

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND OVERVIEW OF CAMPAIGNS AGAINST APARTHEID POLITICAL SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1960-1994.

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria after attainment of her independence on 1st October 1960 declared that the ultimate thrust of her foreign policy was African centeredness and early on, she assisted many other African countries that were still under colonialism or apartheid rule to break the shackles. Framers of her foreign policy reckon it as her Manifest Destiny to help other African Countries and rescue them from the shackles of any shape or kind of domination. Her campaigns against apartheid South Africa fell within the premise of its foreign policy. To this end, Nigeria regardless of the government saw the termination of apartheid in South Africa as an article of faith. This Article use the theory of Manifest Destiny to further deepen our understanding of Nigeria's involvement and campaigns against apartheid in South Africa. Keywords: Apartheid, South Africa, Nigeria, Campaigns.

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INTRODUCTION:

Foreign policy is a product of complex human thought processes (Franc Abagen and Selumun Tyona (2022:1) and diplomatic relations between nation-states is meant to help smoothen any rough edges but that was not to be between Nigeria and South Africa in the early parts of the 1960s till the end of apartheid system in the 1990s. Diplomacy inversely that was meant to facilitate a healthy dose of relationship between both countries became an avenue for dispute, hostile acts, mutuality, reciprocity and interdependence regressed within the period over review. Indeed, the initial euphoria that heralded the opening of diplomatic relations between both countries soon faded as both countries acted in somewhat manner to subvert the other. Nigeria campaigned against apartheid system and especially successive generation of governments in South Africa from 1960 till the system was dismantled in 1994 in sync with the country's foreign policy objectives as outlined at independence. Flowing from this position, relations between both leading African countries were hostile and frosty but Nigeria never for a moment waived from vigorously pursuing an anti-apartheid foreign policy in the period under study. Nigeria both under civilian and military governments (1960-1994) kept faith and ensured that it put the anti-apartheid struggle on the front burner of both domestic and international discourse and gave sundry support in the drive to rid Africa of all forms of domination, especially apartheid system in South Africa. This foreign policy posturing earned Nigeria enormous respect and admiration both within and beyond Africa and in return was accorded a frontline state status in the southern African region.

It is however; noticeable that foreign policy has continued to enjoy a most robust academic and policy scrutiny and has continued to enjoy a pride of place in contemporary international relations since the end of the Second World War in 1945. Although the concept does not enjoy a single universally acceptable definition, loads of definition given by leading scholars in the field has made it somewhat easy to comprehend and to appreciate in inter-state relations. In the context of international relations,

states do not have to have a shared interest(s) to have peace. Matter of fact, in the divergence of interests, states is expected to find a common ground and such complexities have echoed through the ages.

In the beginning, relations between Nigeria and South Africa were characterized by mutual suspicion and tamed hostility with occasional sparks capable of eroding African solidarity and continental security given the ideological atmosphere of the 1960s which shaped global events and reactions amongst nation-states as the two dominant powers, the United States of America and the defunct Union of Socialist Soviet Union and their allies took steps to curtail, undermine or gain foothold depending on the scenario. The cold war on one hand and the wind of independence that swept through many African states jolted South Africa as it found itself increasingly isolated particularly at the African level with Nigeria leading the campaigns against her interests both in Africa and in the international arena.

The perennial spate of animosity characterized and dominated Nigeria-South African relations. This paper will examine Nigeria's foreign policy campaigns against South Africa apartheid system between 1960 and 1994 and how both states related with each other at all levels. As early as the dawn of Nigeria's independence, it was obvious that the country was not going to tolerate South Africa and this made their relations tenuous and fragile. Nigeria vigorously pursued an anti-apartheid posturing and ensured that it maintained the tempo from the moment of its own independence and the dismantling of the apartheid system in 1994 at enormous cost.

By 1960 and flowing particularly from its avowed commitment to a liberated Africa as articulated in its foreign policy aspirations, there was no doubt that both Nigeria and South Africa were on a collision course. The former stood firmly in support of anti-colonialism and the immediate eradication of apartheid system and the routing of any and every shade of imperialism in the continent, while the latter resolutely wanted perpetuation of apartheid system of governance. This opposing stance by Nigeria and South Africa elicited an unhealthy rivalry which defined their relations both at bi-national levels, continental and global levels that shaped both engagements and reactions. For Nigeria, the end of apartheid and every vestige of colonialism was an objective vigorously pursued without as much as a scant regard for South Africa's feelings. This was the order of event which characterized Nigeria-South Africa relations within the intervening period. Therefore, this paper seeks to investigate the foreign policy campaigns of Nigeria against South Africa and its impact on the dismantling of the obnoxious political system.

Conceptual Clarifications

For clarity of purpose and proper overview of the subject matter, the terminologies that continually feature in this discourse such as foreign policy and apartheid are conceptualized for ease of understanding.

Foreign Policy

Readings in international relations and political science has revealed that no single nation within the international political system is self-sufficient, hence, the need to relate with each other either and the bi-lateral and multi-lateral levels. For relations to occur within nations certain interests has to be advanced and protected and because inter-state interests are most often divergent, there is need for cooperation and understanding. As a result of this, many scholars of international relations have defined foreign policy. The concept does not enjoy a singularly universally accepted definition, however, established authorities such as Northedge and many others have given an interpretation of what the concept is about.

Northedge defines foreign policy as an 'interplay between the inside and outside' meaning that foreign policy is an extension of the domestic politics of nation-states. Foreign policy is equally regarded as a process of dynamic process of interaction between the changing domestic demands and support, and the changing external circumstances (Edward and Abarigwe, 2018: 18). Furthermore, Anthony U. Obingene and Emma Chukwuemeka (2007:71) opined that foreign policy is a conglomeration of

principles, rules, decisions and actions for the guidance of a nation in its dealings with other nations of the globe. A former Nigerian diplomat and former minister of foreign affairs, Olu Adeniji (2000), declared that foreign policy can be classified as a “perception of a country’s national interest into the transnational arena, and the consequent interaction of one with the other”. Another renowned scholar, K.J. Holsti (1972:107-108) defines foreign policy as the actions of a state towards the external environment and the conditions usually domestic under which these actions are formulated. In the case of Joseph Frankel, he defines foreign policy as those “decisions and actions which involves, to reasonable extent, relations between one state and another”. Regardless of the abundance of definitions on foreign policy, some scholars such as Kenneth W. Thompson and Roy C. MacCrisis identify two basic approaches to foreign policy: the ideological and the analytical. Author and former Nigerian diplomat L.T. Bade Afuye (2018:68-69), citing Stephen Wright alluded that some factors which he believes have helped to shape the foreign policies of some independent African countries. He posits that, some natural differences from country to country, a general overview of state objectives can be discerned. Factors such as gaining respect on the world stage and to be treated as equal in the international system, after years of inferior treatment status due to slavery and colonialism, the dominant cold war and the presence of foreign troops in some parts of the continent.

These factors, according to Wright sustained the opposition of many African states against South Africa. Accordingly, apartheid and opposition to it was the single most important unifying, common ingredient of foreign policy objectives of the African states, of which Nigeria is one leading actor.

Apartheid

Apartheid ranked as one of the most obnoxious political system of the 20th century. While it lasted, it preserved the supremacy of a race and downgraded the other race as inferior with alienation, exclusion, suppression and erosion of the political and civil rights of the people-in this regard of the black race in South Africa.

Nigeria’s principle of Afro-centrism necessitated the reason of her involvement in matters concerning other African countries and the African region as a whole. Nigeria got her independence on 1st October 1960 and became free from colonial rule and dominance and being one of the first countries to gain their independence in Africa saw the need to help liberate other African countries out of colonial rule. In essence Nigeria saw it as her manifest destiny to play the Big Brother Role in ensuring the total liberation of Africa from colonial domination and this can be deduced from the speeches of the then first Prime Minister and Head of State of Nigeria Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa [Balewa’s speech, 1960]. His three speeches delivered on August 20th 1960, statement in the House of Representatives; October 1st 1960, Independence Day Address; and October 8th 1960, when Nigeria was admitted into the United Nations as the 99th member.

The principle of Afro-centrism which simply states the Africa will be the Centre piece of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy was the main driving force of Nigeria’s involvement and campaigns against apartheid; in essence Nigeria put measures in place and acted in places necessary to prove and maintain her stance against colonial domination. There is no doubt that Nigeria’s Afrocentric principles needed funds to enable the implementation of the foreign policy principle and this was backed by her strong standing and viable Economy as well as her Military Might which was prominent notwithstanding her newly independence. Though the foreign policy principle was laid by Tafawa Balewa whose administration was ousted during the military era, however these principles were sustained with little modification made to them depending on the regime [Izah, 1991]. President Shehu Shagari reaffirmed the principle by stating that Africa will remain the cornerstone of Nigeria’s foreign policy, He further stated that his administration will be committed to the total liberation of Africa and termination of colonial rule as well as racism of all forms and ensuring that all Africans are free (CinClair, 1983). Nigeria under different administration and regimes, all ensured the implementation of her Foreign Policy by combating to the end colonial rule and apartheid regime in Africa especially in South Africa.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the manifest destiny theory. A theory is used to explain a phenomenon, and to further understand why Nigeria structured her foreign policy in a way that requires her involvement in issues affecting Africa, a theory will be used to explain this causing factor. This paper adopts the theory of Manifest Destiny to explain Nigeria's revolving involvement in issues concerning Africa as well as her campaigns against apartheid in South Africa. Manifest Destiny was a cultural belief in the 19th century United States where those American settlers were destined to expand across North America. Manifest Destiny was coined in 1845, an idea that God has destined United States to expand and claim territories across North America. Manifest destiny was firstly used by the John L. O'Sullivan who was a democratic leader and journalist. He used this term to support the annexation of Texas and the justification of the Oregon claims (Zoysa, 2005). Sullivan stated in the New York Morning News in 1845 that, it is the right of their manifest destiny to overspread and possess the whole of the continent which providence has given them for the development of liberty and federated self-government (Heidler and Heigler, 1853).

Just like the United States, Nigeria assumed belief and leadership role in the world and particularly in Africa stems from the belief that she is well-endowed with factors such as abundant economic resources, oil, large population, economic and military might, and rich historical and socio-cultural diversity (Obadare, 20010). Hence, because of the above factors Nigeria assumed that it was her manifest destiny to play a leading and most pivotal role in both global and particularly in African affairs. This has compelled the country to speak and act with assertiveness on certain global issues and African affairs. This theory of Manifest Destiny explains the Afrocentric nature of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust as well as Nigeria's involvement and her campaigns against apartheid South Africa during the anti-apartheid struggle and the enormous resources poured into the campaigns until the obnoxious political system was abolished in 1994.

Historical Overview of Nigeria-South Africa Relations

What can be said to be the advent of the bumpy nature of Nigeria-South African relations was a consequence of the Sharpeville massacre of 21st March, 1960, when the South African police opened fire and killed 72 blacks and wounded 184 (Wilmot, 1980:9; Zabadi and Onuoha, 2021:439; Akinboye 2013:18). Even though Nigeria was yet to attain independence at the time of the massacre, the uproar and international horror which attended the incidence paved the way for a confrontational relation between both countries. The Abubakar Tafawa Balewa administration (1960-1966), upon assumption of office in October 1, 1960 was faced with both internal and external pressure to institute measures to check the growing nuisance of the South African apartheid policies. Sharpeville was the defining incidence between South Africa-Nigeria relations and the Nigerian government basking in the euphoria of African power house deemed the incidence was not only unacceptable deemed it fit to challenge it. Consequently, the administration banned the importation of South African goods into Nigeria and mounted a global campaign against apartheid South Africa using the instrumentality of all diplomatic platforms, especially the United Nations and the defunct Organization of African Unity. Furthermore, the administration went to the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in March 1961 in London, where it succeeded in rallying a consensus that ousted South Africa from the Organization (Aluko, 1982, Ajala, 1986 and 1993).

By the dawn of the next year, Nigeria terminated all forms of privileges of commonwealth membership which South Africa enjoyed in Nigeria. The government in Nigeria increased the heat on the Republic of South Africa until the end of the first republic (Grace Osihinfowokan, 2021: 146). Whatever diplomatic relations with South Africa was frosty and antagonistic and it did not relent even after the fall of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa administration in 1966. Following the military takeover of government in Nigeria, a somewhat slightly modified yet confrontational attitude remained in place. Between the short-lived administration of General Aguiyi Ironsi and Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria continued with the boycott of South African goods and confrontation with the white minority government in South

Africa and went ahead with a prohibition order barring all white South Africans from venturing into Nigeria.

During the war in Nigeria, 1967-1970, the relations between both countries further plunged further down when the Nigerian government alleged that the South African government was complicit in the support of the balkanization of Nigeria. Gowon responded by strengthening the anti-apartheid stance of the country by committing more financial recourses to the campaigns against South Africa. With the flow of petro-dollars, Nigeria continued to pour more financial resources to the campaign against minority rule in South Africa and made donations to anti-apartheid movements (Ajala, 1993).

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS AGAINST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA, 1960-1994

Immediately after independence in 1960, Nigeria through its Minister of External Affairs, Dr. Jaja Wachukwu, in an address to the 16th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 10th October, 1961, asserted:

Our foreign policy is based on three pillars: the concept that Nigeria is an African nation, it is part and parcel of the continent of Africa and therefore it is completely involved in anything that pertains to that continent; that it cannot be neutral and must never be considered as a neutralist country...We are independent in everything, but neutral in nothing that affects the destiny of Africa. The moment Africa is affected we are involved. We want to make this absolutely clear! Nigeria finds itself involved in anything affecting the African continent anywhere, any square inch of African territory we are involved...The peace of Africa is the peace of Nigeria. Its tribulations are our tribulations and we cannot be indifferent to its future.

The above statement coupled with the declaration of the Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in the House of Representatives on 14 January, 1960, set the tone of what Nigeria's foreign policy would be, especially as relate to the African continent and interest:

To carry on a foreign policy in the best interest of Nigeria...it's not going to be easy at all, but we shall do it...Given the sincerity of purpose and goodwill, we shall not fail. And on this core too, I am prepared to say...we are ready for independence.

With statements such as above and coupled with the African centric orientation of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives as enunciated at independence, a clash with South Africa was unavoidable. These objectives as clearly stated and amplified by state officials are:

- i. The protection of the sovereign and territorial integrity of Nigeria;
- ii. The promotion of the unity, as well as the political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa;
- iii. An irrevocable commitment to the total elimination of apartheid and liberation of all countries still under colonial domination;
- iv. Enhancing the dignity and promotion, the welfare of people of African descent all over the world;
- v. Commitment to the principle of Africa being at the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy.

Nigeria denounced apartheid system and made strenuous attempt at spotlighting the evil of the system and insisting that it must as a matter of continental solidarity and security be eroded promptly and permanently. The immediate cause of this decision was followed by the Sharpeville massacres that occurred on 21st March, 1960 when South African police shot and killed 72 blacks and also injured 184 people. It was revolting to the African conscience and the leaders of the African at the time demanded that justice be served against an apartheid regime that cared less or was ready to be accountable or take the path of moral rectitude.

As earlier stated, Nigeria's campaigns against apartheid South Africa is as a result of her Afro-centric foreign policy. Though these foreign policy principles were laid down as deduced from the

speech of Tafawa Balewa (Balewa's speech, 1960), these principles were still upheld by other successive government who out rightly condemned the apartheid regime and effectively implemented the foreign policy principles which was fractured with the aim of repealing the obviously obnoxious political system which Africans regarded as the greatest evil which must be repelled for there to be consideration for peace with the African regime. Nigeria under Balewa's administration was less radical in her engagement and fight against apartheid in South Africa; a typical example was when the Balewa administration cordially invited South Africa to the Independence celebration of Nigeria with a proposal of a gradual way to go about the issue of decolonization and apartheid in South Africa (Gray, 1965). After the overthrow of Balewa's administration, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi came into power though his military regime was short lived yet he recognized the underpinning principles of Nigeria's foreign policy and sought to uphold it. Since his regime was short lived, not much could be said about his posturing on the apartheid regime in South Africa but he remained resolute that apartheid was inconsistent with the African philosophy.

On the contrary to how Balewa approached the issue of decolonization and apartheid, Nigeria under Gowon's administration did better in fighting apartheid South Africa by donating and giving aids to freedom fighters and liberation movements (Ogunsanwo, 1985). Notwithstanding the efforts of Gowon's administration, it was insufficient and this was because it did not end apartheid in South Africa. Nigeria under Murtala Muhammed took a more radical and most pragmatic approach in the course of the fight against apartheid in South Africa by first recognizing African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC), two of the main freedom fighters. Nigeria under this administration also supported South Africa's fight against apartheid with military and financial aid to the two liberation groups (Ogunsanwo, 1985). Before his demise, Murtala Muhammed at an extraordinary session of the Organization of African Unity speech, entitled, "African Has Come of Age", stated that:

Mr. Chairman, when I contemplate the evils of apartheid, my heart bleeds and I am sure the heart of every true blooded African bleeds. . . Rather than join hands with the forces fighting for self-determination and against racism and apartheid, the United States policy makers clearly decided that it was in the best interests of their country to maintain white supremacy and minority regimes in Africa. .

The speech was widely hailed in Africa and beyond and further cemented the image and prestige of Nigeria as a progressive state in Africa and was conferred with a frontline status of the southern African State. In quick succession, the Murtala government recognized the MPLA and poured stupendous financial and technical support to it. The Nigerian support for the movement turned the tide in its favour and subsequently

Despite the assassination of Murtala Muhammed in an abortive coup d'état on 13th February 1976 (Akinyemi, 1980), Obasanjo his then deputy who succeeded him, only reaffirmed his determination and commitment to the vision of dismantling apartheid from the continent of Africa. After the death of Murtala, the successor head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo reaffirmed commitment to the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. At the OAU Summit in Gabon on 3 July, 1977, he maintained that Nigeria was going to continue to push the policy of ensuring that apartheid was torpedoed as soon as possible. He said;

Mr. Chairman, while we continue to call on our brothers in Southern Africa to make necessary sacrifices, we who are physically removed from South Africa have no excuse for not making our contribution to the effort of stamping out apartheid and racism on our continent. It is not enough to shout slogans and dream that the louder we proclaim our opposition to apartheid, the more likely that it would disappear. The sad reality is quiet to the contrary. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all of us to face this reality and redouble our efforts to continue to support the victims of apartheid diplomatically, financially and militarily...

Nothing was spared in the country's support for the end of apartheid. Nigeria succeeded in isolating South Africa from trade, sporting events and political and diplomatic events as well as international

organization participation such as at the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. Nigeria successfully mobilized other black African Countries in isolating South Africa to ensure they realize the illogicality of their racial policies (Agbu, 2010). Nigeria in March 1961, orchestrated the expelling of South Africa from Commonwealth of Nations at the 11th commonwealth prime Minister's conference in London (Adebisi, 1980). Also, all privileges enjoyed by South Africa in Nigeria as a member of Commonwealth was terminated by Nigeria hence South Africans were treated as foreigners. Nigeria also rallied support of other states in the UN to condemn the apartheid government in South Africa. In 1976, United Nations Conference for Action against Apartheid (WCAAA) was hosted by Nigeria in Ibadan.

Nigeria, through the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and its external service to air programs as well as enlighten South Africans the dangers of apartheid and the need to wage war and put an end to it. Nigeria in 1975 established the National Committee for Action against Apartheid (NACAP) which was used as a platform to inform Africans and Nigeria's in general on the evils of apartheid (Garba, 1987). The Federal Government of Nigeria under this regime on December 1976 established the South African Relief Fund to raise funds to support freedom fighters. Nigeria in its campaign and protest against apartheid used sports politics against apartheid South Africa; as it boycotted the 1976 Montreal Olympics in Canada. The outcome of the afore-mentioned protest led to many states, placing embargo to any sports that has links with South Africa.

South African students were given Nigerian scholarships to study in any higher institution both overseas and within. Nigeria also took the responsibility and offered to train the freedom fighters in Nigerian Defense Academy (NDA). The freedom fighters and liberation movement were allowed to open their offices in Lagos Nigeria and the country gave them a platform to ventilate their opinions and have a venue through which their voices could be aired and heard across the nations of the world at no cost at all.

The radicalism of Nigeria under this administration is commendable and their great achievement in decolonization has never been actualize by any regime before or after this regime all because of their ideological commitment and their resolute determination to ensure that the apartheid system in South Africa was decimated as quickly as possible.

CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

This paper focused on the retrospective discourse on Nigeria campaigns against apartheid system in South Africa between 1960 and 1994. Though apartheid is long gone, the opportunities and prospects for deepening relations between both countries is compelling but without challenges. Both Nigeria and South Africa have striking strengths and are well positioned both regionally and globally but such can only be made possible by visionary leadership and necessary inter-state cooperation. No longer can both countries afford the kind of combative and antagonistic relationship which characterized their relations in the apartheid era to either continue to endure or define their future.

The years of apartheid left South Africa mainly ostracized especially by African states but in the immediate eradication of apartheid system in 1994, the country began a steady and progressive re-integration both domestically and internationally. The United Nations left economic sanction which was imposed in 1985 took a heavy toll on the South African economy. The process of the reversal of the policy of apartheid commenced with the historic speech by President De Klerk to the newly elected parliamentarians on February 2, 1990. The speech sped the process leading to the historic and first-time multiracial democratic elections in the history of the country (Adeniji:2000).

Since the end of apartheid political system in Africa, the prospects for deepening of relations between South Africa and Nigeria is evident as both countries can galvanize Africa in its quest for economic and political cooperation. Of course, the relations between both countries is challenged on account of varying dynamics such as conflicts and cooperation, yet the relations between the two economic power house of Africa holds a great promise. There is need for thorough introspection and dynamism on the part of the leadership of both countries and institutions such as the Nigeria-South Africa Bi-National Commission fast track a more robust platform for continuing relations. Though the

Bi-National Commission was quite active in the era of Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Thambo Mbeki of South Africa, very little is seen or heard of the commission in recent times. That is not supposed to be so given the strategic and veritable platform which the commission can help foster between both countries.

Furthermore, areas of division and contention such as deportation of Nigerians and the strict restrictions which Nigerian companies grapple within South Africa while the reverse is the case where many South African companies are making huge in-roads into the Nigerian market should be reviewed timely. Indeed, Sub-Saharan Africa does not and cannot watch its two dominant economic force act in an adversarial manner given the dynamics of the post-apartheid era. The leadership of both countries should ensure that the oasis of cooperation is cultivated for the benefit of both countries in particular and that of Africa in general.

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