Nigeria's Africa Centre-Piece Policy: Imperatives of A New Paradigm In A Globalised World

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Abstract
The relevance of Nigeria's avowed Africa centre-piece foreign policy which assumed an enduring standard irrespective of the nature of succeeding administrations (civilian or military) or changes on the international front is a tidal problem. Primarily provoked by Pan-Africanism, Nigeria's multi-national configuration and relationship as the largest concentration of Blacks, the African centre-piece policy's relevance has been altered by world dynamics, including the end of colonial rule and Apartheid in South Africa. It has also been affected by the thawed ice of ideological divide otherwise known as Cold War and the emergent unipolar world structure; globalisation of the world economy and the resultant challenges of security and development in the South and security in the North. Novel ideological prescriptions by Nigerian ideologues have failed to adequately offer alternative forms to the policy of African centeredness in a 'world without boundaries.' This study adopted the historical methodology, describing 'how' policy was formulated and practised over the years. It relied on data from Secondary and a dint of Primary sources, analysed through empiricism. Existentialism was adopted to explain the nature of Nigeria's domestic setting, its relative position in the international system and the potentials for a more visible disposition. Chief among the findings is that the security and development of Nigeria is inextricably tied to that of Africa. The study recommended that Nigeria must assimilate or adjust to the trending international conventions or fundamental democratic cultures and the indigenous culture of the constituent multi-nationalities to foster a sense of hope and unity and remain inalienable.
Key Words: *Foreign Policy, National Interest, Globalisation, National Integration.*

I. Introduction

No country, big or small, rich or poor, exists in seclusion; (Gambari, 2008:59) thus, Nigeria could not be an island of prosperity in a tumultuous ocean of economic volatility in West Africa or the world either (Garba, 2005). African liberation, anti-racism and African unity became Nigeria's core foreign policy concern owing to its composition as the largest concentration of Blacks in the world. Nigeria's commitment to above objectives can invariably be traced to the influence of the famous Pan Africanism and the Negro Movement for African freedom and unity spearheaded by Marcus Garvey, Du Bois and by extension Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta (Nkrumah, 1977).

At independence, Nigeria emerged unto a world of ideological polar divide known as Cold War (Philips, 1962). Despite its long-standing relationship and orientation with the West, Nigeria declared a posture of non-alignment with either blocs (though noticeably pro West). Whether the policy of non alignment existed has been a subject of examinations. The contest among the ideological blocs for spheres of influence made Africa and Nigeria in particular the bride of the super powers, but this privilege purportedly waned following the collapse of the Socialist bloc and the emergence of a unilateral system lead by the Capitalist structure. However, the relevance of Africa and Nigeria remains contentious in view of the significance of the African market and mineral potentials.

The granting of independence to the last vestiges of colonial States in Africa, the end of Apartheid system and racist minority rule in southern Africa, and the end of the Cold War informed scholarly agitation for a review of Nigeria's rabid commitment to African liberation and non alignments. However, successive Nigerian governments tenaciously maintained the non alignment and African centre-piece policy, with little difference in style or radicalism (Ogwu, 1986:6; Bukarambe, 2000).

The invitation to a review of Nigeria's foreign policy has further been intensified by the 'tide of history', that despite the common objective of African unity among the independent states of Africa, some of them differed on the processes leading to African unity. While some states believed in the immediate political union, others lead by Nigeria proposed functional cooperation among which strategy is the formation sub regional organisations and an African umbrella body through a gradual process. Critics of Nigeria's African policy have argued that following the independence of African states that benefited from Nigeria's largesse, the altruism in its policy is established by their support the secessionists against Nigeria during the Nigerian Civil War, or indulged in competition with Nigeria. More phenomenal is the globalisation or the increase in world socio-economic, political and cultural relations, which has elicited the search for a new paradigm in Nigeria's foreign policy (Fawole, 2012)

Foreign policy ideologues, decision makers and practitioners have described the African centre-piece foreign policy of Nigeria as effete, feeble, naive, obsolete, uncertain, timid, altruistic, servile and lacking in ideology. (Aluko, 1984 cited in Sesay & Eyinla, 2012:99; Gambari, 2008:63; Briggs, 2005; Ogwu, 1986:19; Tordoff, 1984; Phillips, 1962) Therefore, novel prescriptions by foreign policy scholars including the ideology of Nigerianism, Concentricism, Economic Diplomacy, the Concert of Medium Powers, Citizen Diplomacy, Reciprocity, Constructive and Beneficial Concentricism are evidential of discontent with the existing order of Africa centre-piece and non alignment. However scholarly and suitable, these constructions have not offered adequate alternative strategies, in other words they fail to counter the relevance of the precepts of the African centre-piece policy and non alignment.

As noted earlier, despite the nuances on the international scene which has rendered prevailing policies immaterial, there has been more of moderation in the tone of Nigeria's foreign policy than any substantial change in policy (Gambari, 2008:61; Ogwu, 1986:6). This study examines Gambari's (2008:77) dictum that Nigeria's foreign policy must be reviewed either towards the isolationist, regional, continental or global orientation in line with the globalising international system. That the world is dynamic, as such ideologies too must be reformed to meet the needs of circumstances. More especially, theoretical conceptions on Nigeria's foreign policy are profoundly premised on the conservative and broad perceptions which do not adequately regard the internal conditions of Third World countries (Meierding, 2010). Past studies were thus reliant on methods which yielded to subjective tendencies of a given, quantitative, unempirical and bias. It is important to focus on states and the rationality of their behaviours, however, this study will also focus on the society and describe how policies were formulated and how such policies were effectuated. The treasure of 'how' of policies derived from the historical method makes this work distinct and relevant for leaders, policy makers, practitioners and for further studies.

II.   Conceptual Clarifications

Foreign Policy
Foreign policy as a concept dates back to the era of the evolution of modern State system and International Law in the 18th Century, meant to characterise the conduct of external affairs among sovereign State (Hinsley, 1967 cited in Jinadu, 2005). Foreign policy has been defined by Hartman (cited in Chandra, 2006) as a systematic statement of deliberately selected national interests. It has also been defined by Modelski, (1962, cited in Chandra, 2006) as activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other States and for adjusting their own activities to the environment. Further explanations have all conveyed the element of national interest as the driver of foreign policy (Eze, 2010). Foreign policy therefore, is the sum of a nation's interests and values which it determines to pursue in her relations with other States and international entities. The pertinent question is that while a state aggregates and advances its own interests, how does it respond or adjust to the interests of other states or persons and the limits of the international law and change in the international sphere?

As noted by Rosenau (1976 cited in Chandra, 2006) the foreign policy of States are shaped by internal and external factors including geography, history and culture, the level of economic development or national capacity, public opinion or the governmental structure and the values and talents of the leaders or decision makers. International Law and organisation, the changing impact of world public opinion and technological advancement places limits upon the behaviour or actions of the State. The mutational impact of the domestic environment and the international milieu to which Nigeria's foreign policy is expected to respond includes those same factors which in themselves helped to determine Nigeria's foreign policy. We will come back to this subsequently.

National Interest

The concept of national interest is variegated in meanings and interpretations. It can be interpreted from the objectives of a nation's foreign policy which it seeks to pursue at the international arena. National interest can also be interpreted from the angle of the wider range of goals a nation seeks to pursue. However, it is admittedly the key element in all foreign policy objectives, including in the main, promotion and protection of national security and survival. Thus, while Morgenthau (1967 cited in Eze, 2010) says national interest must be defined in terms of national security and that national security itself be defined in terms of the integrity of national territory and institutions, Eze (2010) interpreted national interest within the Hobbessian absolutist conception of the state, which renders national interest as an end itself. In contrast, he cited the Rousseau and Lockean perspectives which maintains that national interest is the General Will and protection of the natural rights to life, liberty and property. Eze (2010:80) has otherwise configured national interest also as a means to an end.

Put succinctly, national interest has come to be understood in diverse contexts. One of such interpretations is that national interest refers to the protection of the regime in power or the interest of the decision makers (Chandra, 2006; Sesay & Eyinla, 2012). It may also be interpreted within the Marxist perspective as the protection of class interest. Eze, (2010) opined that Nigeria's national interest can be more clearly understood within the context of the protection of the security and welfare of citizens as provided in Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Other perspectives to this study include the consideration of national interest on a scale of importance. Nigeria's foreign policy therefore can be classified on a hierarchy of core or vital interests, such as the protection of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the State; the middle range objectives including the economic development and power of the State; and milieu goals such as extension of territory and fame (Chandra, 2006; Sesay & Eyinla, 2012; Ogwu, 1986) The amount of importance accruable to respective national interests therefore must be calibrated within the grade of interest relevance of such interests. Whether Nigeria's national interest or its avowed foreign policy can be considered worthwhile or relevant when weighed on this scale of importance especially given the nuances in the international system is a subject of debate.

Globalisation

The concept of Globalisation may be viewed from various perspectives: as a process, by which prediction is made possible; or as a wave, meaning that it is an unavoidable and an unpredictable tide. Edigin, (2008) historically maintains that the broad reach of the 13th Century Mongol Empire, the 16th Century European commercial and military expansion, and the 19th Century rush for spheres of influence and domination are the first three phases of Globalisation. The era of technology, accumulation, controls and movement of capital, services and the loss of control of such services by the states according to Edigin, (2008) is the fourth era of Globalisation. With this era comes economies and social infusion through a web of flow of stock and a towering level of control by the rich and powerful. This wave of globalisation has further opened the gap of inequality and inequity in the distribution of wealth to the detriment of Africa, attended by deepening poverty, apathy and insecurity particularly in Nigeria.

Omoweh, (2011:49) has contextualised the dynamics of globalisation in relation to states as the providers of the framework for provision of rules, investments, regulations and guarantees. Whereas the integrating capital goods and services as the character of globalisation undermine state sovereignty, the weaker states fall prey to the advantage of the stronger states. Within this context, what is the character of the weaker states and how have their character subjected them to the onslaught of globalisation? Can the failure of states of the South to acculturate, through power acquisition, increased investment, technology and sustainable development be responsible? Perceptions on globalisation throws up new contours of thinking in relation to the states of the south which are presumably over-developed states, soft state hanging states and dependent states (Hamza Alavi, Gunar Myrdal, Claude Ake in Olaitan, 1993:329) One worrisome consideration is whether the Nigerian state human organisation as an organic system has hastily attained the peak of development and is tottering on the brink of extinction. In essence, globalisation has not been the problem of Nigeria and African states, rather it has complicated the problem and rendered the pathway of escape nebulous. This leads us to x-raying some theoretical considerations on Nigeria's foreign policy in a globalised world.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

No single theory may adequately explain the causes, the actions and reactions that shape the changes and continuities in Nigeria's foreign policy without some elements of exception. In the same vein, no single perspective can cover the gamut of intellectual discourse on the problem of Nigeria's response to activities in the international system that is always evolving. However, in the works of Plato, Thucydides, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Morgenthau and Marx, the heralds of Idealist or Utopian and Realist thoughts, we can find suitable theories that can explain the nature, conduct and reactions of States to the nuances in the

international ambiance. Both classical theorists likened the State to the nature of man, which the Idealists say is good, peaceful and seldom led by reason (Morgenthau, 2006); and others believe is 'brutish', rational, self-seeking and driven by fear, honour and interest, which ultimately leads to competition, diffidence and glory. (Morgenthau, 2006)

Shaw and Nweke (cited in Asobie, 1990) attempted a taxonomy of Nigerian scholars into these Realist and Idealist schools, which includes amongst others, Ofoegbu, Aluko, Ogwu and the Ife School of International Relations generally. Asobie, (1990) highlights other paradigmatic models such as the Behavioural theory, found in the works of Gray, (1985); the Decision-making model, found in Asobie, (1977 & 1980); the Strategic and Defence theories which according to Nweke (cited in Asobie, 1990) are found in the works of Vogt, (1986), Akinyemi, (1986) Gambari, and Nweke, (1985). Jinadu, (2012) has suggested that the eclectic sources of Nigeria's foreign policy includes Pan-Africanism, Liberal Conservatism, Social Liberalism and Liberal Internationalism. These classifications suffer the chimera of dogma redolent of Meierding's, (2010) classification as an ambitious macro world view of Nigeria's foreign policy. Such postulations fail to appreciate the domestic conditions that prevail in Nigeria and other Third World countries; they are also inadequate in terms of ranging the States in the order of their levels of development.

Dependency theory though characterised by inherent exceptions, explains the plausible causes of the near absence of security and development or ideological leanings in Nigerian foreign policy, rather than a nationalistic or reactionary policy by which the African centre-piece policy is branded (Phillips, 1962; Eze, 2010:81). Nigeria and Africa's security and development crises are related to the character of the international system which is categorised into the dominant and the dependent, the centre and the periphery or the metropolitan and satellite group of states. It believes in the externality of forces that determine economic activity in the State, including the activities of the multi-national corporations and the international commodity markets (Romaniuk, 2017). Inequality, according to Dependentistas like Gunder Frank, (cited in Ferraro, 2008) is reinforced through historical international dynamics of exchange between the metropols and the satellite States. Most important is its explanation of the increasing inequality between the North and South, the increasing poverty especially in the South and therefore the dependence on the North. (Waltz, cited in Ogbonnaya, 2012)

The capitalist system according to Gunder Frank, (1972) enforced international division of labour, reliance on primary commodities and cheap labour at the periphery. Meierding (2010) and Eduard Jordaan (2003) attempted a classification of states in order to distinguish between the middle powers states like Nigeria, South Africa and Brazil (which some identify as emerging) and others. Dependency theorists from the 1970s described the same group of states as semi peripheral states (Wallerstein, 1979 cited in Meierding, 2010). Adebajo and Landsberg (2003) Shaw (1983), DeLancy (1983 cited in Meierding, 2010) called them 'aspiring or potential hegemons,' while others label them as 'intermediate States.' In a more critical mode, other scholars describe some Nigerian foreign policy behaviors as 'sub-imperial.' These views remain contentious in the light of Nigeria's inherent debilities and popular assumption as a potential power in view of its resource endowments.

Existentialism to a high extent can also be viewed as an extension of the Realist theory. Basic among the creeds of Existentialism is the belief that there is no actual predetermination of the events of life. According to Dimonye, (2014) Jean Paul Sartre, Ayn Rand, Simon de Beaviour, Fredrick Nietzsche, and Albert Camus as atheistic Existentialists believe that man constructs his own world around him through positive actions, decisions, thorough-going engagements and involvement. The theory further believes that the awareness of reality causes pain and anxiety, but that men are free to choose their world view and way of living. Freedom, they contend, comes through struggle and that only the men that try to change the world around them achieve freedom. Existentialism believes in taking responsibility for one's own experience rather than viewing experiences as defined by outside forces such as Divinity, the society or the universe (Dimonye, 2014). Existentialism can be explored to describe both nature and domestic conditions, the character of the international system and therefore therapeutic actions Nigeria must take to render herself relevant and indispensable in world affairs.

TRENDS AND TRAJECTORIES OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY REVIEW (1960-2019)

Nigeria's foreign policy beginning from independence was influenced by the 'geo-politics of the Cold War,' the big power interest in Africa, Pan-Africanism, de-colonisation, racism and White minority rule in southern Africa, European integration and the concern for African unity. Following Nigeria's perception of the world in which it found itself as noted above, Nigeria set out on its perceived 'manifest destiny' and obligation towards the rest of Africa and the Blacks by adopting a concentric circle approach to its foreign policy engagements. The immediate circle of attention focused on Nigeria's multi-ethnic configuration and the need for unity at home. Nigeria's next layer of attention was to be her immediate neighbours and West Africa, then Africa and the rest of the world. This classification is not static, it depends on the perception and priority of respective states and entities.

In order to achieve its set objectives, Nigeria engaged in multilateral organisations at regional and global levels, first by automatically becoming a member of the British Commonwealth and joining the United Nations Organisation (UNO) upon gaining independence as the 99th member. Nigeria took the front seat as a leader of the conservative group of States that championed the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU) (Aluko, 1981). At independence, African States had become divided on the question of the mode of African unity. While the Monrovia group led by Nigeria believed in functional unity, the radical Casablanca group under the leadership of Ghana believed in the immediate political union of African States. Nigeria was also very instrumental to the creation of the regional integration group in West Africa known as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Nigeria became a member of the Non-aligned Movement as an indication of its neutrality to any of the power blocs though its non alignment remains a question of debate.

Successive Nigerian administrations also engaged in bilateral cooperation with the super powers and other States of the world towards achieving the objectives of Africa centre-piece policy. They remain faithful to the doctrine of African centre-piece except for moderations in radicalism or conservatism as dictated by prevailing domestic and international circumstances from 1960 up to 2015. The major Highlights of the features of Nigeria's foreign policy under the successive administrations are recorded hereunder. During the 1960 to 1966 First Republic under Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria engaged in peacekeeping in the Congo; severed diplomatic ties with France in 1961 over the atomic bomb test in the Sahara; (Okolo, 1989:54) Nigeria failed to attend the meeting of Non-Aligned States in Belgrade; Nigeria maintained cold relations with the Soviet Union and even rejected its interest-free loan offer; (Aluko, 1981:49) Nigeria maintained a close relationship with the West and broke the Anglo-Nigeria defence pact she had signed with Britain.

Between 1966 and 1975, the two major issues that dominated Nigeria's foreign policy includes the experiences of Nigerian Civil War and the increasing oil fortunes, which led to Nigeria's rapprochement with neighbouring countries, the establishment of regional integration mechanism known as ECOWAS and increased funding for African liberation movements. At the global level, it improved Nigeria's relations with the Soviet Union and reduced Nigeria's dependence on the West, exemplified in the 1970-74 National Development Plan. (Aluko, 1981:50) The 1975-1979 era witnessed Nigeria's recognition of the MPLA in Angola against the support of the Superpowers for UNITA; Nigeria became a member of the Nine Frontline States in view of her dogged support for anti-colonial movements and its declaration that 'Africa has come of age.' Nigeria exchanged State visit with Jimmy Carter and borrowed from the West, however it did not hesitate to nationalise the assets of Shell BP in order to pressurise Margaret Thatcher on South Africa. (Gambari, 2008; Ezirim, 2010). Nigeria was also involved in the settlement of African disputes.

During the 1979-1983 Second Republic under President Shehu Shagari, Nigeria was so committed to peaceful coexistence and good neighbourliness that incursions into Nigerian territories by Chad and Cameroonian gendarmes did not attract commensurate reprisals. However, the administration suffered from dwindling resources and thus failed to attend OAU summit in Libya and was renowned for the expulsion of over 3 million illegal aliens from West Africa (Ezirim, 2011). The 1983-85 military regime of General Buhari closed Nigeria borders in anti corruption fight and signed the Quadripartite agreement with Benin, Ghana and Togo to further regional peace and cooperation. From 1985-1993 under Gen Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria restored free movement between ECOWAS countries and actively participated in peace enforcement in Liberia and Sierra Leone under the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Nigeria established the Technical Aids Corps Scheme and focused on economic strategies under the guide of the West (Ofoegbu, 1990 cited in Ezirim, 2010).

The 1993-1998 regime of Gen. Sani Abacha dragged Nigeria into avoidable sanctions by which Nigeria degenerated into a pariah status following the execution of Ogoni activists. The Fourth Republic was ushered in with the task of restoring Nigeria's image. The new Nigerian administration further engaged in diplomatic maneuvers in order to restore Nigeria's dampened image and reduce the African debt burden. Nigeria took various initiatives including the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and its instrument, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in concert with South Africa. The President Musa Yar'Adua administration embarked on another foreign policy agenda called Citizen Diplomacy. Up to 2015, the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan embarked on transformation agenda at both the domestic and international levels.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY REFORMS

What became known as Nigeria's foreign policy is a mix of the foreign policy predilections of the three major political parties that formed the independence government and opposition. The principles and policies that have dominated Nigeria's foreign policy from independence were enunciated by the Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa during his speech at the House of Representatives on August 20, 1960; these principles were reiterated at the United Nations General Assembly few days after independence (Otubanjo, 1989). Prominent among the principles of Nigeria's foreign policy are the promotion of national interest, friendship and

cooperation with all nations, non-alignment, assistance to African States, respect for the sovereignty of all States and the pursuit of decolonisation (Ogwu, 1986:8). The objectives of foreign policy at the formative stage include political unity in view of the multi-ethnic structure; economic development, national security and promotion of African interests (Agreen cited in Eze, 2010). The quest for a reform in Nigeria's foreign policy began soon after its independence and the declaration of her foreign policy owing to existing and emerging realities.

As early as 1961, Dr Mbadiwe summoned the first All-Nigeria Peoples' Conference with the theme "Nigeria's Role in African Affairs" (Philips, 1962:55). By 1975, the Murtala/Obasanjo regime that took over from Gen. Yakubu Gowon set up the Adedeji Foreign Policy Review Panel to review Nigeria's foreign policy; the panel submitted its reports. In 1980, there was the Lagos Plan of Action (though not a purely domestic move) geared towards the need to focus on Africa's economic problems (Otubanjo, 1989:6). Under Gen. Ibrahim Babangida in 1986, a conference known as the All-Nigerian Peoples' Conference on Foreign Policy held at the Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, in Jos (Fawole, 2012). While the same regime lasted, there was a workshop on Nigeria's National Interest and Values which held from 11th to 15th April, 1988 at the Old National Assembly Complex, Race Course, Lagos. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 and the Vision 20:2020 all had their inputs towards reviewing Nigeria's foreign policy.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, during his inaugural speech admitted that the urgent task ahead of the new democratic dispensation was the restoration of mutual confidence between the government and the governed (Ogbonaya, 2012) Apart from the global transition, national division, mono cultural economy and the declining economic fortunes, the failure of democratic institutions, the loss of hope to the citizenry and the widening gap between the State and society have posed great challenges to democracy and governance in Nigeria. Waltz (cited in Ogbonaya, 2012) has thrown a lot of questions concerning the ideology of capitalist democracy and the homogeneity of cultures in a globalised world. Beyond Ogbonaya's assertion, terrorism and the unending criminality have posed more danger to the world and Nigeria in particular.

THE PARADIGMS

Paradigms can be regarded as conjectures driven by attempts to create investigative patterns or as alternative models to existing constructions for the purpose of codification and legitimacy (Fawole, 2012). Successive Nigerian administrations have prescribed various paradigms as a detour from the prevailing framework, specifically due to the purported obsolescence of the policy of Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Besides the epochal incidents known to have altered the bearing of the usual Nigeria's foreign policy, the internationalisation and liberalisation of the world system, as a pervasive wave has imposed a new foreign policy paradigm in order to survive their onslaught. Concentricism, the Concert of Medium Powers, Economic Diplomacy, Citizen Diplomacy, Reciprocity and the Constructive and Beneficial Concentricism are most prominent of all foreign policy prescriptions. However relevant the new paradigms, Fawole, (2012:165) has summed them up as immaterial, from the perspective of the interest of successive regimes in power which have always prevailed and left them as tools for analysis or reference.

Without the wealth of space to take on the respective weaknesses of the given paradigms, this study takes exception to the excessive eleemosynary categorisation of Nigeria's foreign policy. One of the defects of such conclusions is their failure to take the fact of history into cognisance. It includes the contents of the African centre-piece policy, how the policy was formulated and how the policy has been pursued. The second angle is their inability to offer any significant option to the African centre-piece policy, rather they are axiomatic having merely explicated national interest as defined by the foremost crafters of Nigeria's foreign policy. New contours of thought on new paradigm prescriptions must examine the nature and the malleability of the state to the global dynamics.

For example, scholars have criticised Nigeria's failure to take advantage of the wars in neighbouring states and the post-war economic opportunities. This is without due regards to the facts of the history of Nigeria's role in African decolonisation and formation of the Organisation of African Unity. The paranoia of neighbouring African countries towards Nigeria's towering size, wealth and possible threat was doused by Nigeria's commitment to the leadership of the liberal Monrovia group and the pronouncement of unreserved dedication to the policy of non interference in the domestic affairs of others irrespective of size and status. Another factor is Nigeria's experience during the civil war which shows that Nigeria must be on peaceful terms or ensure peace coexistence among neighbouring states. This criticism further runs afoul of the spirit of ethical responsibility to protect neighbouring states.

III.   Conclusion

The African centre-piece policy of Nigeria has been a recurring decimal since independence in 1960; subsequent prescriptions have not offered any change in the form, rather the style of Nigeria's foreign policy.

The reforms and rhetorics in Nigeria's foreign policy parlance as noted above have offered no viable alternative to the African centeredness of Nigeria's foreign policy. These views are reinforced within General Yakubu Gowon's position at the OAU summit in September, 1970 that from experience, opposing colonialism and racialism is equivalent to serving the cause of our own freedom and independence (Bukarambe, 2001:107). Apart from the moral obligations and the domino effects of African security, Macridis, (1976:125) has argued that it is ethically acceptable to pursue a goal with a means that appears to be incompatible. There is a palpable link between foreign policy and domestic policies; both realms are not exempt from the ineluctable influences of governance and development. Peace, security, development, democracy, good governance and the protection of human rights are core national interests which according to Gambari, (2008) is the only solution to Nigeria's national problems. In summary, virtually all other prescriptions are mere expression of the desire for changing the Nigerian foreign policy style rather than the policy itself.

IV.   Recommendations

It may not be easily attainable for a country to succeed on all fronts with commitment to a multiplicity of policies, rather it is better to seek one policy first, by which others will fall in line. There is a palpable disconnect between the society, the State and its foreign affairs, because the State arrogates sovereignty to itself and estranged the society from foreign relations. Nigeria's democratic experience must be bound by a dedication to government founded on the consent of the Nigerian people. In other words, democracy as a way of life must be deepened through respect for rule of law and democratic institutions which in themselves reside in the peoples' consent.

- It is pertinent first, to create a sense of belonging for the people through their popular participation in the process of electing their representatives. It is also important to create an enabling environment for the realisation of the hopes and aspirations of the people; and above all respect the rights of the people in order to foster peace and development.

- Nigeria's foreign policy should not be perceived from the tit for tat axiom in relations with African neighbours, rather the African centre-piece policy must be refined to adapt to the globalising culture of liberal democracy and respect for human rights in order to meet modern challenges.

- Nigeria should make itself more relevant and visible by utilising or turning her potential power into development. This feat can be achieved by concentrating on her areas of relative advantage and judiciously effectuating genuine development programmes.

- Leadership and the academia must devote time to studying the historical trajectory of Nigeria's foreign poliicy order to comprehend the *raison d' etre* for the past decisions.

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