.

Beyond the need to maintain stability on the African continent as a preventive measure in securing the territory of the Nigerian state, economic interest should underscore such effort because economic goals underline diplomatic manoeuvres of any nation desirous of development (Tull, 2006). This paper therefore examines Nigeria's efforts at promoting peace and stability on the African continent without concomitant economic interest in and penetration of the economies of benefiting states. This economic diplomatic weakness is rooted in the absence of lucidly articulated national interest guiding Nigeria's foreign policy. In addition to the introduction, the paper has five sections. Section two that follows the introduction briefly discusses key concepts, section three attempts an overview of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence while section four explores Nigeria's human and capital contributions to the stability of Africa. Section five examines China's economic diplomacy in Africa and the lessons for Nigeria while chapter six concludes the study.

1. CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

Without doubt, foreign policy like any other concept in the social sciences has suffered from definitional problem.

This is due majorly to the differences among scholars on the theoretical foundations that underline the imperatives of foreign policy. Though, there are differences in the theoretical orientation of scholars on foreign policy, there is no disagreement on the notion that foreign policy remains guidelines that shape the relationship of one nation with another. In other words, foreign policy is a body of decisions formulated to serve as the guiding principles of a nation-state in its interaction with other nation-states. Unlike other domestic policies, it consists of the fundamental principles on the basis of which a nation-state relates with other nation-states. However, each nation-state's interaction is largely influenced by its domestic scene. Miller (1981) defined foreign policy as presumably something less than the sum of all policies which has an effect on a national government's relations with other national governments. Frankel (1975) describes foreign policy as consisting of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and another. It is important to mention that such relations must clearly be reflective of the national interest consideration of the states (Idachaba, 2009). It is in this sense that Akinboye (1999) described foreign policy as the instrumentality by which states influence or seek to influence the external world and to attain objectives that are in consonance with their perceived national interest. Foreign policy is a result-oriented process (Akinoyemi, 2004) thus it is the strategy or planned course of action developed by the decision makers of a state vis-a-vis other states or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals, defined in terms of the national interest. For the purpose of this paper, we chose to describe foreign policy as an instrument adopted by states to exploit the international arena in achieving their national interest and project their image on the global stage through interactions with other states.

Interestingly, the central theme in foreign policy is economic diplomacy which principally is facilitated by economic globalization. This reflects intensified activity that targets the realization and protection of economic priorities and interests (Sanders, 1996). Importantly, these interests should prompt the penetration of other countries with services, labour and investments that in return help to strengthen domestic economy thereby increasing the prosperity of the people since "butter and bread" issues are the principal objectives for growth and prosperity of people (Pogson, 2011, p.43). Economic diplomacy therefore focuses on embarking on external economic policy that is considered much of direct benefit to the well-being of the people (Pogson, 2011, p.42). Economic diplomacy thus speaks to the promotion and protection of nation's interests in the sphere of economic relations. The role of the state in this regard and diplomacy as a tool remains highly relevant. As emphasised by Potter (2004, p.55), diplomacy has always been concerned with trade therefore economic and trade diplomacy encompasses

international negotiations on market access. Thus, commerce remains an important motivation for reaching out to other foreign entities as done in the ancient days of relations between kingdoms and principalities (Pogoso, 2011, p.43). Commercial diplomacy relates to the application of the tools of diplomacy to help bring about specific commercial gains through promoting exports, attracting inward investment and preserving outward investment opportunities, and encouraging the benefits of technology transfer (Potter, 2004, p.55). This involves trading policies, which are essentially influenced by politics. Fordham (1998) noted that powerful states with imperial ambitions have historically treated the preservation of access to particular sites for trade and investment as vital national interests, securing them with military means. If properly articulated, commercial diplomacy would have availed Nigeria in its quest to be big brother to its African brothers and sisters through the provision of financial, military, human and technological assistance to troubled countries, an opportunity to exploit these comparative advantages and capitalize on the international opportunities created by economic diplomacy and the evolution of markets to launch its hegemony in a way that transforms the domestic economy and places higher values on Nigerian goods and services in the competitive global market. What comes to mind here is how the United States used World War II to establish an international system open to US trade and investment, one where American power predominates. However, the pattern of support to Nigeria's foreign policy can simply be explained in terms of peace and security imperatives that are not accompanied by economic interest and gains.

Nigeria's involvement in international relations especially on the African continent has been conducted on the platform of "big brotherism" which is bolstered by its potentials for fast economic development after independence. These potentials are also greatly founded on the enormous human and natural resource endowment of the nation. Nigeria's big brother foreign policy and diplomacy in Africa is thus predicated on the aspiration of becoming Africa's political and economic powerhouse sustained by its control of huge natural resources. As noted by Ebohon and Isike (2004, p.11), the foreign policy of any nation is determined by a number of factors chief among which include its economy, geography and population and Nigeria is quite blessed with a combination of these factors. This inadvertently, gives Nigeria an assertive and adventurous big-brother diplomacy profile in West Africa (Ebohon & Isike, 2004, p.13). The big-brother posture of Nigeria on the African continent logically derives from the incontrovertible fact that successive Nigerian governments have consistently accorded special attention to the plight and conditions of her brothers and sisters in Africa as reflected in the basic principles guiding her foreign policy (Okunnu, 2010). A review of Nigeria's human capital and natural resources endowment are captured thus:

Nigeria, in addition to its huge population is endowed with significant agricultural, marine and forest resources. Its multiple vegetation zones, plentiful rain, surface water and underground water resources, and moderate climate allow for production of diverse food and cash crops.... Oil and gas, by value, are the most important minerals. They are exploited and produced in the Niger-Delta basin and off-shore on the continental shelf and in the deep sea of the territorial waters. Nevertheless, there are significant non-oil mineral deposits which have been identified and evaluated: coal, iron ore, gypsum, phosphate, limestone, marble, columbite, barite and gold. (Ebohon & Isike 2004, p.10)

The submission of an observer aptly lends credence to the above staggering human and economic profile of Nigeria thus:

No doubt, Nigeria is potentially Africa's largest economy. Every year, the country produces over 200,000 graduates of tertiary institutions (including 93 universities both public and private ones); has the sixth largest gas reserves in the world; tenth largest oil producer with abundant but untapped natural resources-gold, limestone among others and with 60% of its arable land lying fallow. (Ojo, 2009, p.209)

The economic, geographical and population attributes of Nigeria naturally destined her to play leadership roles in the affairs of the African continent. This leadership role, Nigeria has been playing for decades notwithstanding the financial, social, political and diplomatic challenges that come with it (Okunnu, 2010).

2. OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and principles at independence according to Lamido (2002) consist of the following: The protection of the sovereign and territorial integrity of the Nigerian state; the promotion of economic and social well-being of Nigerians; the enhancement of Nigeria's image and status in the World at large; the promotion of unity as well as the total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of our country and Africa; the promotion of the rights of the black people and others under colonial domination; the promotion of international cooperation, conducive to the consolidation of world peace and security; mutual respect and friendship among all peoples among the state; redressing the imbalance in the international power structures that has tended to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of developing countries; the promotion of world Peace based on the principles of freedom, mutual respect and equality of all persons of the world.

However, the Nigerian government pursued a modest policy which was evident in Balewa's decision to uphold the principles inscribed in the Organisation of African Unity 1963 charter which provides for: non-interference, legal equality of states and boundary inviolability (Ogunbadejo, 1979, 1980). Regionally, Nigeria was overshadowed by Ghana, governed by the charismatic president, Kwame Nkrumah (Ihonvbere, 1991). Nigeria

was also trying to resist French encirclement since all of Nigeria's geographic neighbours are francophone states, which were strongly influenced by their former metropole, even after they achieved formal independence. Nigeria's efforts to secure local influence were limited to the creation of cooperative multilateral governing bodies, such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the River Niger Commission (Aluko, 1973).

Increased efforts to achieve a more prominent regional leadership role foundered during the civil war (1967-1970). In addition to being challenged by violent domestic separatists, the Nigerian state was actively opposed by France, the Côte d'Ivoire, Portugal and South Africa. Of course, the civil war revealed the dangers of continued European involvement on the continent, as well as the importance of securing sub-regional allies. The Federal Government, which, in spite of Nigeria's nominally non-aligned status, had previously demonstrated a solidly pro-western orientation, now began to court more active engagement with the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and China (Gambari, 1975). Post war leaders also went to greater lengths to reduce France's local influence and to reconcile with other states in the sub-region, including civil war enemies, such as Côte d'Ivoire, and earlier rivals, like Ghana (Ihonvbere, 1991). Nigeria's need to be less isolated was obvious. Obviously, good neighbourliness had become a security concern, as well as a normative principle (Aluko, 1981). However, a more discrete approach would have been appreciated.

Efforts to reconcile with geographic neighbours and achieve a sub-regional leadership role were facilitated by Nigeria's oil boom. Nigeria struck oil in 1956, near the inland city of Oloibiri. This discovery was soon augmented by large finds in the Delta region. By 1973, Nigeria was the world's ninth largest oil exporter (Aluko, 1973). The petroleum price increases of the early 1970s and the Arab energy embargo of 1973 generated an enormous rise in Nigerian state revenue. At the same time, Nigeria was attracting increased foreign direct investment. The Federal Government used this new income to pursue a sub-regional foreign policy amidst domestic economic problems. Nigeria provided financial assistance to its neighbours, with the aim of weaning them off dependence on France. In 1974, Nigeria announced that it would sell oil to its energy-poor neighbours at concessionary prices (Aluko, 1981).

Additionally, Nigeria used regional economic integration as a means of advancing its leadership and reducing local French influence. The Head of State, General Gowon (1966-1975) promoted bilateral trading pacts, the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) economic bodies, and the establishment of a new international institution for regional integration: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Local francophone states initially hesitated to participate in a Nigerian-led organization. However, Gowon

decided to move forward with the scheme by starting with Anglophone states like Togo. He gained greater francophone confidence by leading negotiations for the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries to gain observer status in the European Economic Community (EEC) (DeLancy, 1983; Abegunrin, 2003). The resultant Lomé Convention was signed on February 28, 1975. ECOWAS came into existence three months later.

On July 29, 1975, General Gowon was overthrown in a military coup. His two successors, Murtala Mohammed (1975-76) and Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979) advanced a more assertive, activist foreign policy. They were less interested in Nigeria's immediate geographic neighbours and less devoted to ECOWAS and the OAU. Instead, Murtala and Obasanjo implemented a more militant pan-African foreign policy that, in particular, aimed to challenge the minority rule regimes of Southern Africa (Aluko, 1976). Nigeria intervened in the Angolan civil war, supporting the MPLA against the US-supported FNLA and UNITA (Abegunrin, 2003). In 1976, Nigeria and some other African leaders encouraged other African states to boycott the Montreal Olympic Games in order to protest New Zealand's interactions with apartheid South Africa (DeLancy, 1983). In 1978, the state gained a rotating seat in the United Nations Security Council, giving it another platform for its anti-apartheid sentiment (Bach, 1983).

Under the democratically elected President Shagari (1979-1983), oil revenue peaked and then dramatically declined (Shaw, 1987). In January 1983, the Nigerian government responded to the economic downturn by expelling illegal immigrants. This was the state's "worst international crisis since the civil war" (Abegunrin, 2003). It antagonized Nigeria's neighbours and further undermined sub-regional integration (Gambari, 1989). This pattern continued under Shagari's successor, Buhari (1983-1985). He began his military rule with overtures to Nigeria's neighbours. However, after further religious riots in Yola in 1984, he closed the state's boundaries as a means of containing international migration (Gambari, 1989). The protectionist move was lambasted within the sub-region. As at April 1986 All Nigeria Conference on Foreign Policy (the Kuru Conference), participants averred that they wished to maintain a sub-regional leadership role by promoting development and economic integration, supporting the OAU, and continuing to reduce France's local influence (Akindele & Ate, 1986). However, given the state's dependence on petroleum revenue, as oil prices continued to decline, Nigerian leaders possessed limited means of achieving these foreign policy goals. From 1986 to 1988, Babangida's new government was forced to respond to the economic crisis by implementing a structural adjustment program (Sesay & Ukeje, 1997).

By the end of 1980s, retrenchment enabled Nigeria to regain a bit of its prior regional standing. In 1990, Nigeria led West Africa's Anglophone states in establishing

ECOMOG (the ECOWAS Monitoring Group), which intervened in Liberia following the overthrow of leader Samuel Doe. The move was partly personal because Doe and Babangida were friends with the aim of preventing outside military forces from intervening in the region (Abegunrin, 2003; Yoroms, 1993). This effort was facilitated by a secular decline in French engagement in the area that had occurred by 1990 (Adebajo, 2000). Nonetheless, sub-regional concerns arose over Nigeria's apparent willingness to violate its longstanding principle of non-interference in other African states' internal affairs. Moreover, some West African countries suspected that Nigeria was taking advantage of the Liberian conflict to advance a local "Pax Nigeriana" (Saliu, 2000; Yoroms, 1993). Mistrust was exacerbated by Babangida's domestic political ruthlessness and the repeated postponements of Nigeria's transition back to civilian rule (Sesay & Ukeje, 1997).

Nigeria's international reputation degraded further following a major electoral controversy in 1993. After the June 12 victory of popular presidential candidate Moshood Abiola, Babangida annulled the national election results. Nigerians erupted in protest and the EU and US threatened sanctions. These responses were only partially effective. Although Babangida stepped aside from office, democracy was not restored. Following a brief period of interim governance by Ernest Shonekan, Sani Abacha seized power in another military coup. A month after the regime change, Abacha rattled the region by invading the Bakassi Peninsula, a purportedly oil-rich territory disputed with Cameroon. In March 1995, Abacha accused a large swath of the policy elite of a coup plot. The courts handed down over thirty death sentences. Following international condemnation and threats of increased sanctions, these were reduced to prison terms (Mahmud, 2001). However, Abacha's clemency was short-lived. In November 1995, he executed nine leaders of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), including Ken Saro Wiwa. The US and EU responded to the new provocation by imposing broad sanctions. However, US sanctions did not include oil (Abegunrin, 2003; Mahmud, 2001). This omission weakened the effectiveness of external calls for democratization (Sesay & Ukeje, 1997). In addition, Abacha was somewhat successful in spinning the sanctions locally as an anti-imperial struggle (Mahmud, 2001). Internationally, Nigeria's reputation was marginally rehabilitated in 1998, when Abacha initiated an ECOMOG intervention to restore democracy in Sierra Leone. The Great Powers' failure to intervene effectively in Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990s had increased the attraction of regional peacekeeping efforts, particularly since, after the end of the Cold War, there was little strategic reason for superpower engagement in the region (Adebajo & Landsberg, 2003). Domestically, however, Abacha's democratizing intervention was condemned for its hypocrisy and expense (Adebajo, 2000).

Nigeria's return to democratic rule was eventually facilitated by Abacha's death in office in 1998. His successor, Abubakar, oversaw a transitional government before former military leader, Obasanjo again assumed political leadership through a popular election. Obasanjo's foreign policy priority was to restore Nigeria's international reputation. Soon after he took power, Nigeria was readmitted to the Commonwealth of Nations. Sanctions were lifted. In 1999, Nigeria began pulling out of Sierra Leone, to cut costs and redirect resources to the Niger Delta, where the local security situation had deteriorated (Adebajo, 2000). In the West African sub-region, Obasanjo presented himself as a peacekeeper. When the International Court of Justice ruled in 2002 that the contested Bakassi Peninsula belonged to Cameroon, Obasanjo contained intense Nigerian opposition to the verdict and initiated implementation efforts (Meierding, 2010). Obasanjo also reiterated Nigeria's support for ECOWAS and his desire to pursue more extensive regional integration (Kaplan, 2006).

Obasanjo's affection for economic integration and international institutions attracted some domestic criticism (Adebajo & Landsberg, 2003). His continued engagement of Nigerian troops in multilateral peacekeeping operations in areas such as the Sudan also generated internal resistance. Yar'Adua's assumption to office increased Nigeria's rank as high on international corruption indexes. A cease-fire has been brokered with the Niger-Delta insurgents, but inter-confessional instability had increased in the north. Most recently, Nigeria has appeared on international terrorists watch lists, in the wake of the thwarted 2009 "Christmas Day bombing" in Detroit. Nonetheless, the state's international reputation has improved significantly since 1999, in part because of the successful democratic power transitions. Since Nigeria started its big brother role, it has committed a quantum of its human and material resources in that direction without concrete attempts at using such opportunities to create economic space for the state and its people outside the shores of Nigeria.

3. NIGERIA'S FINANCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS AS 'BIG BROTHER' ACTS?

Clearly, successive governments since Balewa have reaffirmed Nigeria's basic commonwealth to the eradication of apartheid and the struggle against white minority domination in Southern Africa as one of the fundamental tenets of Nigeria's foreign policy after independence. Another area which the nation's foreign policy has witnessed continuity is in the settlement of disputes between countries in Africa and participation in peacekeeping missions within the African continent (Ade-Ibijola, 2013). Nigeria played leading roles in the

resolution of crisis in countries like Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Guinea Bissau, Sudan to mention a few since independence. Nigeria in her bid to ensure peace on the continent and the world at large has spent a colossal \$10 billion and lost over 2,000 soldiers in the process. The country has sustained assistance to countries in Africa since its emergence as an independent state. Okunnu (2010) and Adeniyi (2015) summarized the contributions of Nigeria on the continent of Africa thus:

- (a) Nigeria's participation in UN peacekeeping operation dated back to 1960 when it provided UN peacekeepers to Congo (ONUC) from 1960-1964. Since then, the country has not looked back as an active participant in UN peacekeeping missions. Currently, Nigeria is one of the largest UN contributing countries with military and civilian personnel deployed in ten UN peacekeeping operations and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).
- (b) Nigeria deployed the first set of Individual Police Officers (IPOs) in Africa in ONUC in 1960.
- (c) Outside UN missions, Nigeria has played pivotal roles in Africa and the West African sub-region. Regarded as the preponderant power in West Africa, Nigeria has been the main provider of military and other resources for ECOWAS peace operations to the tune of US\$8 billion in its various missions in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone. During the peak of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars in the 1990s, Nigeria provided over 70% of ECOMOG's military and civilian personnel as well as logistical support.
- (d) In 2003, Nigeria deployed 1,500 troops to the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) and a medical and signal team to the ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire in 2003 (ECOMICI).
- (e) In 2004, Nigeria deployed 1,500 troops to Darfur as part of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS).
- (f) Recently, Nigeria has provided 1,200 troops to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), and 200 Police officers to AMISOM.
- (g) The pioneer Formed Police Unit (FPU) of 120 officers was deployed by Nigeria in Liberia in 2004.

Sadly, Nigeria often becomes the most affected donor-state in AU or ECOWAS-led peace operations due to the financial constraints of these organizations (Adeniyi, 2015) and more worrisome, Nigeria had on many occasions shouldered extensive monetary requirements for ECOMOG's operation when other participating countries threatened to pull out due to lack of funds. However, since independence, Nigeria's foreign policy lacks the most important ingredient of economic diplomacy which has partly contributed to the impoverishment

of the nation itself. The absence of a national strategic framework means that Nigeria's participation in peace support operations, given the fact that the nation is the fourth largest contributor of troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions across the world (Oyinlola, 2010; Adeniyi, 2015), is not driven by economic interest. Her foreign policy is deficient on this basis because Nigeria has refused to understand the need to secure concrete gains that would be commensurate with her enormous sacrifices on the international scene. Nigeria with her poor economic status has repeatedly failed to use its massive investments in African peace support operations to its advantage. This is a fundamental deficiency in her foreign policy that managers of Nigeria's external relations are still struggling to grapple with. This situation is indeed embarrassing because there is no justifiable reason why "outside" problems should take priority over that of the "inside". For a nation whose internal security has rapidly degenerated through catalogues of ethno-religious clashes, armed robbery, kidnapping and lately terrorism, exacerbated by a high level of poverty and unemployment, it defiles logic and reason to be preoccupied with restoring peace in other climes as doing this amounts to Nigeria giving what she does not possess or enjoy. Rather, it paints a picture of pursuing a big brother foreign policy, a show-off of its immense physical and human resources.

Though, Nigeria is not in a state of war but it cannot be ascertained that the nation is enjoying peace. Nigeria has the fourth largest contingent in the United Nations Peacekeeping operations since 1960 having committed 250,000 men and women losing 2,000 troops in the process and expending over 10 billion US dollars. Presently, Nigeria has more than 17, 000 troops serving under the world body. Regrettably, the nation's contribution so far has not been anchored on solid economic diplomacy that could ensure rewards for fortunes invested. It seems Nigeria, been the most populous black nation on earth, feels fulfilled being perceived as the "giant of Africa" and "potential leader" of black race, arguably a self bestowed title. Nigerian leaders have seen issues of peace keeping as routine humanitarian assistance to other countries. It seems to have been paying lip service to its economic diplomacy initiated since 1988. The policy was to ensure adequate economic reward for government's goal of economic revival and sustainable development. It is regrettable however that economic gain from Nigeria's foreign policy has been non-existent over the years.

As mentioned earlier, Nigeria played a critical role in restoring peace to war-ravaged countries such as Liberia and Sierra-Leone after years of civil wars. It is also incontrovertible that Nigeria was at the forefront for the liberation of South Africa from the shackles of apartheid as well as playing crucial roles in ensuring countries like Angola Rhodesia were brought to a state of independence. Though, the foregoing represents one of the goals of Nigeria foreign policy which is to ensure

the freedom of countries under the yoke of colonialism, the question now is; how many of these countries that benefited from Nigeria's rare generosity appreciate the nation's sacrifices? The case of South-Africa readily comes to mind. As stated earlier, Nigeria stood for South Africa when it mattered most, yet Nigerians living in South Africa have been victims of xenophobic attacks in recent years, the worst being 2008 and 2015. The flaws in Nigeria's foreign policy are further exposed with the emergence of South-African business interest including MTN, DSTV, SHOPRITE AND STANDARD BANK (Ade-Ibijola, 2013) dominating the Nigerian economic landscape especially in the banking, entertainment and telecom industries. The reverse should have been the case.

This development is made possible because Nigerian leaders had not deemed it necessary to protect the nation's economic interest by consciously navigating economic opportunities in assisted countries. A staunch economic diplomatic relations accompanying financial and human capital contributions to peace and stability in crises-ravaged countries within the West-African sub-region and the African continent in general would have ripped off positively on Nigeria's deteriorating economy that is dependent, disarticulated and peripherally integrated into the world capitalist economy. If the likes of South African originated companies mentioned above are recording high sales in Nigeria with huge profit expropriated back home, yet Nigerians living in South Africa are still been treated with disdain, then there is misuse of diplomatic instrument on the part of managers of Nigeria's foreign policy. Due to its skilled economic diplomatic relations, South Africa is for many years the largest economy on the continent of Africa. Interestingly, South Africa has been able to use her multinationals to her advantage and this was a nation Nigeria fought for tirelessly. In 2012, South African immigration authorities deported more than one hundred Nigerians on a trivial issue of not possessing the yellow card vaccination certificate, a situation that led to diplomatic row between Abuja and Pretoria. The ugly development provoked some prominent Nigerians including Federal legislators to institute stiff actions against South Africa. In fact, some Senators called for the withdrawal of operating license from the MTN and immediate closure of Nigerian High Commission in South Africa. The argument suffice that there are Nigerian companies that can take over from them. The MTN makes far more profit in Nigeria than in her home country. The sanction theory expressly underscores Akinyemi's (2004) viewpoint when he noted that:

Countries in Africa should understand that they need Nigeria more than we need them ... Nigeria's foreign policy have been marred by fellow African countries that voted against us on the international scene. We have got to have a foreign policy, which penalizes countries that vote against us"

The above submission clearly indicates that there is absence of the needed impetus for economic benefits

in Nigeria's foreign policy and this, the country has suffered on many occasions. This is because countries that have benefitted from Nigeria's "big brother" or father "Christmas" foreign policy often emerge to work against Nigeria's interests in global politics when it mattered most. As earlier noted, Nigeria played a lead role in restoring peace to countries such as Liberia and Sierra -Leone after years of civil wars, this adventure cost Nigeria billion of US dollars. However, since these countries return to the path of peace, nations that did not undertake such sacrifices have been busy exploring economic opportunities. Economies of these nations have been dominated by France, Indian, China and Taiwan. If Nigeria had not expended blood and money in these countries to bring peace which they now enjoy, would they have had the opportunity to reap where they never sowed? If one may ask, are they to be blamed? Reasonably, the blame solely lies on the table of Nigeria's leadership for not making the most benefits out of the situation created by socio-political crises in assisted countries.

Oyinlola (2010) emphasized that Nigeria has spent 10billion US dollars on the promotion of peace and stability and the eradication of every form of colonialism on the African continent since independence. He however lamented that it would have been more profitable to humanity if such funds were channelled to human and societal development. Arising from this position, it is obvious that Nigeria has got her priorities wrong. Otherwise, how does one explain that a country without peace like Nigeria could spend such money on peacekeeping in other nations? Nigeria is a nation where more than two third of the population live below one \$1 dollar per day, it is better imagined what 10billion dollars would have done in tackling socio-economic challenges. "The promotion and protection of the economic wellbeing of Nigerians" as stipulated in Nigeria's foreign policy statement which ought to be paramount in the mind of the leadership has been relegated to the detriment of Nigerians. For instance, 1,000 Nigerian fatalities were recorded during Nigeria's intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leonean crises that lasted for eleven years. The intervention also cost the national treasury billions of dollars (Vogts & Aminu, 1996). Nigeria must re-prioritize in her foreign policy conducts by putting in place diplomatic machinery that would ensure adequate economic rewards while still participating in maintaining peace across the globe because economic interests matter even when peace, freedom, sovereignty and security issues seem paramount.

4. CHINA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA: LESSONS FOR NIGERIA

Sino-Africa's Socio-economic and political relations is a testament to the remarkable transformation of China's

foreign policy which began in the early 1990s. This relationship means that China is deeply involved on the African continent in mutually benefiting arrangements which see China providing financial and technical aid to African countries while in return; it penetrates African economies for raw materials for its growing industries and market for its products. This has significantly improved China's domestic economy, competing strongly for space in the global arena in the United States. China's foreign policy as a whole is by and large considered to be more dynamic, constructive, flexible and self-confident than was the case during the 1970s and 1980s. China's engagement with African countries clearly indicates that it is assimilating into the international system (Brzezinski & Mearshelmer, 2005, p.46). According to Tull (2006, p.462), China's interactions with African states have manifested in the forms of its support for fairer global trade; support for an enlarged Security Council to accommodate African representatives; support for Africa's various reform-oriented institutions such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the building of new African Union complex in Addis Ababa. Also, its increasing involvement in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa has been substantial. For instance, in 2004, 1,400 Chinese participated in nine UN missions on the African continent while 558 troops were sent to war-torn Liberia after the incoming Liberian government of 2003 terminated its diplomatic relations with Taiwan. China's robust economic diplomacy in Africa also included the cancellation of the bilateral debts with 31 African countries totalling \$1.27billion while 44% of its widely spread overall assistance to developing countries went to Africa in 2002 (Tull, 2006, p.463). Significantly, economic transactions underscore China most powerful evidence of increasing interests in the African continent as aptly noted by Tull (2006, pp.464-469) thus:

- (a) Between 1989 and 1997, Chinese African bilateral trade volume grew by 430%.
- (b) In 2003, China was the second biggest exporter of goods (11%) to the member states of ECOWAS and in particular Nigeria, thus narrowing the gap with ECOWAS leading supplier, France.
- (c) bilateral trade volume reached \$24bn in 2004.
- (d) In 2004, China was reported to have oil stakes in as many as 11 African states.
- (e) In 2004, state-owned China Eximbank released a \$2bn loan package to Angola in exchange for 10,000 barrels a day of oil. The deal was of mutual benefit. While it enabled the Angolan regime to circumvent donor pressure for increased fiscal transparency, it will strengthen the Chinese foothold in the Angolan oil economy.
- (f) In the first ten months of 2005, Chinese-African trade grew by 39% to \$32.17bn and as a result, China overtook the UK as Africa's third most

important trading partner in 2005 after the US and France.

- (g) 700 Chinese enterprises with a total investment of about \$1.5bn are operating in Africa as in 2005.
- (h) In January 2006, China's offshore oil producer, GNOOC agreed to pay \$2.3bn for a 45% stake in a Nigerian oil and gas field, its largest ever overseas acquisition.

Relatedly, Alden & Davies (2006) provided a staggering profile of Chinese operations in Africa which signifies further benefits of Beijing's economic diplomatic relations with African states and their leaders:

In pursuit of China's broader global ambitions, 180 companies have been designated by the state to benefit from preferential finance, tax concessions and political backing to go "global" and become true multinationals. They are involved in mining and energy industries. In the extractive industries are Sinopec, CNOOC and China Minmetals corp. Huawei Technologies, ZTE Corporation, Lenovo and TCL are rapidly becoming global players in the ICT sector. China's state-owned China National petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has invested in oil assets in Sudan and Chad. Another state-owned enterprise CNOOC has acquired energy interests in Morocco, Nigeria and Gabon. China already procures 28% of its oil and natural gas from Africa with Sudan and Angola leading exporters to the country. More than 800 Chinese state-owned firms are now active in the African economy.

Reviewing China's commercial role in Africa, Elizabeth Economy (Cited in Alden & Davies, 2006, p.91) noted:

Whether oil in Angola, timber in Mozambique or Copper in Zambia, China is breathing new life into these African economies. All over Africa today, you will see Chinese construction firms building railroads, highways, telecoms, enormous dams, even presidential palaces.

Observably, China has gained substantial economic ground in Africa by taking opportunity of its large and cheap labour force to massively export goods to Africa that suffers acute poverty in vast parts of its territory thus offering low-price export goods such as textile and clothing, electronic devices and machines. Instructively, Beijing has cultivated the favour of governments in oil-producing states and by extension, obtained privileged access and opportunities for its companies by dispensing soft loans and credit lines, development assistance, gifts and other incentives, arms deliveries and diplomatic backing. China thus provides a massive example for Nigeria on how nation-states take opportunities of prevailing socio-economic and political situations in other climes to launder their national interest through the instrumentality of economic diplomacy and use assistance they offer other nation-states to negotiate what they require to jumpstart or consolidate their development drive. Interestingly, Beijing's economic diplomacy extends beyond the soils of Africa and has made inroad into other regions of the Middle East and Latin America.

Arguably, only on two occasions can Nigeria be seen to have significantly benefited from her economic diplomatic drives which have improved projection on Nigeria's image and domestic economy. First was the achievement of a higher visibility for Nigeria in international organizations as a result of the successful projection of the nation's image as the *primus inter pares* on the continent of Africa under the Babaginda's regime in the early 1990s (Pogoso, 2011) and second the successful negotiation of its foreign debt with both the Paris and the London clubs under the Obasanjo civilian administration. Through the negotiation, Nigeria significantly secured debt relief and slightly came out of economic doldrums which debt burden has imposed.

5. RE-THINKING NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY: STATEMENT OF CONCLUSION

There are no doubts that Nigeria has aspirations of being hegemonic in Africa and what is required are sound, articulated economy, stable polity and professional military (Ebohon & Isike, 2004). However, despite its huge human capital and material contributions to the restoration of peace and stability in crises-affected and war-torn African countries including the emancipation of some others from every form of neo-colonialism, Nigeria has abysmally failed to utilize the opportunity the crises present to establish her hegemonic aspirations on the continent.

The insensitivity of Nigeria to accompany its foreign policy pursuit of peace and security as well as political stability of brother and sister African states with economic penetration of beneficiary states has held back Nigeria's ascendancy as Africa's political power. Invariably, this has opened the space for South Africa to compete with the most populous black nation in the world as Africa's hegemonic and economic power house. This argument does not amount to asking Nigeria to project a veiled imperialistic manoeuvring intent of interfering in the domestic politics of assisted states in Africa as did Western countries in the global south (Tull, 2006, p.461). Rather, it is a challenge for Nigeria to construct a common identity with her African brothers and sisters in a mutually benefiting economic relationship that compensates for Nigeria's sacrifices in stabilizing their countries and dislodge the asymmetric economic relations with the West has fostered with African states.

Nigeria requires charting a new foreign policy which must as a matter of necessity has as its principal tool economic diplomacy. Such effort requires the recognition of the "Nigerian" as the ultimate beneficiary of Nigeria's foreign policy endeavour. To achieve this, Nigeria's

national interest must be cleverly and robustly articulated in a way that economic interests are embedded in financial and human capital investments in promoting peace and stability in the West-African sub-region and on the African continent. Arguably, African countries need Nigeria more than Nigeria needs them. The Nigerian state needs to take cue from Beijing's economic diplomatic strategies and create space for private and state-owned businesses of Nigerian origin to venture into the economies of other African states particularly in oil and gas, solid minerals, textile and telecommunication industries. For this to thrive, Akinterinwa (2004, p.247) noted that realistic efforts must be made by Nigeria's leadership to make Nigeria's socio-economic and political environment conducive to the development of national capacity to meet the challenges of the current international conditions.

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