

Nigeria in the World: Issues and Problems for the Sleeping Giant

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Chapter One

Nigeria's Foreign Policy

1.1 Nigeria and the Consultation Doctrine

The idea of consultation in Nigeria's foreign policy could be dated to the time of late Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa who, at times, consulted London to know what steps to take *vis-a-vis* certain issues. But my analysis will be limited to the time of the Kuru Conference which the Foreign Minister, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, used as a forum to propound his doctrine.

Akinyemi was quoted as saying that: "There is no disputing the fact that we have responsibilities to Africa. There should be no disputing the fact that Africa has responsibilities to Nigeria. If, when we say that Africa is the centre-piece of our foreign policy, we mean that Nigeria should identify with and defend the legitimate interest of Africa collectively and in African state, individually, then - it also means that Africa and African states should identify with and defend Nigerian interest."

When the minister was also asked to justify Nigeria's stance on America's assaults on Libya in the Gulf of Sirte, he replied: "We must not and cannot allow states which, of their own free will, adopt policies that lead to crisis to assume that Nigeria will automatically be dragged into that crisis. That is not a position of subservience."

In the first statement, it comes to saying that if Nigeria has to serve the interest of Africa or Africans, the entity or people served should also reciprocate. And the second raises the position of Nigeria as a leader. It would amount to a position of subservience for Nigeria to allow herself to be dragged into the conflict without prior consultation. This was what the minister had in mind by saying: "If we owe a responsibility to stand for and respond to Africa, we are owed an obligation to be consulted when the situations allow for consultation."

Many problems are raised when these statements are closely looked into. First, that Nigeria owes "a responsibility to stand for and respond to Africa" may be true. If true, it is a self-imposed responsibility. It is a known fact that the size, position and material resources of Nigeria made the Francophone states to fear Nigeria and to develop cold feet when it comes to Nigeria assuming effective leadership in African affairs. Libya is another potential rival of Nigeria in the struggle for African leadership. Since Nigeria had not been specifically designated as Africa's representative, it can never be a question of obligation on the part of other African states to consult Nigeria. If Nigeria wants consultation, there must also exist a cordial understanding in this regard between Nigeria and Libya. Is there any?

Secondly, if Libya of its own free will, adopts "policies that lead to crisis," there is no problem as such since she is an independent, sovereign state like Nigeria. Libya can decide for herself and has no obligation whatsoever, as a sovereign state, to consult anyone, save where international conventions, to which Libya is a signatory, require. This is why, as a sovereign state, Libya has to bear alone, or in the main, the consequences of her decisions.

Thirdly, what is the purpose of Akinyemi's call for consultation in this case? He said that Nigeria should not be automatically dragged into the crisis because it amounts to a subservient position, because it is not a position of leadership. This shows that the minister wants a special type of consultation, in which the relationship between the parties involved will be vertical and not horizontal. The parties will be involved on unequalled basis. That is, one has to be the chief, or the leader, - and that is Nigeria - the other has to be at the tail end, and that is Libya. This type of consultation is quite different from those analyzed above and which are based on equality. This cannot be easily accepted by sovereign states, especially Libya was more or less found in an unprepared state of emergency. In this type of situation, Libya would not have been conveniently opportuned to consult any state like Nigeria. If Libya has to consult, she was likely to consult the Arab countries first. Reason: Libya's and Nigeria's foreign policy objectives are not the same. They are not allies.

Fourthly, that Nigeria is waiting to be consulted before making her stand known directly contradicts one fundamental objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy: peaceful atmosphere without which Nigeria's economic development cannot take place.

If there is war in Libya, although it will help France, Hissene Habr~ and Nigeria in the sense that Libya, a strong supporter of Goukouni Weddeye will be compelled to attend to more pressing domestic issues than coming to Chad thereby enabling France to give quick and meaningful assistance to N'djamena so as to crush the Weddeye's resistance. Nigeria will also be happy as she doesn't want any war near her territorial border - Nigeria cannot feel unconcerned. If Nigeria wants prior consultation before acting and this is not forthcoming, does it mean the nation will fold her arms and become a spectator while the war is on? Akinyemi himself admits that "a lot of situations allow for consultation." When can a situation allow for consultation? Who will determine the "when"? What form will it take? On what basis and which type of consultation? The bitter truth here is that consultation exists between allies and despite this, states consult when convenient and this prerogative is exclusively that of the would-be consulting state.

If the Akinyemi Doctrine is limited to the Libyan-American dispute, those writers who criticized it might be justified. But the minister appears to be more correct if the doctrine is weighed against Nigeria's long-term interests.

Consultation, as said above, must involve at least two people. The object of consultation must also be of interest to the parties. Whatever the form or means of the consultation (dialogues, diplomatic notes, summits, etc), the parties must believe in it. It must also be rooted in sovereign equality for it to work out effectively. But if Nigeria wants consultation based on master-servant principle, she must be militarily, politically and economically strong enough to force others to give Nigeria her due respect. Why did the United States prefer to consult the major powers and not the small African neighbours of Libya? Was this not an issue of naked power? If Nigeria has the power, the respect will also go with it. This is why the Akinyemi Doctrine should not be totally condemned. (**The Guardian**, 16 June. 1986)

1.2 Budget '97 and Foreign Policy

The 1997 budget was read last Saturday morning at 7.00 a.m. by General Sani Abacha. Christened, "Budget of Economic Growth and Development", the reading lasted for one hour. In spite of its new Christian name, the budget is more of a budget of consolidation of the gains of 1996. According to the Head of State, privatization will continue, the dual exchange rate systems, as well as government's fiscal and monetary policies will be maintained.

In fact, in terms of methodology and actors, government intends to stimulate growth and development through a number of measures: placing greater emphasis on agricultural production, especially self-reliance in food production; job creation; macro-economic stability through fiscal and monetary policy coordination; encouragement of private investment; commercialization and privatization of public enterprises; stabilization of prices and maintenance of low inflation rate and equilibrium on balance of payment, etc. All these measures are not new. What may be different from past approaches is the degree of emphasis on each of them.

However, it is significant to note that foreign policy is hardly reckoned with as a challenging method of boosting economic growth and development. Economic diplomacy, as conceptualized under Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, and as developed by General Ike Nwachukwu, as Foreign Ministers, is nothing to write home about under General Abacha. Whereas economic diplomacy is putting greater emphasis on diplomatic resources to attract foreign investments and promoting non-oil exports, in addition to the export of petroleum products.

From General Abacha's speech, the place of foreign policy clearly points to the little or no importance attached to it. It was the last topic addressed before the conclusion. Even though it can be argued that the speech responded to the logic of foreign policy concentricism - Nigeria, West Africa, Africa and the world -, the fact remains that foreign policy seems to have attracted very little enthusiasm.

This is unfortunate but Nigeria's relationship with the larger international community is likely to be greatly enhanced by the budget, but subject to the reconciliation of economic objectives with the country's political contradictions. They cannot be separately addressed.

The first factor favourable to enhancing relationship with the world is the apparent and increasing competence in economic management. In the words of General Abacha, "the external debt overhang remains worrisome." However, this does not suggest that government will quickly want to do anything about it. It should be pointed out that the budget maintained the dual exchange rate system and only noted that privatization efforts will continue in 1997, but without specifics. In this regard, the position of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is that the merging of the two exchange rates and privatization are not only necessary to bring about growth in the economy, but also a desideratum for concessional external debt rescheduling and debt relief.

This position is not in agreement with the likely attitude of the government in 1997: again in the words of General Abacha, "as a result of adroit debt management for the first time in over a decade and without fresh debt management for the first time in over a decade, and without fresh debt rescheduling, this government has succeeded in reversing the hands of rising external debt stocks." By implication, if government continues with the adroit management, not just of the debts, but also of the economy as a whole, the intervention of the IMP may not be necessary.

Secondly, General Abacha wants to move the country into the Twenty-first century with *Vision 2010*. He also wants the country, in doing so, to be a "a united and strong nation having greater impact and role to play in international affairs." On the one hand, this is possible especially in the light of the fact that he is increasingly reducing the number of strong opponents of the government. For instance, pensioners should now all be happy: civil servants who retired before 1991 are henceforth to have their pensions harmonized with those retirees who left service after 1991. Additionally, the introduction of a Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) has the prospects of bridging the hitherto long gap between the government and the suffering Nigerians who are interested in small scale and cottage industries. More

significant, he promised to settle the debts owned the local contractors and to cancel multiplicity of taxes.

Put differently, the government may be able to forge a closer link with the people. This link can be translated to goodwill and support for the government, and which is required as a source of strength in relating with foreign countries.

On the other hand, however, government efforts may be tantamount to nothing if the dilemma of political detainees is not also objectively and honestly addressed. The budget is silent on this aspect. When it is borne in mind that the thaws and tensions in Nigeria's relationship with the world are ascribable to uncertainty over Nigeria's democratic future and protection of human rights in Nigeria, continued detention without trial of political detainees may backfire and produce adverse effects on economic policies.

For instance, there is no disagreement on the fact that the United States is Nigeria's biggest oil client. It is also a truism that the United States is also the strongest opponent of military dictatorship in Nigeria. Until now, Nigerians live under the illusion that the United States cannot easily place embargo on the import of Nigerian oil. I do not belong to this school of thought. If and when the need arises, the United States can go to any extent, at least on short term purposes, to compel changes in Nigeria. Consequently, government should not under-estimate the impact of political imbroglio to the advantage of macro-economic factors.

Thirdly, new foreign investments are likely if we are to reckon with the improvements in the economy. The growth rate has gradually improved: 1.3% in 1994, 2.2% in 1995, and 3.25% in 1996. Capacity utilization increased from 29.3% in 1995 to about 32.5% in 1996. Nigeria's external debt dropped by N4,524 billion from \$32,585 billion in 1995 to \$28,060 billion in 1996. Apart from the fiscal surplus of N37 billion, representing 1.45% of the GDP, recorded in 1996, interest rate is now market determined, after it has declined from 21 % to 19% in the third quarter of last year.

However, will all these positive factors be sufficient to attract foreign investments without political stability? Can foreign policy be relegated to the background with the development of terrorism? Generally, until now, budgetary allocation to foreign affairs has always been poor. Our embassies are often under funded. In fact, it is on record that information officers posted to strategic diplomatic missions have been summoned to courts in their receiving states for non-payment of house rents. This situation arises because government and relevant ministries do not often make available to their staff the necessary funds. As a result, such officers are embarrassed even if they claim immunity from court prosecution.

This poor funding and the factor of political instability explain, to a great extent, why Nigeria's foreign relations have not been good in recent times. It is unfortunate that General Abacha could only refer briefly to ECOWAS and Liberia in his budget address.

Blacks in Diaspora want Nigeria to play a major role in world affairs. Nigeria ought to have provided a UN Secretary General. However, the international context of Nigeria's economic policies has not always

been reconciled with the domestic context. Nigeria should not make new friends and reject the old. No, she needs to keep the old friends because their qualities are different. In other words, foreign policy should, in 1997, be used to enhance the "budget of growth and development" but sufficient funds to foreign affairs must be allocated.

Today, it is expected that the Minister of Finance, Chief Anthony Ani, will give the breakdown of the budget. How much money will be allocated to foreign affairs remains a matter of speculation. But going by tradition, it may be about 3% compared to about 6% in small African countries.

If the government is to consolidate the economic gains of 1996, the political environment must be more conducive; terrorism must be nipped in the bud. Considering the transnational character of terrorism, foreign policy must continue to be non-confrontational in 1997 and used to contain terrorism by encouraging international cooperation. Foreign policy should also be used to disabuse the minds of the international community about the developments in Nigeria. But this can be costly.

More significantly, the denomination of international contracts entered into in Nigeria in Naira and the appraisal of the 145 projects financed with International Capital market (ICM) Loans are praiseworthy. As government has promised to "continue all projects to intensify and accelerate negotiations with the IMF on the urgent need for the medium Term Economic Strategy in the current year, it means that political understanding with the world has to be underscored. (**ThisDay**, 20 January, 1997)

1.3 The New Regional Challenge

If there are "daggers in the smiles of men" and if "the near in blood, the nearer bloody," as posited by William Shakespeare in *Macbeth*, then the time has, therefore, come for Nigeria's policy makers to accept a new truth: the re-affirmation of non-recognition of Nigeria's foreign policy posture in the sub-region.

In the thinking of Charles Taylor, President of Liberia, he was prevented by Nigeria from becoming President of Liberia for good seven years. In the period, Liberians suffered a lot. In the same vein, Johnny Koromah, who has actually become the *de facto* leader in Sierra Leone, thinks that Nigeria is in the forefront of those who want to unseat him. Nigeria's material assistance to many countries is ignored. That Nigeria is responsible for about one-third of ECOWAS assessed dues is not reckoned with. In fact, more unexpectedly, everyone forgets that ECOWAS decisions are not Nigeria's. The fact is simply that Nigeria has been providing the chairmanship of the Community more than other countries and that, in the context of the current Sierra Leonean saga, General Sani Abacha is not only Nigeria's Head of State, but also the Chairman of the ECOWAS.

In the light of this attitude, which, from all indications, cannot be said to be deliberate, Nigeria's foreign policy should no longer, *stricto sensu*, be predicated on Afrocentrism, but, as a matter of priority, on Nigerians. Nigeria has always been misunderstood. Its offer of altruistic policy and honesty of purpose, as a basis for intra-community relations has always been misrepresented. The recently concluded ECOWAS summit, held in Abuja, lends support to this observation.

Until now, African brotherliness, good neighbourliness, altruism, largely inform Nigeria's attitudinal policies towards ECOWAS countries; and more importantly, the need for coordinated development strategies in an inclement, international environment.

Nigeria has seen itself as a big brother, a natural leader and better endowed than many others. It believes it should show magnanimity to other sister countries. This consideration is humanitarian and Godly.

However, these gestures are wrongly seen as pointers to eventual Nigerian domination. Truly, Nigeria has all that is required to become a regional power, politically, economically and militarily. No one has doubted that Nigerians are very enterprising and can be prepared to do anything to succeed. Unlike the Francophones, Nigerians are more aggressive, if not, more; disorderly. Nigerians, in any community of foreigners in a given country, are more outspoken than others and will not hesitate to go the extra mile to defend their interests. They not only fight their home government but also query their host governments, especially in the areas of denial of justice. When diplomatic protection from Nigeria's diplomatic missions is not readily forthcoming, they often assault the missions. Organizationally and attitudinally, therefore, Nigerians have been perceived to constitute a threat in several respects.

As Francophones are more perceptibly obedient, they do not want to be corrupted by Nigerians. France has also encouraged them to live within the framework of French-speaking and culture.

So, when this fear of eventual domination Of the region by Nigeria is analyzed within the context of Liberia and Sierra Leone, it should be expected that Nigeria's call for the use of force to reject the government of Johnny Koromah would be challenged. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria was instrumental to the establishment of the ECOMOG, which was engaged in peacekeeping and peace enforcement in Liberia. In fact, the tree of liberty in Liberia was painfully wet by Nigerian blood.

Like Nigeria was instrumental to preventing Charles Taylor from taking over power by force, so is it supporting that Tejan Kabbah, an elected president, should not be ousted by force. Nigeria's involvement, therefore, goes beyond the idiosyncratic factors of Generals Babangida and Abacha. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the underlying dynamics of Nigeria's foreign policy is the need to create an enabling democratic environment as a starting point for economic development of the region. This is in spite of the fact that Nigerian authorities have been going about it in a military fashion. This might also explain why many ECOWAS countries have not sincerely appreciated Nigeria's efforts.

Again, this attitude can be ascribed to Nigeria's faulty policy implementation strategies or to West African countries' better counterstrategies, of which Nigerian authorities have not taken into account. One of these counter-strategies, it seems, is the non-disposition of other West African countries to accept what they often describe as "Nigeria throwing its weight everywhere." It is not clear whether they are against Nigeria throwing its weight all the time or against both?

This point raises many others: If there is crisis everywhere all the time, is it that Nigeria should sit on the fence rather than joining in the civil and military defence of peace and security? If Nigeria is to sit on the fence, will this attitude be consistent with the principles of good neighbourliness and African

brotherhood?

Under the Abacha administration, foreign policy cannot be said to have had the expected inputs from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an institution whose responsibility it is to guide the foreign policy formulation process. In fact, foreign policy pronouncements have not only been aggressive but have lacked tact. One even wonders what wisdom would have informed foreign policy aggressiveness without domestic foundation and justification. How do we explain the non-posting of diplomats and the restriction of consultation by the foreign minister to just a handful of some friends in a public office? Will the implication of protection of personal interests not be to the detriment of those of the larger society? Will it not explain, in part, the deficiencies in our foreign policy, and by extension, the attitude of other West African countries towards Nigeria?

The definition of Nigeria's attitude vis-a-vis ECOWAS countries has generally not taken into account the perspective of West African countries. How do Ghana and Burkina Faso perceive Nigeria's so-called leadership? Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe, once noted that Africa, without Nigeria, is hollow. Who shares this belief in West Africa? If there were to be a misunderstanding between Nigeria and Republic of Benin, what will be the position of Guinea or Mali? Senegal and Cote d' I voire are known to have reservations about Nigeria's leadership role. Guinea is known to have an objective policy position, which has not generally been determined by Francophone factors. Will this posture be sustained in the near future?

Howbeit, a new pattern of alliance is emerging in the sub-region as evidenced in the last Abuja Summit: the traditional supporters of Nigeria now seem to be on the other side, even if their reasons are tenable. And if care is not taken, we may soon have a situation whereby Nigeria may have to face an alliance of all other ECOWAS countries in the determination of foreign policy directives in the sub-region.

Fortunately, the resolution of the ECOWAS Authority to send a peacekeeping force (ECOMOG II) to Sierra Leone and thereafter to embark on total economic blockade of the country, only points to the far-sightedness of Nigeria rather than a slap on the face of Nigeria as it is being suggested in some quarters. It is not difficult to foresee that Johnny Koromah will find it very difficult to accept an embargo on food, petroleum and arms import into the country. Consequently, found in this type of situation, Koromah will want to resist and fight back, especially as he had rejected dialogue and had taken some measures to counter ECOWAS initial sanctions. If Koromah, therefore, attacks ECOWAS peacekeepers, ECOMOG, as a result *offorce majeure*, . predicated on the principle of legitimate self-defence, will be compelled to respond to the attack. Additionally, the likelihood of a war, in an attempt to enthrone peace, will be very high. Consequently, not accepting the use of force now is not at all a foreign policy failure *per se*, but rather an opportunity, probably non-deliberate, given to Koromah to see reason and accept dialogue.

The implication in the long run, is that Nigeria's foreign policy on West Africa will need the seriousness it deserves to make it effective. A re-conceptualisation has become necessary. As the need for African brotherliness and good neighbourliness cannot be compromised, these principles should be predicated on reciprocity, and made understandable and clearer to Nigeria's West African neighbours.

More significantly, many Nigerians have served in West Africa, but how far is the Foreign Minister making use of their wealth of experience? Government should, before the year 2000, if not urgently, convene a general conference of Nigeria's former and current ambassadors in the sub-region to examine the possible foreign policy scenarios of our neighbours. For instance, should we continue to have ECOMOG, ECOMOG II, etc. or should ECOMOG simply be institutionalized? What will be the position of Nigeria in, the event of an institutionalized ECOMOG and establishment of America's African Crisis Defence Force? Will Nigeria be able to sustain its leadership role by the year 2010? Will there be ECOWAS or ECOMOG by the year 2010. In fact, does Vision 2010 Committee envision these regional concerns? (**ThisDay**, 14 September, 1999)

1.4 A New Foreign Policy Posture?

It is, indeed, arguable to suggest that Nigeria's foreign policy is programmed under the Abacha administration. To a great extent, foreign policy under General Sani Abacha was more reactionary than programmed. And if it was programmed, it should be seen as a reactive programme. The reason for this cannot be far-fetched: the domestic foundation of the foreign policy was built with political bricks of confusion and discord. At the West African regional level, the confusion and discord that existed were institutional and did not have much impact on the domestic setting in the eyes of Nigerians at home. Nigeria's intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone was diversionary and uncalled for. At the international level, Nigeria has become a pariah state. She is accused of human rights abuse, anti-democratic policy decisions and repression of press freedom. Nigeria is seen as working against the spirit of the New World Order. Relationship with the major powers of the world has not been what it should be. Consequently, the international community has been very hostile. In an attempt to grapple with this hostility, the government had to adopt a confrontational posture, which some foreign policy experts have called "area boys diplomacy." Nigeria's foreign policy has, therefore, also been aggressive. But what is the situation with Nigeria's diplomacy as at today? What are the costs of Nigeria's confrontational diplomacy? What are the implications for the human development index of the country? In a nutshell, has Nigeria's foreign policy of confrontation achieved its objective?

The domestic context of foreign policy was characterised by political lull and negative impact. Firstly, it has strengthened the pro-democracy group and the human rights activists, on the one hand, and an increased support from international pro-democracy groups, on the other. This situation should also be seen within the context of the new status of human rights and increasing number of arrests of people, especially media men. As regards the status of human rights, it used to fall within the competence of sovereign states until the beginning of the post-Cold War era, when, as demonstrated in world politics, human rights question ceased to fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of states. Human rights is now being given a universal character. In fact, it has now almost become one of the preemptory norms or *ius cogens*, which cannot be derogated by any state.

Government has, for one reason or the other, closed its eyes to this new development. Several journalists have been arrested. So have a number of pro-democracy and human rights activists. There is the problem of political detention without charge or court prosecution. All these problems constitute the basis of anti-government campaign by opposition elements. But in the thinking of government, the pro-democracy and human rights activists are tools in the hands of unfriendly countries. They are seen as agents, funded by foreign countries. They are seen as unpatriotic and anti-Abacha, hence the clampdown on them. This situation naturally creates special link between the home-based pro-democracy movements and their international counterparts as well as some foreign countries and international organizations.

True enough, the opposition elements are being given international support. But the support has not been strong enough to enable the opposition elements to compel a change in situation. The best that it has done is to help sustain the domestic political lull.

Another aspect of the confrontational foreign policy is the government's unwanted popular support for the

pro-democracy groups. On many occasions, government prevented social functions organized by pro-democracy groups. Chief Bola Ige's book launch was, for instance, prevented. A diplomatic evening-get-together, organized in honour of the former US ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Walter Carrington, was also stopped. It was, without any gainsaying, a diplomatic blunder and embarrassment. Thus, many Nigerians, who did not support the human rights and prodemocracy struggle, began to have greater sympathy for them.

Perhaps, more importantly, the spokesman for foreign policy was not clearly known. Too many people spoke for Nigeria anyhow and anywhere. Such pronouncements were, at best, undiplomatic and conflicting. Diplomatic posting has been put at bay. Involvement in and input into the foreign policy process has been considerably restricted. Those who are outside of it have always been presented with *afait accompli*.

Consequently, Nigeria's foreign policy under General Sani Abacha could not be objectively appreciated. The people are hostile to the country's foreign policy posture, arguing that our intervention in the crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone was unwarranted: educational problems, poor infrastructure, poverty, high infant mortality, energy crisis etc are issues that Nigerians believe should have attracted greater attention and funding as mark of government's concern for the people of Nigeria before going to Liberia and Sierra Leone

At the regional level, government achieved its objective of bringing about a peaceable environment. The shooting war in Liberia and Sierra Leone was brought to a close. To a great extent, this was a considerable foreign policy success. However, strictly speaking, Nigeria and ECOMOG have only won the battle, and not the war. It is only the shooting war that has been won. The war, especially against Nigeria, in the areas of regional cooperation and integration cannot be said to have been nipped in the bud.

For instance, Liberia-Nigerian relationship, following the restoration of peace in Liberia, is nothing to write home about. President Charles Taylor has been very hostile to Nigeria. Some say he is only against General Sani Abacha and not against Nigerians. Probably, they are correct. But how do we explain the fact that Liberia is always interested in frustrating Nigeria's efforts in Sierra Leone? Charles Taylor, at one time, wanted an ECOMOG without Nigeria's leadership. Why is Charles Taylor supporting the Revolutionary United front and the Johnny Koromah junta against the Kabbah-ECOWAS coalition in the unrest in Sierra Leone? The point we are making here is that Nigeria incurred a lot of money and shed the precious blood of Nigerians in order to restore peace and order in Liberia. but this effort does not seem to exist in that country's book of recognition. The crisis in Sierra Leone is yet to be finally resolved as there are still some pockets of incursions here and there. Consequently, the direction and pattern of relationship between Nigeria and Sierra Leone are also yet to be determined.

But whatever is the case, General Abacha has truly done to Liberians and Sierra Leoneans, in particular, and West Africans, in general what Charles de Gaulle did to the French, even though the backgrounds and contexts are quite different. Thus, Nigeria's diplomatic confrontation seems to have succeeded.

Regarding the hostility of the international community, the bottom line of it is the general perception of General Abacha's non-preparedness to play the game with the member states of the international community. The Nigerian leader was appealed to by many of his African counterparts not to kill Kenule Saro- Wiwa and eight others. The European union leaders, as well as the American and opinion leaders, also pleaded with General Abacha who gave the impression that he would commute their sentences. In fact, he not only shocked the world by killing them, but also did so when the Commonwealth Summit was in session. This irked the organization, which decided to suspend Nigeria's membership of the organization. The European Union, because of the killing, took additional sanctionary measures against Nigeria. Several European ambassadors were recalled as a result.

That Nigerian-Canadian relationship was brought to its lowest ebb is one of the fall-outs of international hostility. The denial of hosting right of the youth soccer championship about three years ago, under the pretext of cerebro spinal meningitis is another fall out of this international hostility. The United States position on decertification on the issue of drug cannot be separated from this network of international hostility.

Britain lobbied that sports sanctions be taken against Nigeria in exchange for political concessions. Expulsion of Nigerians, travel restrictions on government officials who are close collaborators of government are pointers to the various forms of international hostility.

What should be further said is that, Nigeria's policy of confrontation failed at the home level as it pushed Nigeria's egg heads and many genuine nationalists outside the country. They have become political refugees who, now, in collaboration with the international community, also fought the Abacha administration.

In the area of Nigeria's border dispute with Cameroon, the confrontational policy is praiseworthy. Since a long time, Cameroon has always taken advantage of Nigeria's belief in non-violence and good neighbourliness. She has always attacked the Nigerian border villages. In 1981, five naval patrol officers from Nigeria were killed. Apart from this occasion, even though the Shehu Shagari government compelled Cameroon to pay compensation to the families of the deceased, Cameroonian gendarmes have always had their way until General Sani Abacha came to power. He decided to resist any form of aggression and embarrassment of Nigeria. This attitude has compelled Cameroon, which initially refused international arbitration, to now go to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for redress. The ICJ, in response to the preliminary objectives of Nigeria as to whether the ICJ has jurisdiction over the case, has now said it has jurisdiction.

Generally speaking, the implications of this confrontational attitude may be very counterproductive in essential areas that are crucial to Nigeria's survival as a nation. Nigeria was reported to have become a full-fledged member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) which now raises the issue of secularity. Government has been keeping mute on the issue by fiat.

Will Nigeria be expelled by the Commonwealth in the foreseeable future? Will the exiled Nigerians consider the option of armed struggle against the new administration? What will be the future of the

political transition programme and June 12? In fact, what will be the new foreign policy of the new administration? Time will tell. But before then, there is a pointer to a change in tactics. General Abdulsalami Abubakar has now offered a hand of friendship, dialogue and cooperation to the international community. The extension of olive branch to exiled Nigerians and the release of some detainees is a pointer to a changing attitude. If this attitude is sustained, an end to the domestic lull, increased regional respect for Nigeria, and removal of international sanctions may be the lot of Nigeria.

1.5 Foreign Policy and National Development Under General Abubakar

Before General Abdulsalami Abubakar assumed the mantle of leadership of the country on June 9, 1998, past administrations adopted various approaches towards national development. All the governments had economic development agenda that sought increased economic growth and development through foreign assistance and policies largely predicated on a mono-cultural economy. While the Murtala-Obasanjo administration embarked upon Operation "Feed the Nation," the Shagari administration continued with the operation under a new name "Green Revolution." The cardinal objective was to guarantee food self-sufficiency. The underlying consideration was that health is wealth, and that there cannot be good health without good food. In fact, people cannot work to produce with empty stomachs. If the country cannot produce to export, there will be problem of little or no foreign exchange earnings and national development in the sense of general national welfare and human development index, will remain, at best, a dream.

What is significant to note, at this juncture, is that foreign policy was minimally used as an instrument of national development until the time General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) took over power. Without doubt, before IBB, efforts were made to attract foreign investors and foreign aid, either as grants or loans, etc. The efforts were insignificant and were not vigorously pursued. In fact, foreign policy was not seriously considered as a possible major instrument of national development. Foreign policy was basically seen and implemented within a political framework and the reasons for this cannot be far-fetched.

In the First Republic, the emphasis was more or less on how to lay a solid foundation for Nigeria as a newly independent state. Although Nigeria became a Republic in 1963, the usefulness of Nigeria's independence and sovereignty was neutralized by a foreign policy of alignment. This was in spite of the self-proclaimed non-alignment policy and membership of the Non-Aligned movement. This policy was based on the consideration that "good could come from the West or the East." The truth again was that independence was declaratory, while sympathy was actually with the West. Consequently, there was no good basis to evolve an independent foreign policy that would have sought to promote national development using foreign policy as a tool. Besides, the First Republic was crisis-ridden, especially in the then Western Region. This crisis warranted much attention and the basis of the Nigerian federation had to be given priority, but of course, unsuccessfully. This led to Odumegwu Ojukwu's declaration of war in 1967.

The focus of Yakubu Gowon, who took over power in July 1967, following a coup d' etat, was on the prosecution of the war. He thought that the declaration was a joke that could be quickly nipped in the bud

within six weeks and for that matter by policemen. The war dragged on for thirty months. And during the war, the focus of foreign policy was basically on how to prevent the international community from recognizing the state of Biafra. As explained by the then, very able Federal Commissioner for External Affairs, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, Nigeria's attitude to any country would be a function of that country's attitude to Nigeria's civil war. Put differently, Nigeria would not promote good relationship with any country that had sympathy for the disintegration of Nigeria by supporting the Biafran secession. Thus, how not to dismember the country was the priority of foreign policy. The question of development was secondary. Dead people cannot develop. Development can only exist for the living, so Nigeria must survive first and this explained the rationale for the war slogan then, "to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done." After the unconditional surrender of Biafran forces on January 1, 1970, which was made known through General Effiong of the Biafran army. Government embarked on National Reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. What is again noteworthy is that the war was prosecuted without foreign aid. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, then Federal Commissioner of Finance, was placed on record to have managed very well national resources to the admiration of everyone. In fact, General Gowon refused the offer of assistance from France when the country wanted to help in 1970. What the Gowon administration did was to consider the war as a phase in the nation's history, which should not be allowed to mar Nigeria's relationship with even those countries that had helped Biafra against Nigeria.

Under General Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo, foreign policy was given impetus. It became more dynamic and *a priori* political. It was under the duo that Nigeria intensified the struggle against apartheid abroad and that effort at democratization at the domestic level, was also intensified. Protection of the Black man was of priority. Government could afford the luxury of refusing US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, entry into Nigeria. Nigeria called the bluff of Britain by nationalizing the Barclays Bank (now Union Bank) and the British petroleum. The economic development that was recorded both under General Gowon and the duo of Mohammed and Obasanjo was largely ascribable to the oil boom rather than to the use of foreign policy as an instrument of growth and development.

The situation was not different under the Alhaji Shehu Shagari administration. First, his election as president was controversial. Secondly, economic growth began to witness decline. Although the Shagari administration made strenuous efforts to encourage establishment of information centres in major overseas capitals, in order to promote a better image and sell Nigeria's economic potential to the world, there was the problem of funding which eventually led to the virtual abandonment of the centres. Funding of foreign policy and diplomatic activities began to dwindle. Besides, Alhaji Shagari had little control over his men, and had no specific foreign policy directions.

The problem did not improve under the Buhari administration. Apart from the problem of funding, General Muhammadu Buhari adopted a very confrontational posture vis-a-vis the West and its institutions and highhandedness at the domestic level. He refused to accept the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund for development loans. In an attempt to cushion the effects of little flow of financial resources and to improve on foreign exchange earnings, the Buhari regime introduced barter trade exchange of crude oil for needed items. As he did not stay long in power, his foreign policy was necessarily reactive. Main attention was on how to enforce social discipline while foreign policy as an instrument of development suffered neglect.

When general IBB ousted General Buhari in August 1985, he made consistent efforts to use foreign policy as an engine of growth. He changed the confrontational posture of his predecessor to that of openness to the world. First, his first Foreign Minister, Bolaji Akinyemi, former Director-general of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, came up with the doctrine of consultation according to which Nigeria must initially be consulted before Nigeria's support or position can be forthcoming. In his eyes, Nigeria must never be allowed to be taken for granted. Additionally, Professor Akinyemi introduced the concept of Concert of Medium Powers which later changed name to Lagos Forum. He also laid the foundation for economic diplomacy which General Ike Nwachukwu later articulated and promoted. Economic diplomacy was indeed the cornerstone of foreign policy under IBB. Foreign policy was specifically conceived to attract new investors, promote international economic cooperation, as well as diversify the economic base. Captains of industry were part of official economic delegations to overseas countries. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria became more important. However, this development was not to last as Ike Nwachukwu was replaced as Foreign Minister by Alhaji Rilwanu Lukeman. Alhaji Lukeman, at best, did nothing as Foreign Minister. Even when General Nwachukwu was re-appointed Foreign Minister, the emphasis that used to be placed on economic diplomacy was no longer there. The creation of a special bureau in the Foreign Ministry to specifically deal with the promotion of foreign aid and investments later suffered setbacks.

Under Ernest Shonekan, foreign policy was directed more at self-consolidation than on national reconciliation. It should be recalled here that General IBB annulled the results of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, that the country had been having troubled sleep since then and that it was as a result of the annulment that General IBB was compelled to "step aside." Like Alhaji Rilwanu, Chief Ernest Shonekan had a brief stay in power. He never had the time for new foreign policy making.

As for General Sani Abacha, who took over power from Chief Shonekan, foreign policy became a child's play. It was predicated on militarism and confrontation, as well as on regional peacekeeping. Foreign policy was associated with noise making that often ended in national embarrassment. Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth was suspended under the late Sani Abacha administration. International sanctions were intensified. Governance was characterized by several contradictions in official pronouncements. Reckless abuse of human rights was the order of the day. Corruption was a daily occurrence. In fact, the country was at the precipice of disintegration. Consequently, at the international level, foreign policy was reactive and combative. The killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 with eight others irked the international community which decided to make the Abacha administration realize that international politics now emphasizes the principle of inter-dependence and therefore, Nigeria could not behave in a manner that is incompatible with accepted international standards. In the face of Nigeria's political instability, characterized by bomb blast, ferocious armed robberies, and commercial assassinations, as well as international hostility, only one option was left for the Abacha administration: aggressiveness, the implication of which is isolation by other countries and anti-Abacha sentiments at home. Thus, there was no time for foreign policy planning that would have been informed by serious bureaucratic inputs. Foreign policy was more or less dictated by "His Master's Voice."

From the foregoing, in between October 1960 and June 8, 1998, foreign policy has been very reactive and not programmed. It was not designed to be an element of national development with the exception of the

IBB's administration under which economic diplomacy was given priority. Foreign policy generally underscored the political aspects of national life.

But after darkness came light. General Sani Abacha died in a miraculous way and General Abubakar also became a Head of State without coup and election miraculously. And by design too, national life began to witness new, developments. Foreign policy attitude has changed. In less than four months, General Abubakar has achieved what General Abacha could not achieve in between November 17, 1993 and June 8, 1998. This is where the discussion of the significance of foreign policy and national development under General Abubakar is of more relevance. How do we explain his foreign policy breakthrough where others have failed?

Firstly, the Abubakar administration emphasizes "shuttle diplomacy."

True enough, foreign visit is one of the major elements of foreign relations. The status of the visiting official, the manner of reception of the visitor, the nature of the "visit (state, working, private, etc), duration of the visit and contents of the *Communiqués* signed at the end of the visit, etc, all help to determine how good a relationship is. as well as the importance to be attached to the relationship.

General Abubakar has visited six countries: South Africa, Benin Republic, Togo, Britain, United States and France. The United States should be added because it is a multinational country viewed from the perspective of the principle of extraterritoriality. The Nigerian leader also visited the UN organization, which is a "common patrimony." The implications of these visits are that: by visiting South Africa first, Nigeria-South African ties in the foreseeable future will continue to warrant priority attention. The visits to Niger, Benin and Togo point also to special regional considerations in foreign policy making. Niger is the only country with which Nigeria has had no border clashes. IBB considers it Nigerians' second home. Benin is the gate way for those running out of Nigeria, while Nigeria and Togo are original members and initiators of the ECOWAS. All these suggest that Africa will still remain the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy.

As regards France, Britain and the United States, Nigeria's relationship with them is of a special nature. Concerning France, Nigeria has five contiguous neighbours, four of which are Francophones having special and privileged relationships with France. Nigeria's policy towards the neighbours has to reckon with French Policy on the neighbours. Britain was former colonial master. Education, lifestyle in Nigeria, etc, have been largely influenced by the British. The United States, though not a colonialist, was instrumental to the decolonization policies of Britain and France following the Second World War. The three of them have very strong economic relationships with Nigeria. The United States is the chief client of Nigeria in the area of oil export. The three of them have enormous investments in Nigeria. Being also permanent members of the UN Security Council, Nigeria's quest for permanent membership of the council will need the blessing of the "Triumvirate." The decision to visit the three main powers was apparently informed by enlightened self-interest. It also shows seriousness of purpose. Many may think that a visit to Benin Republic is not necessary. But if it is remembered that Benin Republic has not generally supported Nigeria's international positions beyond the framework of West Africa, a visit to Cotonou cannot but therefore be a re-assuring way of conveying brotherly solidarity to one another.

On the achievements of the visits, renewed goodwill was the major highlight. Tension between Nigeria and the Commonwealth countries and the UN is easing. Lobby for the removal of sanctions against Nigeria is on but such measures are likely to remain until hand over of power next year: the easing of tension at the home level has also been significant. Political exiles want to return home which means that the foreign visits are complementary to the domestic effort.

More significantly, General Abubakar sought new foreign investments, debt rescheduling and new partnership. There have been promises here and there, meaning again that the current Nigerian leader has opened a new window of challenges.

Before June 1998, the principles of good neighbourliness, peaceful co-existence, non-interference (with the exception of apartheid, protection of black dignity, concentricism and leadership of the black world guided foreign policy with Africa as the centre piece. Since June 9, 1998, these principles have been adhered to faithfully. The foreign policy machinery has remained the same: Presidency, Foreign Ministry, NIIA, NIPSS, Nigerian embassies etc. But the environment at the world level, has been that of a New World Order (NWO) which emphasizes collective action against opponents of the NWO, protection of human rights and democratization. At the domestic level, political tension is being eased gradually. A new foundation is being laid. But it is not yet clear whether the foundation will be strong enough to contain Nigeria's centrifugal problems (quest for true federalism: revenue allocation, restructuring of the military, power shift, etc).

Whatever is the case, Abubakar's visits show the vision and personality. They also show that a leader can make or mar the peace and security of a nation. The military caused the political imbroglio in the country and is also solving the problem. Nigerians should therefore bare their minds on how to bring about a better day to come in Nigeria by supporting the government. In order to truly make the Abubakar administration an instrument of change for the better, all the coup plotters should be released now. Only hardened criminals should be behind the bars. Let all Nigerians forgive themselves so that there will be a basis for love. At the external level, foreign policy should be directly used as instrument of national development. (**ThisDay**, 03 October, 1998)

1.6 Nigeria's Foreign Policy in Global Historical Perspective

On Wednesday, October 21, the Unilag community played host to the first public lecture of the session in the University, the second from the Faculty of Art, the 26th lecture since the advent of the Professor Jelili Adebisi Omotola's administration and the 110th lecture since the inaugural lecture series began on October 3, 1962 with "The Place of Physiological Science in Medicine" by Professor F. O. Dosekun. The 1998 inaugural lecture was delivered by Professor Akinjide Idowu Oladepo Ishola Osuntokun, a diplomatic historian, international relations analyst and a former ambassador. The topic of his lecture was "Nigeria's Foreign Policy in Global Historical Perspective." The lecture raised directly and indirectly the essence of good leadership and management. In fact, it was not simply a deep reflection on Nigeria's foreign policy since independence and a reactive assessment, it was also a reflection of the new Jelili Omotola phenomenon. The lecture was well prepared and competently delivered. There were not less than five hundred listeners in the venue: Unilag's auditorium.

The background of the podium was colourful: the seats were in red colour while the high table was covered with a combination of yellow cloth on white. The lecture was delivered, with the aid of audio-visual equipment: as the lecture was being delivered, the text and supporting images were also simultaneously shown. Thus, there was the option to either watch and read the lips of the lecturer or follow the magnified video monitor. The first citizen of the academic citadel, Professor Jelili Omotola was flanked to his left by the Deputy Vice-chancellor (administration), Mr. S. A. Adekola, the Dean of Faculty of Arts, Professor Eruvbetine and Professor Osuntokun. And to his right were Mr. Wale Aderibigbe, the University registrar, Professor O. A. Odeyemi, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (academic), and Mrs. Dada, the Academic Secretary. Notable personalities occupied the front rows of the auditorium. Gen. Ike Nwachukwu (rtd.), former Foreign Affairs Minister, General Olusegun Obasanjo, former Head of State and a catalytic proponent of good governance, etc. were there.

Inspite of the beautiful decor' of the auditorium, there was the problem of poor cooling system. Without any jot of doubt, new giant standing fans were provided in the venue but they were of little effect bearing in mind that the auditorium has no windows for inlet of air. The Vice-Chancellor himself recognised the inconveniences. He had already reached agreement with Mandilas, the original supplier for the repairs. A sum of seven million naira had already been incurred on the giant cooling system. He has recently also approved three and a half million for the procurement of the necessary spare parts from Europe.

The lecture was interesting and symbolic from many perspectives. Firstly, the inaugural lecturer was born on April 26,1942 while Professor Omotola's administration began on April 26, 1995. Thus, both the lecturer and the VC have good reasons to celebrate every April26. In point of fact, the lecture was initially slated to take place in April 1998 but because the lecturer "could not possibly be in two places at the same time since (he) was under state detention," the lecture had to be rescheduled. Secondly, the lecture took place on the eve of activities organised to mark the 36th Founders Day Celebration of the university which began on October 22 with a declaration of a "University Free Day" by the VC. Thirdly, the lecture was partly a reflection of theory and practice of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence. Professor Osuntokun combined classroom experience with his experience as special adviser in the foreign ministry and as ambassador to Germany. Fourthly, Professor Osuntokun's lecture was the first to directly focus on Nigeria's foreign policy since the commencement of the inaugural lecture series. In between October 1962 and October 1998, emphasis was on paramedical, engineering, education and legal topics, with accommodation for the social science from time to time. Foreign policy, which, in advanced countries, is generally taken seriously by all and sundry because of its implication, not only for sovereign states and policy planning but also for the citizens of the author-country, was ignored. It is from this perspective that Professor Osuntokun's lecture was of significance especially that he examined Nigeria's foreign policy, from the perspective of a historical method. Fifthly, and more importantly, the lecture was given at a time the foundations of the Fourth Republic were being laid. Presidential aspirants and their political stalwarts were given the opportunity to begin to address the foreign policy directions in the next republic. The lecture should, therefore, be seen as a message and a call for deeper reflection.

In the lecture, Professor Osuntokun provided a cursory analysis of the role of diplomacy and place of history. While he argued that the power school saw "diplomacy" as holding operation before countries were ready to unleash, with all its ferocity, destructive and offensive power of the state," thus making

some treaties nothing more than "a *chiffon de papier*" (rough sheet of paper), he noted that "knowledge is historical." Man logically builds on the achievements of those who have toiled in the same field in the past. Progress in all fields of human endeavour takes knowledge and experience of the past as points of departure in the constant search for truth and knowledge ... Historical knowledge is so fundamentally important that no society can make progress without it. As a subscriber to the positive idea of history, the reason for the choice of topic of the lecture by Professor Osuntokun could therefore not be far-fetched.

The positivist historians posited that "inspite of the variable factor of the human element, one can make predictions about the future course of events if things remain equal and firmly rooted on the knowledge of the past." Thus, the intention of Professor Osuntokun was to provide a historical background analysis as a pointer to foreign policy trends in the future. And that he did well.

The lecture was essentially in two main parts. The first part, covering almost half of the lecture, focused attention on the evolution of the dynamics of international politics right from the signing of the 1648 Westphalia Treaty which ended the Thirty-year War (1618-1648) to the present. In this period, international relations was predicated on two ideas: The first is that a state's policy should be guided by its national interest (doctrine of *raison d'état*). The consideration of *raison d'état* warranted a balance of power politics which was aimed at ensuring that no one single country was allowed to dominate European affairs. The second idea was that of *real politik* which was the acceptance of the world as it is and making the best out of it. As put by the inaugural lecturer, "the ideal world is utopian and can only be found in the realm of ideas but the political world is utopian and can only be found in the realm of ideas. .. This idea of *real politik* became the dominant idea of international relations until the eve of the First World War." The outcome of the politics of balance of power and *real politik*, he said, was the First World War.

International relations between 1945 and 1998 were characterised by the introduction of weapons of mass destruction at the level of the two super powers; undoing of the diktat imposed by the 1919 Versailles Treaty on the vanquished nations at the level of Italy and Germany; containment of communism (Truman doctrine) through regional military pacts and alliances in Europe (NATO), in the Middle East (Baghdad Pact), in Asia (SEATO). etc., introduction of balance of terror and Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) at the level of the United States. policies of non~ alignment at the level of African and other developing countries, etc.

On the place of Nigeria's foreign policy in global politics, Professor Osuntokun explained some of the dynamics and the general features of the policy since 1960. While the big population of the country informed the acceptance to provide leadership of the black world, the factor of Nigeria being a federation of contending political persuasion compelled the adoption of consensual positions on foreign policy in the First Republic. As submitted by Prof. Osuntokun, it was "the rule rather than the exception." Even with the religious dichotomy between the North and the South, there was hardly any area of foreign policy in which the political parties differed. The three political parties, the Northern People's Congress, the Action Group, and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens were all pro-West in their orientation and capitalist in their economic thinking and action. It was not until disillusionment set in shortly after independence that the opposition party, the Action Group, began to manifest radical socialism and pro-soviet policies.

The oil boom, following the civil war, was another major dynamic that enabled Nigeria to move from over dependence on the West "to a balanced relationship with the Soviet Union and the Eastern block." Nigeria was able to initiate the creation of the ECOWAS, support liberation movements in Southern Africa, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, promote the interests of Blacks in Diaspora, etc.

Professor Osuntokun also highlighted the major achievements under the various administrations, especially under General Babangida, who promoted economic diplomacy, created the Corporate Affairs Commission to facilitate registration of companies, abrogated the indigenisation decree which prevented foreign participation in certain sectors of the economy, initiated the establishment of G 15 (group of developing, medium income Afro-Asian Countries), promoted the signing of the 1991 Abuja Treaty on African Economic community in the belief that a Continental market of 800 million people would serve as an attractive market for foreign investors, etc.

But, inspite of all these efforts, there were no commensurate economic dividends for many reasons: inability to institute a democratic regime, opening up of Eastern European market at the same time Latin America, China and South East, Asia were doing same etc. More significantly, foreign policy under the late General Sani Abacha was at the expense of the well being of Nigerians. In his words, "we have been successful at considerable cost to our psyche and exchequer in helping to stabilize the political situation in our region through imposing an uneasy peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone. But this has been at the expense of the well being of our people who have suffered untold economic deprivation and loss of their fundamental human rights.

Consequently, he made a number of recommendations on the way forward: need to develop a democratic culture, revamp the economy with the objective of making Nigeria the Japan of Africa, restructure the ECOWAS by particularly removing its formalistic nature and destroying the "Berlin Wall" between Nigeria and the Cote d'Ivoire, promotion of a better entente with the immediate neighbours by especially creating a Gulf of Guinea Commission and implementing the African Economic Community Treaty, develop a highly mobile and efficient armed forces that will be strong enough to reflect the country's leadership responsibilities, as well as effectively respond to the peacekeeping and peace enforcement requirements of the UN. And more importantly, foreign policy must be taken more seriously; the choice of foreign affairs officers and appointment of Foreign Minister must be done with greater caution and objectivity. In this regard, there should be a National Security Adviser to advise the Head of State on daily basis on the implications of developments in the international scene and a Council on Foreign Relations to be made up of members from the Universities, business community, armed forces, relevant research institutes, and the ranks of retired diplomats, etc. Professor Osuntokun also suggested the need to prevent the frequent frictions between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his Minister of State-whose jurisdiction has been 111 defined, by possibly creating a separate Ministry for Islamic Affairs.

All these suggestions are good but what about the problem of implementation or the 'Nigerian Factor'? Is it not the personality of who is in power that matters rather than the creation of new structures even if they are necessary?

In the Unilag, for instance, 84 inaugural lectures were delivered between 1962 and April 1995 when

Professor Jelili Omotola took over. In this case, there were no lecturers in the period 1963 and 1967, 1970, 1992, 1982, 1984 and 1993-1995. In the years there were lectures, the highest number of lectures recorded was 7 and this was in 1976, 1990 and 1991. Whereas in about two and a half years (April 1995 to October 1998,) Prof. Omotola has organized 26 lectures (2 in 1996, 11 in 1997 and 13 in 1998) compared with 84 lectures in 30 years. Even if we argue that the few lectures recorded every year might be due to environmental crises, how do we explain the fact that Jelili Omotola has become a catalytic agent of change and development? He initiated UNILAG Today, a quarterly news magazine as an official medium of communication which is being edited by Prof. Ralph Akinfeleye. He has adopted a housing policy aimed at making staff become landlords. Earlier in the year, he gave a grant of one million naira to allottees of plots of land at Pasada and Oke-Osa. He has, with the help of Chief Wahab Iyanda Folawiyoy, extended the Health Centre of the University. With the extension, the center has been upgraded to a medical center. He has built a two-storey Unilag Consult Complex at a cost of N20.8 million. He installed on April 20, 1998 a N44 million digital hi-tech telephone system, which has a capacity for 50 trunk lines and 20,048 extensions and which is said to be the most modern in Africa.

Under Professor Omotola, the Unilag has become the first Nigerian University to have its library automated with the provision of Internet and E-mail services.

More interestingly, he has again acquired 120 plots of land for staff housing scheme at Kaiyetero on Lagos-Epe Expressway and has returned the university to the normal academic calendar. If Jelili Adebisi Omotola has been able to modernize the sports center, refurbish the Faculty of Arts building, increase staff Housing Loan from N300,000 to N500,000 and has released more than N60 million for development in the Faculty of Engineering etc. then the personality of the man cannot be ordinary. In the same vein, if there is to be a renovation at the level of the Foreign Ministry, the personality of the foreign minister and his subordinates must not be ordinary. Prof. Omotola holds meeting with his collaborators virtually all nights on development strategies. He goes the extra mile to secure help from outside of the university. Will there be a foreign minister or any minister who will be prepared to do same?

Apart from the issue of personality, Professor Osuntokun agreed with Palmerston's popular saying that there are no permanent enemies but permanent interests. We believe that it has become necessary to qualify this statement because the permanency or non-permanency of an enemy is directly a resultant of the nature and type of the interest at stake. If an interest is self-preservation at all costs, and neighbouring states are against, it goes without saying that such a country will have a permanent enemy. Besides, the permanency or non permanency of an enemy is also a function of political will. For instance, the US, Israel, European Union etc. have very hostile attitude to terrorism.

The US had a no compromise policy vis-a-vis communism at one time. Consequently, if an interest is permanent, and the permanent interest is to maintain hostility for self-preservation and survival, then there cannot but be permanent suspicions and enemies. Unless it is to be argued that no interest can be permanently defended and which will be absurd as a hypothesis. There is no way, for instance, there will not be mutual suspicions in Franco-Nigerian relationship because Nigeria is enveloped by Francophone neighbours in which France wields considerable influence.

More significance, Prof. Osuntokun also said: "essentially the foreign policy of any country is the policy of the incumbent Head of State." In the context of Nigeria, this is true because of the military system in place. Appointments of ambassadors are not subject to any parliamentary approval. Policy making can have inputs from here and there but the position of the Head of State counts. However, ambassadors should not be seen as personal representatives as it used to be in the era of classical diplomacy. To do so may encourage a Head of State to go beyond constitutional provisions in foreign policy actions. In the context of elected presidents, ambassadors can be considered as personal representatives of Heads of States or Presidents. Apart from this, ambassadors should represent the sending governments and peoples of their various countries.

Whatever is the case, Professor Osuntokun has made very useful suggestions that should constitute a diplomatic food for thought. Professor Jelili Omotola has also called for the establishment of a "Centre for the Training of Professional Diplomats. The center, he said, should be located in the Faculty of Law of the Unilag. He, in addition, also announced that as from the 1999/2000, mathematics, along with English, would be required for JAMB admission in all courses of the University.

Whatever will be the situation, Professor Omotola was happy to welcome everyone to 'the Wonders of Unilag' while Professor Osuntokun was also happy to say; "I have paid my dues". The VC agreed that his claim was valid and that he was a "modest person". It was on this note that the lecture which he declared open with "please be seated" at 5.25p.m. was brought to a close at 6.55p.m. But the lecture continued informally at the University's Guest House where RSVP did not mean "Repondez S'il vous plait" but Rice and Stew very Plenty." (**ThisDay**, 31 October, 1998)

1.7 Foreign Policy Foundations Under Obasanjo

The foundations of foreign policy under President Olusegun Obasanjo are likely to be very weak and destabilising because of their implications and contradictions. Politically, the structures are fragile. Economic wise, there is nothing to write home about, especially in the light of our human development index which is low. The position of the press is not certain. Besides, foreign policy institutions have generally been inactive, particularly because of underfunding. In fact, there is contradiction between the domestic and international environments. Even though the election of General Obasanjo as president-elect is no longer a major issue, many Nigerians are agreed that the line of direction of foreign policy is still shrouded in uncertainty.

For instance, some look at the President-elect as a soldier to the core in spite of his long date of retirement. Some others see in him a Northern-sponsored candidate. Some people also say he is an agent of the Maradona of Nigerian politics, General Ibrahim Babangida. Some describe him as a non-professional politician whose charity begins not from home but outside of his home, this is because he does not enjoy popular support from the Yoruba states. If all these considerations are valid, then General Obasanjo ought to be praised for not only being a focus of attention but for also belonging to many shades of opinions. While this may be good, the problem is that General Obasanjo has not always made his position very clear at the level of every opinion. What has been made crystal clear is his preparedness to use the international environment to address domestic problems in Nigeria. His world tour attests to this.

As revealed by Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, a member of Obasanjo 's entourage, the world tour of the president-elect was not at all wasteful. He said the visit enabled the building of a reservoir of goodwill for Nigeria, promised economic assistance and flow of development aid, pledged IMF support, preparedness of our creditors to review their position on Nigeria's request for debt relief, assurance of many Nigerian experts living abroad to return home, etc. In fact, Alhaji Rimi put it this way: "we are on the edge of history, something great and beautiful beckons on the horizon, and Nigerians are ready for it. The world must give us a chance and Nigerians at home and abroad must support it." Although there is need for caution in planning on the basis of political promises, there is no disputing the fact that the international environment is likely to be conducive and friendly to Nigeria's foreign policy posture. The domestic pillars of the policy, however, are not likely to be so strong. The environment may not be very conducive unless General Obasanjo adopts a radical approach to both policy making and implementation at the domestic level.

In this regard, the perception and attitude of the Nigerians towards national questions is the main problem to initially address. Even if General Obasanjo claims not to be a magician, it should be said here that no magician anywhere in the world is capable of solving Nigeria's problems. Only Godliness, predicated on truth and honesty of purpose, can bail Nigeria out of her ordeal. For instance, what can a magician do to solve the problem of corruption which has been characterised by a *laissez faire* attitude? What is worrisome is not simply that there is corruption in Nigeria. The dilemma is that we know that there is corruption but everyone tries to promote its acquiescence. In the thinking of many Nigerians, General Abdulsalam Abubakar cares less about this problem and that his priority is to hand over power and be in peace with himself thereafter.

General Obasanjo has not helped the matter by not making known his position on what to do with visibly corrupt public officials. Thus, he is being seen as likely to condone the 'past.' This perception is in itself unfortunate because there is nothing to suggest that General Obasanjo will not be a born-again president. After having been framed up in a coup, after suffering in prison but luckily released, after revealing that he had become a born-again, a situation which neutralises allegations of his membership of the Ogboni secret cult, the president-elect should be expected to govern on the basis of the fear of the Lord and Godliness. That he is likely to sell out the Yoruba people becomes untenable in this context. The beauty of this argument is, however, neutralised when it is borne in mind that General Obasanjo's military contacts are still strong and intact and that he has been making some contradictory pronouncements on what to do with corrupt officials.

Another domestic pillar of foreign policy is the military factor. Nigerians look at the election of General Obasanjo as a mere change of personality within continuity of the same military agenda. The military does not want to check out. In fact, Government has been asked why oil contracts were given to companies belonging to military officers. Some have queried why a section of the military is calling for a standing Armed Forces Council that will comprise senior military officers. In the eyes of the people, this is an attempt to derogate the constitutional powers of the president, as well as prevent him from being the Commander-in-Chief. If Government is now showing seriousness in its privatisation agenda, some people said, it is to enable wealthy military officers take advantage of it.

It is important to recall the problem of the Service Chiefs. The Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshall AI-Amin Daggash, had said that only the Head of State and the Chief of General Staff have to quit on May 29, being political office holders. The Service Chiefs do not have to, because they are part of the military set up, they are not politicians. Many Nigerians do not share this view, especially that it consciously distorts international history. All over the world, the appointment of Service Chiefs is political. And without having to go too far for justification, the very proposition of a standing Armed Forces Council is an illustration on its own. Press reports have it that the standing Armed Forces Council being proposed is expected to recommend to the president names of military officers for consideration and possible appointment into the office of the Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Air Staff, Chief of Naval Staff, General Officers Commanding, Flag Officers Commanding, Air Officers Commanding, Inspector-General of Police etc. The question is this: how can the choice of a candidate be totally devoid of political idiosyncrasies? As put by Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife, former Anambra State Governor, the military is readily a threat to democracy because "the Nigerian military is still as it was in 1993 and even now there is a dangerous dimension to it." Additionally, the conclusion of Mega Force of last April 7 in the *Nigerian Tribune*, points to a dangerous future: if the military think that by wearing uniform and learning how to shoot they could control an unfriendly populace, let them try and see what the result will be. Bosnia or Somalia or Liberia, whichever way, everybody will be a loser. At the level of the national economy, there are problems of unemployment and increasing inflation. Two weeks ago, the CBN devalued the Naira by about 4.5%: from N85.25 to N90 to the US dollar. Whether or not the CBN wants to control the rising demand for foreign exchange at the Autonomous Foreign Exchange Market, or it is responding to the IMP Managing director's (Michel Camdessus) remark that the naira is overvalued at N86 to the dollar, the truth is that Nigeria's human development index is poor. The purchasing power of the people is low whereas inflation is on the increase. According to a former Finance Minister, "inflation is just one of the symptoms of a sick economy. Sick economy portends a serious danger both socially and politically."

The press is another foundation that cannot be ignored. Considering the press as a factor, the Yoruba component is also important. The Yoruba are sharply divided on the second coming of General Obasanjo. What will be the position of the press: partners in progress or in dispute? Will it uphold the truth?

The crux of all these points and question is that the domestic foundation of foreign policy, as it is now, is not good unlike that of the International environment. Nigeria's image even at the home level is bad: power failure in Kano and at the liberty stadium, during world cup matches:

Fuel scarcity when foreigners are still here, etc. The attitude of the Nigerian is responsible. If a new and strong foundation is to be laid, General Obasanjo should begin to liken foreign policy to a human being whose existence is characterized by self-helplessness at the level of infancy and shaped by the environment at the middle and old age. Put differently, the objective of foreign policy is human being. The failure or success of foreign policy, therefore depends largely on the Nigerian as a person. Consequently, efforts should be initially made to secure the understanding and support of all Nigerians through general enlightenment on the Obasanjo agenda. Their perception of the Nigerian problem must be changed. This is necessary for general economic development and particularly for foreign policy directions. (**ThisDay**, 12 April 1999)

1.8 Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under Gen. Abubakar

Foreign policy under the General Abdulsalami Abubakar administration is based on a three-pronged strategy and principle: reconciliation, redress and renewal. The principle of national reconciliation is informed by the need to ease political tension and provide an acceptable platform for national mobilisation and unity. But the application of this principle also depends on the adoption of another principle, that of national redress. National life has been characterised by unfairness, injustice and reckless corruption. This situation has to be redressed in order to also create another foundation for a new Nigeria that will be free from any scintilla of incorrigibility, ethnic suspicions, and renewal and national myopia. This is the principle of renewal. The three principles are intertwined and have been adopted simultaneously since the inception of the Abubakar administration about a year ago.

Nigeria's foreign policy in the past one year has been particularly interesting for two reasons: first, it is a policy that largely seeks international understanding to resolve a national crisis. Thus, and *stricto sensu*, foreign policy is not, in this case, an extension of domestic policies but vice versa. At the domestic level, Nigerians were already fed up with the military which had lost its credibility. Making direct appeal to Nigerians will not suffice. General Abubakar's strategy consists of convincing the international community that had taken sanctionary measures against Nigeria. The cardinal objective here is not only to prevent the adoption of new sanctions against Nigeria but also to seek support and assistance for the new administration.

The foreign policy is also interesting because it is unidirectional in strategy and multi-dimensional in implementation. Unidirectional in the sense that the strategy was essentially based on using the political transition programme to convince both Nigerians and the international community of Abubakar's determination to truly hand over power to an elected government come May 29, 1999. In this regard, as General Abubakar makes a policy pronouncement, he tries to also back it up with action, a situation which has led to the perception of his regime as a serious one.

Multi-dimensional in implementation as well, because of the nature of his reconciliation effort, his development agenda, and attitudinal disposition to national questions. On the one hand, the regime wants national reconciliation but, on the other hand, does not want to predicate the reconciliation on justice. This makes the foreign policy of the administration difficult to understand. Without any iota of doubt, the foreign policy is not programmed, that is, not anticipatory. It is reactive because there are problems at home. Consequently, the objective of foreign policy efforts is to seek international help in the form of support, flow of financial assistance, new investment, economic cooperation etc. in redressing the problems.

In writing and understanding the current history of Nigeria under General Abdulsalami Abubakar, and particularly Nigeria's foreign policy, it may be useful to first of all draw a link between Nigeria and Rome. When Professor M. Carry wrote his *History of Rome*, he noted that "the best that can be said of the Second Triumvirate of Rome, Nov. 43 B. C. is that it was ruinously wasteful in men and wealth and it rested on nothing firmer than a precarious balance of essentially antagonistic annihilations. Its eventual

collapse was a foregone conclusion."

This situation was in no way different from the situation in Nigeria before June 9, 1998 when General Abubakar came to power. At that time, Nigeria was similarly "ruinously wasteful in men and wealth." The wealth of experience of Nigerians is never tapped to the maximum. Because of personal whims and caprices of Nigerians who happen to be in position of power, many other Nigerians have been retired from active service. Public embezzlement is no longer a big deal. Ethnicism and myopia did not enable those in power to adopt the principle of putting the right person in the right position. In fact, ambassadors who are at the peak of their productivity are retired, fine soldiers are sent packing. This is a serious waste in man and wealth.

Truly again, Nigeria operated on a "precarious balance of essentially antagonistic ambitions", leadership in Nigeria has not been really that of service to the nation but that of self-survival which has been to the detriment of the development of a healthy Nigeria". It cannot be a gainsaying to suggest here that Nigeria was, indeed, at the precipice of collapse by the time General Abubakar took over the leadership of the country. Crisis was the foundation of Nigeria's foreign policy under the administration of General Abubakar.

It was *a priori* a foundation of divisiveness. Nigerians were sharply divided over the self-succession bid of the late General Sanj Abacha, the alleged doctoring and non-availability of the 1995 Draft Constitution, relevance or irrelevance of the office of the First Lady, Islamisation of national edifices in Abuja, diplomatic isolation of Nigeria, political and economic squander-mania, coupled with armed robberies and social unrest. For instance, war was declared on the press. Community clashes were rampant, especially in the oil areas. So were academic unrest and trade disputes. Abuse of human rights was at its crescendo, a situation which brought to streets the pro-democracy group and human rights activists. Energy crisis had become part of the Nigerian life: at times, Nigeria was without fuel, kerosene, water, gas etc. at the same time. In short, Nigeria's human development index was, at best at its lowest ebb. Nigeria's diplomacy had to be described as an "area boy and motor park diplomacy" because the Abacha Administration gave the concept of diplomacy a confrontational and *manu militari* meaning, as well as condoned ethnic witch-hunting in the foreign ministry.

It should be noted, however, that General Abacha provided effective leadership in ECOWAS efforts to maintain regional stability and economic integration, especially in the area of support for the ECOMOG and resolution of the saga in Sierra Leone. The Abacha administration is also on record to have done its best in resolving the border dispute with Cameroon. Although the matter is yet to be adjudicated by the International Court of Justice, no government in Nigeria can be said to have actively shown seriousness more than General Abacha in resolving the dispute once and for all.

This was the situation as at the time Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar providentially assumed the mantle of leadership of Nigeria on June 9, 1998. Providentially, because the death of General Abacha at the time it occurred was not expected. Not even his Marabouts gave Nigerians any hint. Gen. Abacha died at the height of his power, at the time he was fully wrapped up in the glory of a power that could not be confronted, and at a time he was to change his official designation from Head of State to President by

initially promulgating a decree to that effect. General Abacha dreamt dreams but God turned the dream into wishful thinking by taking his life and giving Nigeria and Nigerians another leeway for self-reappraisal.

Providentially again, because General Abubakar was then politically unknown in Nigeria. Naturally his personality is quiet. He was number three in the military hierarchy, by that time. In terms of state succession and military discipline, it was number two man, General Oladipo Diya, that should have ascended to the number one position. What General Diya wanted unsuccessfully through a "framed up" coup, General Abubakar joyfully got it on a platter of gold. The crux of the points here is that, if, according to some press reports, both General Abubakar and his deputy, Mike Akhigbe, had already been slated for retirement from the service by General Abacha before he gave up the ghost, how do we explain the undoing of man's plan for their retirement and God's approval of their coronation as Head of State and Chief of General Staff? We believe that there is the hand of God in it.

Beyond this providential factor, Nigeria's foreign policy since June 1998 should first be seen as an individual attitude, then as a national attitude which is largely influenced by the personality of General Abubakar and then as an emanation of the domestic situation in the country. Put differently, Nigeria's foreign policy behaviour in the past one year has been influenced by the providential nature of Gen. Abubakar's ascension to power, the hostility of the international community to military rule in Nigeria especially before June 1998, and the unrelenting opposition of the social forces which requested for the release of political detainees and grant of amnesty to coup plotters and convicts as a basis for national reconciliation.

General Abubakar is the first Nigerian leader to enjoy popular support since the June 12, 1993 presidential election imbroglio. He became the number one citizen without any coup d'etat, without election and without qualms. His tenure of leadership is not only the shortest (if he hands over on May 29, 1999). In fact, his leadership has also attracted the least opposition from the public. This situation explains, in part, Gen. Abubakar's attitude to governance.

Additionally, Gen. Abubakar recognised that Nigerians want Nigeria to become the *terra cognita* of discipline, hard work, corruption free society, freedom and democratic culture. Hence, he did not hesitate to give the Foreign Minister free hands to operate but this "laissez faire" attitude has been abused to an extent. This can be seen in the context of the open disagreement between the Foreign Minister and his Minister of State. There is also the quarrel over the Foreign Minister's reaction to the request for a more convenient official residence for Nigeria's ambassadors in Paris. The current ambassador is located in Paris 16e (Park Saint James). In fact, while it is praise-worthy that the Foreign Minister tried to fill the ambassadorial positions, which have been vacant since 1992, with professional diplomatists, the exercise has not been devoid of hypocrisy: there were diplomats who returned from Europe in 1997 and 1998 and who have been re-posted. Whereas, many are the careerists who have been waiting patiently for six years and more for their turn.

What is important is not the diplomatic intrigues or unfairness but the fact that the Abubakar administration is making attempts to sanitise the Foreign Ministry, improve on Nigeria's international

image and provide a new foundation for the Fourth Republic. In doing this, General Abubakar presented himself as a peace maker and took a number of measures to move Nigeria from its status of a pariah state to that of an active participant in world affairs. As noted earlier, he chose national reconciliation as an objective in order to ease political tension.

At the domestic level, he released political detainees and coup convicts; restored press freedom to an extent; reviewed the salary of civil servants; abrogated the obnoxious decrees that antagonised human rights; gave national honours to 755 Nigerians; organised a luncheon for former Heads of State, their deputies and top government officials on December 13, 1998 to solicit their support in the resolution of the crisis; he appointed (sic) new justices to the Supreme Court; he deregulated fuel importation.

Although the notorious Decree 2 of 1984, which allowed for the detention of people without trial, is yet to be abrogated, General Abubakar told Nigerians that he would not apply the decree. Until now, the soft-spoken General has not eaten his words. He dismantled the Abacha political machinery, made the debate on Abacha's self-succession irrelevant by dissolving government's political parties and by paving way for the natural emergence of three new parties: Peoples Democratic Party, All People's Party and Alliance for Democracy.

Thus, General Abubakar made it clear that he would restore power to the civilians next May 29 and has been matching his words with action. This is why he has succeeded in luring Nigerians to his side. Nigerians considered that he should be given an opportunity because of the nature of his ascension to power.

At the international level, Nigeria's foreign policy strategy consists of moving from isolation to rapprochement with the international community, as well as seeking support for Nigeria's transition programme. And to a considerable extent, international support has been forthcoming.

The International Monetary Fund had shown interest in returning to Nigeria. A British trade delegation visited Nigeria in December 1998. Mr. Brian Wilson, the British Minister of Trade who led the trade delegation, supported Nigeria's efforts at democratisation but condemned corruption in Nigeria. Former President Jimmy Carter came to Nigeria on a three-day visit last January. The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, was in Nigeria last month. In fact, Aso Rock has been playing host to many international guests and General Abubakar has been traveling out extensively.

While the farthest distance made by the late General Abacha was from Nigeria to Sierra Leone, General Abubakar has traveled out of the sub-region to all parts of Africa, Europe and America. Nigeria, under Gen. Abubakar, has been, active in ECOWAS affairs: the Head of State sent in February 1999 the Inspector-General of Police, Alhaji Ibrahim Ahmadu Coomasie, to President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone to assure him of Nigeria's commitment to the pursuit of peace in Sierra Leone. Alhaji Coomasie had also been sent earlier on to Libya's Moammer Ghaddafi to discuss the peaceful resolution of the Sierra Leonean crisis. The Head of State personally participated in the December 1998 OAU summit held in Ouagadougou.

What should be underscored here is that the international community appreciates the transition to civil rule but refuses to take any positive step to help Nigeria. Even though the IMP boss, Mr. Michel Camdessus, showed keen interest in returning to Nigeria, the conditions are made difficult: the IMP is insisting on the finalisation of the discussions on the SMP (Staff Maintained Programme), which is made a prerequisite for negotiating the medium term economic strategy (MTES) for Nigeria. Besides, the IMP is insisting on the abolition of dual exchange rate, removal of subsidies and increased privatisation.

The United States has ruled out debt relief for Nigeria. The Commonwealth has said that the re-admission of the country cannot take place before May 19, 1999. Thus, Nigeria's problem is yet to be meaningfully solved on a long-term basis. However, Nigeria's foreign relations are gradually improving but not without complaints at the domestic level. The Abubakar government talks about the need for a corruption free society but does not want those that are engaged in the malpractice to be prosecuted. Government said that there is no sufficient basis to try the culprits but the same government admitted that it had recovered N65.96 billion from Abacha's close collaborators.

In the same vein, Government attempted to make a nonsense of the transition programme by conferring 41 of the 63 Grand Commander of the Federal Republic awards to military officers. In fact, various press reports point to increasing corruption in the Abubakar administration.

As a matter of fact, the administration is currently faced with the problem of extra-budgeting spending to the extent now that some Nigerians have gone to court to ask that General Abubakar should not only explain the situation but also to compel him to declare his assets. When all these factors are considered, the sincerity of purpose of the Head of State may have to be doubted.

There is therefore need for more openness predicated on fairness. Nigeria's foreign policy under General Abubakar has been so far so good. (**ThisDay**, 23 May, 1999)

1.9 Foreign Policy Agenda After May 29

The independence and sovereignty of any nation-state will be meaningless if she is not able to influence or make inputs into the making of international decisions that will directly or otherwise affect her. This is why the handover of the instrument of power by General Abdulsalami Abubakar, last Saturday, May 29, to the President-elect, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, was not only a watershed in Nigeria's history of political survival but also an invitation to further reflection on whether Nigerians still want to operate on the basis of "divided we are, united we agitate" at the domestic level and whether Nigeria can make herself relevant in world politics at the international level.

The thrust of this article is that Nigeria and Nigerians do not have any choice as regards the place of Nigeria in world affairs. As the depository of Black cultures through the CBAAC (Centre for Black African Arts and Culture), the most populous and powerful black nation state, as the leading peacekeeping nation state in the black world and more important, because of the impact of globalization over which Nigeria does not have control, Nigeria has to make herself relevant in international politics. It is particularly necessary if the dignity of the black man is not to be tainted any further.

The thrust is also that Nigerians are still largely divided even on foreign policy questions that should have been resolved on the basis of unanimity or quasi-unanimity. For the purposes of foreign policy relevance in the new political dispensation and beyond, it has become necessary to set a national agenda to assist the would-be national assembly sub-committee on foreign affairs. Nigerians can come up with many agenda. If there is division or disagreement on what agenda to accept, there must not be any disagreement over the objective of foreign policy in the new century: Nigeria must be in a position of respect, a position in which Nigeria must be taken for granted and must have prior consultation in the making of any international decision affecting Africa in general, and Nigeria, in particular.

Based on this perspective, the following foreign policy agenda is open to debate as a prelude to the eventual debate of the National Assembly on foreign policy. We propose here that the agenda be analyzed at two levels: domestic and international. We also propose that the methodology be issue-oriented for convenience.

At the domestic level, there is the need to place greater emphasis on the principle of reciprocity in Nigeria's foreign relations. Reciprocity has two main components: reprisal and retorsion. Generally speaking, the little or lack of respect for Nigerians abroad is as a result of little and inconsistent application of the principle of reciprocity in Nigeria's relations with other countries. Good neighbourliness policy must be put in context. Its application must be predicated on reciprocity.

Secondly, the environment for diplomatic practice has not been very conducive in Nigeria. Apart from the problems of hoodlums, the application of the diplomatic privileges provided for in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is meaningless in Nigeria. For instance, there are no diplomatic supermarkets or shops where members of the diplomatic corps can buy goods de-taxed. The provision of special places for de-taxed goods for internationally-protected citizens has therefore become necessary. The diplomats need to live with comfort in Nigeria.

Provision of a good business environment for foreign investors must be of priority. The problem now is not that efforts were not made to attract the flow of new investments to the country. The problem is that government policy is hardly consistent. The policy is never stable. Administrative procedure for registration of new companies is cumbersome. Besides, the telecommunication systems, electricity supply and road infrastructures are, at best, very poor. This is not to mention the problem of corruption, which has become a feature of national life and that of the society. Unless a new business environment is created, Nigeria cannot have respect: the society needs self-discipline to produce. Without production, there will not be anything to trade for foreign exchange.

This economic agenda must take into account the need for increased productivity, on the one hand, and prevention of economic sabotage, on the other.

More important is the coordination of all foreign policy institutions in the country. The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, in particular, needs special funding because of the need for full computerization of research activities, as well as acquisition of library materials. International books are generally expensive because of the foreign exchange implications but they have to be acquired if there is to be

currency of research information. The increasing ambiguity in world politics demands a more serious foreign policy analysis at all levels.

Additionally, it has become necessary to do away with intellectual waste: the non-use of retired Nigerian ambassadors, at least, in an advisory capacity. There is a real need for an ambassadors' forum as an alternative source of suggestions based on empirical data. While the NIIA may be theoretical in its analysis, an ambassadors' forum can recall personal experiences that can inform such theoretical analysis. For instance, since 1960, Nigeria has only produced three academic Foreign Ministers: Professors Ishaya Audu, Ibrahim Gambari and Bolaji Akinyemi. They are Professors of repute. Gambari and Akinyemi have been Directors-General of the NIIA, even though Prof. Gambari had a brief tenure. It should be recalled that the first Foreign Minister was Alhaji Tafawa Balewa who combined his Prime Ministership with Foreign Ministership. It was on April 17, 1961 that he relinquished the position of Foreign Minister to Dr. Jaja Wachukwu who was succeeded by Dr. Okoi Arikpo when Dr. Yakubu Gowon, then a Lt.-Col. was Head of State. General Joe Garba under the Murtala-Obasanjo administration, also General Henry Adefope, a medical practitioner, Professor Ishaya Audu under the Shagari regime, as well as General Ike Nwachukwu, Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, have been foreign ministers to date. Though everyone of them tried to make impact, their impact was not in the area of foreign policy philosophies as Gambari and Akinyemi tried to promote. Gambari came up with foreign policy concentricism. Akinyemi came up with the controversial 'consultation doctrine,' Concert of Medium Powers which became the Lagos Forum.

He also provided a foundation for Ike Nwachukwu's concept of economic diplomacy.

What we are saying here is that the new Nigeria needs foreign policy philosophies that will take into account the peculiarity of the Nigerian state specifically, and Africa, in general. There is need to go beyond the consumption of imported foreign policy dictums.

Hence, former ambassadors, former foreign ministers and foreign policy analysts will need to interact more in order to redefine the direction of foreign policy and make the foreign policy community livelier and relevant.

At the international level, the foreign policy agenda must include how to secure a permanent seat with a right of veto for Nigeria at the UN Security Council, policy on economic and regional integration and development of a nuclear energy.

As regards the UN seat, the current world is that of injustice, where first atomic powers decided to constitute themselves into an exclusive club of special powers. In 1963, when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was to be signed. France and China refused to accept the treaty that will prevent them from developing a nuclear capability. After succeeding in developing one, they showed preparedness to cooperate. The point therefore is that nuclear power is one form of deterrence. It can also be used for economic and peaceful purposes. It is necessary in power politics. It is necessary for African people. Nigeria must spearhead its development, as it is an informal condition for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

The use of nuclear power and permanent membership of the UN Security Council go hand-in-hand. The use of veto to protect national interests, the refusal of the incumbent permanent members of the Council to accept enlargement and restructuring is a clear pointer to the need for Nigeria to ensure that Nigeria is given a seat.

Related to this, Nigeria must work towards the creation of an African Security Council at the level of the OAD. Reason: the New World Order suggests that there will be collective aggression in the event there is a country that refuses to accept international dictates. If there will be a collective aggression, there should also be a collective resistance. This is why there is need for an OAU Security Council to serve as a counterweight to that of the UN, in the event Africa will not be given its rightful place at the UN Security Council.

Above all, Nigeria's foreign policy agenda must provide for the future of the ECOMOG and regional integration. In this regard, the ECOMOG must be sufficiently sustained. Rather than encourage the African Crisis Response Force proposed by the US or France's RECOMP or any extra-regional force, the ECOMOG must be retained and reorganized to meet the new international challenges. ECOMOG is original; Nigerian military must be very strong therefore. It is an African initiative.

On regional integration, Nigeria ought to champion it at the West African and continental levels. The number of ratifications of the 1991 Abuja Treaty Creating the African Economic Community is not encouraging. The pace of West African integration is similarly slow. The Obasanjo administration should begin to provide more positive support for Mr. Benjamin Kouyate, the ECOWAS Executive Secretary. He is very committed to the ECOWAS cause. Under him, information flow of activities on the ECOWAS has increased considerably.

Above all, diplomatic protection of all Nigerians abroad should be a priority. Apart from the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, government must come to the aid of other Nigerians as long as they are able to show proof of effective and continuous Nigerian citizenship. With this type of foreign policy agenda, Nigeria will be very relevant and supported at home and abroad in world affairs.

(**ThisDay**,31 May, 1999)

1.10 Constitutional Provisions and Foreign Policy

On May 29, 1999 power was not only transferred by the Abdulsalami administration to the democratically-elected Olusegun Obasanjo government but the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Promulgation) Decree 1999 also came into force. Nigeria and Nigerians were given a Constitution whose provisions were essentially an embodiment of the 1979 Constitution and the amendments and modifications brought to it by the Constitutional Debate Coordinating Committee which was set up on November 11,1998 to review the 1995 constitution.

One very significant feature of the Constitution is the emphasis placed on foreign policy in several forms. Foreign policy components were specifically provided for. The importance of foreign policy in the

Constitution and in the current democratic dispensation is explained in at least, three ways. Firstly, the preamble of the constitution has significant foreign policy implications. The third preamble provides that the People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria solemnly resolved "to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble Sovereign Nation under God dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace, international cooperation and understanding."

In other words, Nigeria must continue to enter into international relations as a state actor. It cannot operate internationally as a divided state, it must remain indissoluble and sovereign under God. This point must be underscored because of the factor of God. God is omnipresent hence universal. Nigeria wants to operate under the directives and assistance of God in its efforts to promote inter-African solidarity, world peace and international rapprochement, through cooperation. Thus, Nigerians want to live in order to promote the welfare of the people of the world. This is foreign policy altruism that takes precedence over the welfare of Nigerians themselves, which is only mentioned in the fourth preamble.

In this preamble also, international values are emphasized: principles of freedom, equality and justice etc. as basis for good governance and welfare of all people resident in Nigeria. A second significant feature is that foreign policy falls under the Exclusive Legislative List. Although foreign policy was not specifically mentioned, there is no disputing the fact that several aspects of it are provided for. For instance, item 7 is on "borrowing of moneys within or outside Nigeria for the purposes of the federation or of any state." Item 20 is on "diplomatic, consular and trade representation." Immigration into and emigration from Nigeria, as well as citizenship, naturalisation and aliens are the focus of items 30 and 9. These issues fall squarely under private international law and therefore foreign policy. This justifies the popular saying that foreign policy is the continuation of domestic policy in other forms. In fact, item 26 specifically mentioned "External Affairs." In other words, the Federal Government has responsibility for the conduct of Nigeria's foreign relations in all its ramifications. It is not surprising therefore that extradition, export duties, exchange control, passports and visas, public debt of the Federation, service and execution of civil and criminal processes by any foreign court of law, foreign trade etc. are also put on the Exclusive List.

A third important consideration is state succession. Section I (2) provides that the control of the Government of Nigeria or any part of it, must be "in accordance with the provisions of this constitution" which is supreme and whose provisions have binding force "on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

In this regard, until the end of the Cold War, International law does not care much about the manner of coming to power in member states of the international community. But since the making of a new world order in 1990, democratic governance based on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, protection of human rights, etc., had become a condition *sine qua non* for development assistance and international recognition. The implication of Section 1 (2) is that Nigeria must remain democratic. Government must be democratic, not necessarily because of the need for international assistance but essentially because the people of Nigeria are themselves democratic and would want to continue to promote their democratic culture.

Perhaps more important, Africa is also given a pride of place in theory and practice. The constitution says

Nigerians shall promote inter-African solidarity. This is very consistent with the principle of making Africa the bedrock of Nigeria's foreign policy. By implication, Africa will continue to retain a special attention in Nigeria's foreign policy. As a matter of fact, expression has already been given by the incumbent government to the importance of Africa in Nigeria's foreign policy calculation: Government has created a full Ministry of African Integration. This ministry will be a good instrument in the promotion and coordination of African unity and integration efforts. Several Francophone countries and a few Anglophone countries have departments or ministry of regional integration or national integration. Nigeria's focus is continental integration. The creation of the Ministry is consistent with the aspirations of the Treaty Creating the African Economic Community which was done in Abuja (Nigeria) in 1991. Apart from the significant place of foreign policy in the Constitution, there are the aspects of treaty making or implementation, foreign policy objectives and the final authority on the conduct of foreign policy.

As regards international treaties, the Constitution provides for a federal system of government and places, as noted earlier, external affairs under the exclusive legislative list. Hence, it is the federal government that has full responsibility for the conduct of foreign relations. But since there are three arms of government (Executive, Legislature and Judiciary) any of the arms can be involved but the degree of involvement may vary according to the issue at stake. For instance, section 12 (3) is relevant here. It provides that "a bill for an Act of the National Assembly passed pursuant to the provisions of sub-section (2) of this section shall not be presented to the President for assent, and shall not be enacted unless it is ratified by a majority of all the Houses of Assembly in the Federation."

In other words, the House of Assembly will be involved in treaty making and ratification. In international law, an agreement, whatever its designation, cannot produce effects unless it is duly ratified through constitutional procedures. The involvement of the House of Assembly in treaty-ratification process is significant as it ensures that the generality of the Nigerian people endorse any international treaty signed by Nigeria. Additionally, section 12(1) suggests that Nigeria belongs to the 'dualist' school of thought rather than the Monist school. The Monist School accepts the direct supremacy of international law while the dualist school emphasizes the existence and equality of municipal and international law, hence, international law must first be reconciled with Municipal law before ratification. The section says "no treaty between the federation and any other country shall have the force of law except to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly."

On the issue of which arm of government has the final authority on foreign policy decisions, we may argue that the Constitution is more on the side of the National Assembly. Going by the provisions of section 5 on Executive powers, it is clear that the National Assembly has the ultimate power. For instance, section 5 (4) (a) says "the president shall not declare a state of war between the federation and another country except with the sanction of a resolution of both Houses of the National Assembly sitting in a joint session." Even though subsection (5) empowers the president to deploy Nigerian troops on a limited combat duty outside Nigeria if and when the president considers that national security is in danger or under threats, the Constitution in subsection 5, paragraph 2 still compels the president to seek the consent of the Senate" within the seven days of actual combat engagement." The consent can be given or refused. Thus, on policy initiative, the National Assembly has the advantage of approving or disapproving such initiatives. Again, the president may also have the leeway in the execution of foreign policy, however, the

National Assembly can always cripple any foreign policy decision taken by the Executive through non-appropriation of funds.

It is also important to note that the President can always resort to the deployment of Nigerian troops abroad as long as the constitutional conditions are met: the combat duty must be limited but the Constitution is silent on who determines the 'limits'. Hence we believe that the Executive will do here. Who determines whether or not Nigeria is under threats. Again, the Constitution is silent on this but we believe it is the president. And more significantly, as long as the president seeks the consent of the senate "within seven days of actual combat engagement, the limited combat duty can continue. In fact, even if the senate withholds its approval, the withdrawal of the troops cannot be immediate nor will it be easy, not simply because of logistics but because a debate on whether the nation is under threats or not cannot but ensue and therefore delay the withdrawal.

Finally, there is the issue of foreign policy objective as provided for in section (19) (a-e). The Constitution says Nigeria's foreign policy objectives are the "promotion and protection of the national interest" (section (19) (a), "promotion of African integration and support for African unity" (19B), "promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations" (19c), "respect for international law and treaty obligations ... " (19d) and "promotion of a just world economic order" (19e).

With the exception of section 19c where the objective of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations is clear, all others cannot be considered as objectives. They are ways and means of furthering Nigeria's foreign policy objectives which, until now, are basically maintenance of the territorial integrity and independence of Nigeria, self-preservation, protection of Africa and black dignity, economic development etc.

Finally it is important to note that every Nigerian without exception is supposed to be a foreign policy actor. According to Section 24, a citizen of Nigeria must "help to defend Nigeria and render such national service as may be required." Consequently, in the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy, Nigerians must be involved. They must contribute ideas because, as pointed out by Fidel Castro, ideas do not create crisis, it is crisis that generates ideas. (**ThisDay**, 26 July, 1999)

1.11 The New Foreign Policy Environment

Today, the Olusegun Obasanjo administration is 87 days old. In the next thirteen days, we all will be talking about its first 100 days. The past 87 days have been eventful. Since President Olusegun Obasanjo took over the mantle of leadership on May 29, he has been receiving presidential visits as well as invitations. In fact, day after day, interest in foreign policy making is growing, and growing for the better.

Firstly, there are new foreign policy activists whose activities are not very visible but whose impact cannot be ignored. There is the retired Nigerian ambassadors' forum. All things being equal, this forum will be hosted three days time (August 26) by President Obasanjo in his Aso Rock office. The Forum meets from time to time, say every two to three months. We can recall here that the forum organized a

congratulatory reception for Ambassador Olisemeka in January 1999 at the Metropolitan Club, Lagos when he was appointed by the Abubakar government. The Forum is not meant for every retired ambassador but retired careerists. The Forum is currently Lagos-based and is making efforts to operate nationally. It does not have any female member. The origins of the forum can be traced to the time Ambassador Leslie Harriman died in 1995 when the funeral activities provided a platform for his peers in particular to meet there and to then discover the essence of togetherness. Informed sources have it that Ambassador Emmanuel Kolade had made very constructive efforts to bring the retired career ambassadors together. This is very encouraging for multidimensional reasons.

In many overseas countries, the notion of 'retired' is very relative. Retirement is often subject to conditionalities. In Nigeria, except probably for the military, retirement has a permanent character. Professors can continue to profess. They can have a chair in one institution and be teaching in several others. In Nigeria, it is the criteria of 35 years of service or 60 years old for those in research institutions and 65 in the universities. The problem is that the retirees do nothing virtually for the government following their retirement. Retired ambassadors are constructively engaged in nation-building. In Paris, for instance, there is a Diplomatic Centre located at the periphery of the popular Arc de Triump. The Centre is used by the diplomatic community, retired or not. Lectures, seminars, meetings, celebrations, etc. are generally held there. The Centre serves as a coordinating and meeting point for diplomatists. Ideas are shared and students of diplomacy who attend lectures organized there are able to marry theory and practice of diplomacy there. Thus, the creation of an Ambassadors Forum in Nigeria ought to result, in the foreseeable future, in the creation of a similar diplomatic centre. The diplomatic community in Nigeria does not have any diplomatic centre. There are no special super markets where diplomats can buy non-taxed goods as required by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. One, therefore, expects that the new retired ambassadors' forum will take into account the need to institutionalize the Centre as well as organize their membership in such a way that non-diplomats or the ordinary Nigerians can benefit from their wealth of experience.

Although we do not have access to their constitution, it is pertinent to advise against restrictive access: then notion of an ambassador or retired ambassador can be ambiguous. For instance, there are four types of ambassadors based on the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the 1818 Aix-La-Chapelle Congress which modified the provision of the 1815 agreement and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (see Article 15). In descending order of importance, they are ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary, envoys extraordinary and plenipotentiary, ministers resident (although this designation is no longer in vogue), and charge d'affaires. Which category of ambassadors are we talking about? Will the charge d'affaires, who are of the third or fourth class, be accommodated in the new forum? What about the charge d'affaires ad interim? These questions are necessary because many careerists do not always succeed in getting to the rank of a full ambassador. There is also the issue of "ambassador in sending states," that is ambassadors who live in their home countries but still have a mandate for foreign countries. Although this practice is not in vogue in Nigeria's diplomatic practice, it must not be ruled out on a long term basis. And what about those heading the paradiplomatic missions? True, the paradiplomatic missions do not, *stricto sensu*, have a representative character but they do perform various diplomatic assignments, especially in areas where official diplomatic relationship does not exist.

Secondly, the students pursuing the Master of International Law and Diplomacy (MILD) Programme at the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, have created an association that wants to go beyond the declared objectives of the MILD programme. The programme, whose origins Prof. Akin Oyeboode has traced to 1984, when the then Foreign Affairs Minister, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, mooted the idea of a training programme for Nigerian diplomats, is aimed at "examining the principles and practice of international law and diplomacy from the legal, economic and political perspectives." As at today, MILD students are not only interested in the examination of the principles but have been unofficially engaged in the determination, at least indirectly, of the principles. The association, which currently operates on a class by class and yearly basis (MILD 1998 Class, MILD 1999 Class etc) organized on May 7, 1999, a symposium on Nigeria's Foreign Policy in the Next Millennium. The symposium was held at the NIIA. Prof. Akin Oyeboode, Dr. George Obiozor and Bola A. Akinterinwa presented papers at the symposium. Again, on August 7, 1999 the association organized a dinner/ award nite at the Imperial Chinese Restaurant. It was mainly aimed at expressing gratitude to their lecturers on the one hand, and drawing attention to the inadequacies of the MILD programme. They want some modern international languages used as official means of communication at the United Nations (French, in particular) to be included in the MILD programme. They want the introduction of M.Phil and Ph.D programmes in diplomacy, international politics, international economics etc. They also want to be made relevant in policy-making. It is on record that the association, through its 1998/1999 president, Mr. Adetoye Abioye, asked the Government "to kindly initiate and commence programmes that have become needful for the continued survival and relevance of our country in the comity of nations." It is also on record that the association is against "military pacts with external power(s) for the protection of democracy in Nigeria). As put by the MILD president, the call by some senators for defence pact is a proposition that is not "careless but also dangerous." Although I do not agree with this observation, the fact is that the association has a viewpoint on an important national question.

If Chief Olusegun Obasanjo will, on the 26th August, receive a delegation of retired career ambassadors, an event that is unprecedented, and if organized student bodies also want to be relevant in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy-making, then the foreign policy environment is changing for the better. Again, the foreign policy community is becoming more interesting.

Thirdly, the list of new ambassadors recently presented by the President to the Senate for consideration and approval, is very significant. It is another pointer to a brighter future in the articulation of Nigeria's foreign policy in international politics. For instance, the quality of national and international standing of many of the ambassadors-designate is high. The careerists are worth their salt. Most of the non-careerists are not only of unquestionable integrity, they have also been well exposed internationally. They are professionals on their own right.

Prince Bola Ajibola is an international jurist of repute. His dissenting opinion in the preliminary hearing of the Bakassi dispute at the International Court of Justice was academically thought-provoking. Jibril Aminu is one professor that can profess scientifically, even beyond the medical world. Arthur Mbanefo is one of the "Rocks of Gibraltar" behind the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs. He is an astute member of the Nigerian foreign policy community. Ralph Uwechue it was, who reopened Franco-Nigerian ties in 1996. His background as a publisher can only be complementary to his diplomatic

experience. Tokunbo Awolowo-Dosumu is another Obafemi Awolowo by advocating good governance and leadership by example. Ignatius Olisemeka is a veteran diplomatist. In fact, one of the first twelve Nigerian diplomats. Sani Kangiwa and Fidelis Tapgun are known apostles of a strong Nigeria free from economic underdevelopment. They are nationalists. Olatunji Olagunju is another nationalist. He is one of the leading politologists, who, in Nigeria, has had the opportunity to combine theory and practice when he was special adviser to General IBB and Minister of Internal Affairs under him.

Even though the political appointees are generally good, the number (62) should not be more than that of the career diplomats (44). But I admit that the nomination list is an indication of greater objectivity and sincerity of purpose in meeting the challenges of the new millennium. (**ThisDay**, 23 August, 1999)

1.12 Voice of Nigeria and Foreign Policy

Voice of Nigeria (VON) is the equivalent of Voice of America (VOA) in the United States, Radio France Internationale (RFI) in France, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in Britain, Deutsche Welles (DW) in Germany etc. The VON was established by law on January 5, 1990 by the Federal Government to broadcast by radio the viewpoints of Nigerians and the policy position of the government of Nigeria. In other words, it is designed to be an instrument of foreign policy that is required to complement the role of the Foreign Ministry in the area of world communications.

For instance, in appreciating the efforts of the VON in fulfilling its mandate in 1994, Professor Jerry Gana, then Hon. Minister of Information and Culture, noted that "the shackle of cultural imperialism is the strongest of all shackles of bondage. When foreign broadcasting stations had the monopoly of the air, they presented us the way they liked and compromised our minds, our integrity and our perceptions. But since the inception of the VON, the battle of the minds had changed and we are happy to notice that VON is winning the battle visibly."

Thus, the VON is supposed to seek understanding of what is said internationally about Nigeria and provide what Nigeria's position is on the matter. The VON has to be a defensive, explanatory, and an offensive organ in order to be able to fulfill its mandate of external broadcasting. Besides, the VON must also be well funded if it is not to compromise its national integrity especially that the law establishing it subjects its operations to three inseparable conditions: first, the news and programmes of the VON must promote the country's foreign policy and international image; secondly, the services of the VON must "reflect the views of Nigeria as a federation and give adequate expression to the culture, characteristics, affairs and opinion of Nigeria," to borrow the expression of the Director General of the VON, Mr. Taiwo Allimi, who is generally referred to as 'Uncle T'; and thirdly, the VON must not carry any commercial advertisement or sponsored announcements.

Without any whiff of doubt, the VON has generally been poorly funded, and particularly neglected under the military. The mandate of the VON is a serious and important one because it requires the protection of the territorial integrity of the country through the placement of emphasis on harmonious relationships, defence of foreign statements inimical to the well being of Nigeria, promotion of national culture and other interests etc.

To an extent, and in spite of the poor funding, the VON has tried to fulfill its mandate more at the level of generation of ideas than at the level of external broadcasting until the advent of the Fourth Republic. There was the time external broadcasting had to be interrupted for a long time as a result of non-repaired broken-down equipment. Rather than doing nothing in this type of situation, the VON organised in-house and national seminars on its mandate. This, in itself, is commendable. For instance, in June 1992, the VON held an in-house seminar on various issues in Nigeria's foreign policy: broadcasting and foreign policy, African Economic Community, apartheid, foreign policy and national interest, a critical appraisal of VON News etc. In fact, the outcome of the seminar was published in 1994 in Yaya Abubakar and Justin Labinjoh (eds.), *The Challenges of External Broadcasting*. Besides, the VON also published an in-house magazine, VONSCOPE, which encouraged debates on current affairs having direct implications for Nigeria. It seems to now belong to the dustbin of history for lack of funds.

More significantly, the Programmes Directorate of the VON introduced in 1992 an annual VON Essay Competition. It was designed to be for listeners of the VON, as well as a feedback mechanism from the listeners. The competitions have essentially focused on political themes and expressions in five languages: Arabic, English, French, Fulfulde and Hausa. This annual essay competition is still on course. In fact, it has been rapidly gaining ground beyond the expectations of the 1992 initiators: In 1992, there were only 294 entries from five countries in Africa. In 1993, the number of entries increased by 60 while the number of countries increased by one only. Although the number of competitors declined from 354 to 199 in 1994 and climbed up again to 355 (about its 1993 figure) in 1995, no competition was held in 1996. However, the VON began to witness considerable impact of its programme as from 1997: entries were only 352 in 1997, however, they came from fourteen countries. In 1998, there were 2,711 entries but the number of countries declined to nine. More interestingly, 3,390 people, from nine countries, took active part in the 1999 competition the award ceremony of which was held last Thursday, July 21, 2000 at the NIIA.

The ceremony, the seventh so far, was of particular interest: it was more of a family reunion than a formal gathering. Past directors found time to be there and contribute suggestions as to the way forward. The principal initiator of the essay competition, Alhaji Salauwa who is now the Executive Director of FRCN Kaduna, was there. Former Directors of News, Tunji Oseni and his successor, Mohammed Okorejior, the veteran journalist and current Chairman of Nigerian Press Council, Alhaji Alade Odunewu. etc, were all there.

The opening remarks of the chairman of the occasion, Alhaji Odunewu, was thought provoking: he likened his role at the occasion to that of a standby generator, the nature of which is always that of emergency. But more significantly, he observed that a colleague, James Audu, who was a well known broadcaster, passed away about a fortnight ago but not a single mention of his passing on had been mentioned by other journalists. He said this was a disturbing trend. He therefore, rather than make a speech, called for a minute silence in honour of Mr Audu.

The awards are a token indeed: only Certificates of Merit and small Multi-Band Radio Sets were given. Since some of the winners came from far away Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Niger, Cameroun, etc, the costs of the certificate and radio set given a winner is undoubtedly nothing to write home about when

compared with what is spent on travelling to Nigeria to receive the awards.

Perhaps it should also be mentioned that the themes for the competition as well as the structure of the results, clearly showed that Africans are showing increasing interests in what Nigeria is doing both at home and in Africa. The themes deal essentially with problems in Africa and how to resolving them. In 1992, it was "Africa, Three Decades of Independence." This was a call to appraise the past and draw attention to the future. In 1993, the competitors wrote on "Demilitarisation of Politics in Africa." This topic probably took into account that democratisation had just been made conditionality for foreign aid by the developed countries and that many parts of Africa were under military rule, especially Nigeria. In the years 1994 and 1995, "Supremacy of Dialogue Over Violence in the Resolution of Conflicts in Africa," and "The Impact of the United Nations in Africa," retained attention. True enough again, Africa was conflict ridden and in 1995, the UN was 50 years old. Thus, the themes of the competition generally reflect the situational reality of the time. As explained by Alhaji Ayodele Sulaiman, VON Director of Programmes, the themes have always been "carefully structured to reflect contemporary situations in the world and to serve as barometers to gauge the mood and expectations of Africans in matters of global consequences." In 1998 and 1999, the topics were "Africa and the Politics of Debt Servicing," and "My Africa in the 21st Century," respectively. What type of Africa do the competitors want? How do they see the politics of debt servicing and type of attitude do they want the African people to put both at the domestic and world levels?

At last week's award ceremony, five countries were winners: Cameroun, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria. Overall, Nigeria took the lead in the essays written in Arabic, thanks to Alhaji Qamarud-deen Oyebola from the MKO Abiola School of Arabic Studies in Abeokuta. Alhaji Oyebola took first position in the maiden edition of the competition in 1992 and also took the lead again in 1997 and 1998. He had won four times. A Camerounian, Nana Youssouf, came second while another Nigerian, Musa Abdus-Salami Mustapha, from Lagos State, came third. Again at the level of Fulfulde, a Nigerian took the first position: Ustaziya Sa' adatu Gulgule. She is from Taraba State. Ustaz Manu Alhaji Jabbo Bagudo, from Kebbi State, took the third place, coming after a Ghanaian, Uwargida Maryam Asabe Sule. More importantly, in English and Rausa, Nigerians still led. Nwosu Onyebuchi from Imo State, brought honour to Nigeria in English while Salisu Dba Kofar Wambai from Horin College of Arabic Studies came first in Rausa. It was only in French that Nigerians have been beaten:

Dossouhouan Jerome from the Cote d'Ivoire took the first position, leaving the second place to a Togolese (Shehu K. Lare) and the third position to a Nigerien (Oumarou Souley).

The essence of what we are saying here is that, the first winners of the essay competitions are Nigerians. The second winners are from Cameroun (three out of five; the other two are from Togo and Ghana) while the third winners are from Nigeria (two), Niger (two) and the Cote d'Ivoire (one). In other words, the feed back is essentially from within and the immediate neighbourhood. The feed back can be good and encouraging, however, it cannot be sufficient and must not be interpreted to mean a reflection of response from all Africa.

The importance of the occasion must also be seen at the level of multilingual presentation of the speeches

made there and the new role of Uncle T. The presentations were done in English by Emeka Odikpo, in Rausa by Musa Yunusa, and in French by Kehinde Adegorite. The English presentations were generally done with humour and in detail. The Rausa and presentations were abridged and without the jokes in the English presentation. For instance, Emeka Odikpo invited people to whom honour is due, not to the 'High Table' but to the 'Service Table," even though the platform and the table was high. This was not translated. Even if time is against, abridging the translation can only be detrimental to the purposes of the Essay Competition if many people laugh and applaud during one translation and non-speakers of English cannot do the same in the other languages. The notion of Service Table does not mention or point to any class distinction but places emphasis on service to the audience. The implication of this point was indirectly made clear at the ceremony: one of the Francophone award winners addressed himself to the 'small and big people present in the hall' during his expression of gratitude for the award. This drew a lot of interest and concern. If the idea of a service table had been well explained to him, the probability of raising his small and big people would have been remote.

On the purposeful and success of Uncle T, it was openly acknowledged there: he has raised the morale of staff, acquired 15 computers, enhanced productivity, embarked on training of staff at home and abroad and had negotiated agreements with the BBC, DE, VOA and the RFI in this area within his first twelve months in office. In fact, the RFI is currently providing a digital studio to the VON. Generally, the award ceremony was very successful. Tunji Oseni gave the third prizes in the five languages, the representative of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information, Nancy Oghenekaro, gave the second prizes, while Alhaji Odunewu and Uncle T jointly presented the first prizes.

If the essay competition is to continue to have impact, it must be well and consistently funded and re-organised. There is the need for a *primus inter pares*. Having five winners in each category is good but there is the need for another competition amongst the five winners in order to have the best overall three. Winners must also be assisted to come to Nigeria both in terms of visa and flight ticket. Where foreign winners cannot come, their embassies ought to be represented at the ambassadorial level. In other words, the status of competition has to be raised through involvement of more non-Nigerian assessors. There must be notices about the competition in Nigerian Embassies which must also be encouraged to help disseminate them. (**ThisDay**, 24 July, 2000)

1.13 Strides on the Foreign Policy Turf

The principles and method of implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy made the country the cynosure of international eyes, especially in the comity of nations, since 1960. The policy is Africanophil in design and orientation, aggressive in reaction and implementation, and more importantly, altruistic and humanitarian in outcome.

More than any other factor, Nigeria's foreign policy determined the status and respect given to Nigeria in the past forty years. The leadership dimension of it, which is, at best, controversial at the home level, appreciated at sub-regional and regional levels, and viewed with jealousy and caution at the extra-African level, was the most important. But leadership for what? Some Nigerians have asked. What have been the gains of the past forty years of Nigeria's foreign policy of African reconstruction? To what extent was the

foreign policy used to enhance national economic development?

Truly, in the past forty years, Government has been essentially preoccupied with nation-building. National unity has been by forced consent more or less. In fact, Nigerians fought a civil war to keep Nigerian unity. Consequently, nation-building has been fraught with problems and challenges of self-preservation and national development. At the domestic level, there were two main problems of national development: how to go about it and how to translate the potential resources of the country to manifest progress. The other problem was the challenge of leadership, that is, the role of Nigeria, what it should be in Africa and in the world. In this regard, should Nigeria provide assistance to other countries when Nigerians at home are living in abject poverty and are begging for national attention? In other words, should Nigeria play the big brother's role when Government cannot provide the same assistance to Nigerians at home? The making and implementation of, foreign policy in the past forty years has been largely informed by whether (I not Nigeria should play the big brother's role and the extent of resources that should be committed to it. What role has Nigeria actually played? What problems and challenges was Nigeria faced with? In fact, how do we appraise the foreign policy of the country in the past forty years?

At the world level, the problem was how to contain Nigeria's policy in such a way that Nigeria would not be a threat to euro-American interests in Africa. For instance, the problematic was whether a debt-free, resource-based, and courageously enterprising Nigeria would not turn out to be a threat to European interests or American influence etc, in Africa. Whatever is the case, the truth is that, at the time of independence, foreign policy was essentially predicated on two objectives: protect and preserve the newly acquired independent status of the country, hence self-preservation, on the one hand, and help to liberate other African countries from the shackles of colonialism, on the other.

Without any jot of doubt, Nigeria's foreign policy challenges are very interesting because they are hardly understood by Nigerians at home but clearly understood by the international community, in general, and African peoples, in particular. The more Nigeria's foreign policy is explained, the more it becomes confused, not because of poor explanation, but essentially because of the difficulty inherent in reconciling the demands of Nigeria's big status in African affairs with available means. There is also the fact that foreign policy gains are not always immediate and quantifiable. Consequently, whenever the Government takes any decision to provide assistance to other countries, many Nigerians promptly complained. They then argue that charity should begin from home.

In his lecture delivered on May 17, 1967 at the Ibadan campus of the Institute of Administration of the former University of Ife, Mr. Edwin Ogbu, the then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, said it was the policy of Nigeria to give aid to other African countries that specifically asked for them. He also noted that most countries of the world look up to Nigeria for a responsible leadership in Africa and that Nigeria would be judged by her success in meeting this challenge.

Truly enough, the late Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, understood well this challenge of leadership. When he was to travel to London on December 13, 1965 to discuss with his counterpart, Mr. Harold Wilson, on how to find a lasting solution to the Rhodesian crisis, a journalist asked him whether it would not be better for him to stay at home and look into the then Western Nigerian crisis, he

answered that "Western Nigeria is very different from the Rhodesian issue. Our domestic problem exists with us every time, but you have to go out to assist your brothers in other parts of the world." Put differently, Nigeria was not only ready to show concern for other African brothers and to play a big brother's role, but also attached greater importance to foreign affairs. It is not surprising therefore, that, in the period from 1960 to 1965, interest in foreign policy questions gradually increased. For instance, foreign affairs in the Speech from the Throne increased from 7.3% in 1960 to 11.1 % in 1963 and 18.5% in 1965.

Without any iota of doubt, the principles guiding Nigeria's foreign policy making and implementation have not changed since 1960: defence of national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries, promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the world at large; promotion and defence of social justice and respect for human dignity, especially the dignity of the black man; and the promotion of world Peace. However, the emphasis placed on the application of these principles vary from one administration to the other.

At the level of Africa, Nigeria's foreign policy had been guided by the principles of good neighbourliness and leadership by example. Nigeria did not apply the rule of reciprocity in its relations with African countries. These principles underlie the Africa centredness of Nigeria's foreign policy. They show a great concern for the people of Africa. Nigeria's objectives are not limited to the attainment of political independence of all African states, but also designed to ensure social and economic justice for all of them. Nigeria's commitment to Africa was to the extent that the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries was redefined. In 1963, when President Sylvanus Olympio was assassinated, Nigeria could no longer close its eyes to what transpired in her immediate neighbourhood. President Olympio was very friendly with Nigeria. Nigeria was not happy about the manner of his killing. Consequently, Nigeria saw the need to henceforth prevent any activity that was likely to be inimical to her interests in the neighbourhood. Brutal killing of friendly African leaders was not to be tolerated. Thus, any situation that is prejudicial to Nigeria's and Africa's interest became an exception to the rule of non-interference. The then Foreign Minister, Dr. Jaja Wachukwu, did not fail to lay emphasis on this point in 1963. In the same vein, apartheid was to become a second exception to the rule of non-interference. Nigeria's policy on apartheid in South Africa was "no compromise with apartheid." In this regard, General Olusegun Obasanjo noted in October 1977 that "Nigeria condemns and rejects the credentials of these friends who will not care for the human worth irrespective of race creed or colour. Countries which call themselves our friends but do not respect the worth of man for his ability, merit and his attainment, no matter his colour or where he lives, are far from being our true friends and Nigeria shall reject their credentials."

Commitment to the emancipation of all the people of Africa was good and appreciated. The policy of good neighbourliness and leadership role of Nigeria was good. President Robert Mugabe had to remark that "Africa without Nigeria is hollow." In this regard, when Zaire accused Angola of supporting the invasion of its copper-rich Shaba province in 1977, Nigeria offered to mediate between Zaire and Angola in March 1977. Nigeria's Joe Garba made diplomatic shuttles in order to bring about peace in that region. Nigeria also promptly mediated in the Libyan-Chadian dispute over the Aousou strip. It was a complementary mediation effort to that of the OAU Reconciliation Committee in 1977. On the specific

issue of apartheid, Nigeria adopted the policy of armed struggle against it. Government also launched a special liberation fund for Southern Africa (Southern African Relief Fund in December 1976) as part of Nigeria's contribution to the Non-Aligned Solidarity Fund. It was because of the need for Africa's liberation that Nigeria not only withdrew Government's account from the Barclays Bank but also nationalized the British Petroleum in the late 1970s particularly because of their South African operations. General Obasanjo said that Nigeria mounted "survival lance on all those enterprises who depend on our raw materials and markets but continue to help our enemies." All foreign contractors, who were known to have links or connections with South Africa, were barred from obtaining contracts in Nigeria. General Obasanjo set up an economic intelligence unit "to ensure the successful implementation of this policy." Nigeria led the mass boycott of the 1977 Olympic Games in Canada due to the participation of New Zealand in the games.

Nigeria's attitude was in order because France was supplying South Africa with uranium and nuclear reactor. British Petroleum and Shell supplied fuel. The United States assisted South Africa to set up a nuclear research centre in Penindaba. West Germany designed and installed a machine for extraction of pure plutonium that can be used for the creation of nuclear explosive devices for military purposes. The US, UK and France were the very first to veto the UN resolution on trade sanctions placed on South Africa, etc.

Nigeria's commitment to the wellbeing of Africa was also given impetus under the Babangida administration. The then Foreign Minister, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, introduced the Technical Aid Corps. This was a programme under which technical assistance was provided to African countries in need at Nigeria's cost and without conditionalities.

As regards peacekeeping, Nigeria was against the prescription of Cold War solutions to African problems by the super powers. Nigeria rejected the formation of the Western-sponsored pan-African peacekeeping force in Zaire. In June 1978, Nigeria told the Convention of Black American publishers in Queensland, Ohio of its opposition to any attempt to re-colonize Africa under the guise of African security force. According to General Obasanjo, that should be the responsibility of the OAD.

Following the vicious tribal blood-letting in Liberia in the 1980s, which the whole world knew but did nothing about, Nigeria's Ibrahim Babangida, proposed the establishment of a Community Standing Mediation Committee of four members (including the country that held the chairmanship of the ECOWAS Authority) during the 13th Summit of ECOWAS held in Banjul, The Gambia from May 29 - 30, 1990. This suggestion was accepted and the First Session of the Committee was held on 6th and 7th August, 1990 in Banjul. The Committee created the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and asked all the warring parties in Liberia to observe an immediate ceasefire and to surrender all arms and ammunition to the custody of the ECOMOG. The story of the ECOMOG is now a truism. Suffice it, however, to note that the ECOMOG restored peace in Liberia and restored the administration of the ousted democratically elected Tejan Kahhah of Sierra Leone. Additionally, apart from Lt.-Gen. Arnold Quiainoo, a Ghanaian, all the other commanders of the ECOMOG, numbering more than ten, have been Nigerians; Major Generals Joshua Dogonyaro, Rufus Kupolati, Ishaja Bakut etc. Nigeria, in fact, provide the bulk of the contingent (70 %) and logistic support, especially funding (80%). The role of Nigeria has

become important to the extent that Nigeria was specifically asked to join hands with the UNAMSIL to help maintain peace in Sierra Leone.

Nigeria led the campaigns against dumping of toxic and radioactive waste in Africa in 1988, particularly in OAU, ECOWAS, NAM, South Atlantic Council and the UN fora. They led to the establishment of Dump Watch, world wide. The campaigns also led to the promulgation of national legislation against dumping of toxic wastes.

No one disputes Nigeria's oil price concessions to many countries. There is no disputing the fact that Nigeria was instrumental to the creation of the OAU particularly the drafting of the Charter (by Taslim Elias) and the ECOWAS.

But in spite of all these efforts, many people consider that Nigeria has not gained much from the choice of Africa as centrepiece of its foreign policy. This observation is arguable. I admit that many countries have not always reciprocated Nigeria's good gesture. I also admit that Nigeria's offer of assistance had not always been tied to any conditionality. However, if we admit that foreign policy gains may not be in the immediate and that they may not be quantified, it will be early to jump into conclusion as to the success or failure of our foreign policy. Besides, evidences pointing to the international recognition of Nigeria's de facto leadership roles in Africa abound.

For instance, even though Nigeria is not a contiguous neighbour of the frontline countries in Southern Africa (Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique, etc), she was internationally acclaimed and given the status of a "Frontline State" in recognition of her efforts and struggle against the obnoxious policy of apartheid. In fact, it is also for this reason that the Chairmanship of the United Nations Committee Against Apartheid was reserved for Nigeria to assume. When the United Nations also organized its first World Conference for Action Against Apartheid (WCAAA), it made a Nigerian, Brigadier Joe Garba, the Chairman in August 1977. Happily enough, all the Nigerian ambassadors accredited to perform one duty or the other in this respect, have been internationally acknowledged even beyond their national expectation. One major problem in Nigeria is that, Nigeria is doing well in foreign policy but Nigerians refuse to acknowledge it.

For illustration purposes, Nigeria and the United States had divergent positions on the internal settlement agreement in Zimbabwe in 1978. The US favoured the agreement but Nigeria and many other African countries declared the agreement illegal. However, when US president, Mr. Jimmy Carter, paid a three-day visit to Nigeria, he endorsed in Lagos the declaration which he refused to.

(ThisDay, 30 September, 2000)

1.14 Foreign Policy and Nigerian in Diaspora

Foreign policy under President Olusegun Obasanjo, in the period from May 29, 1999 to date, is characterized by major efforts to exploit the international environment to the advantage of socio-economic development in Nigeria. While Professor Bolaji Akinyemi and General Ike Nwachukwu

adopted the strategy of Concert of Medium Powers and Economic Diplomacy respectively to exploit the external environment, and by so doing, placing emphasis on the elements and currency of power, President Obasanjo seems to have opted for the Japanese method, which is predicated on using 'what you have in the main to get what you need, and that is the human resource.' President Obasanjo wants to take advantage of Nigerian professionals abroad.

In this regard, President Obasanjo directed that a conference of Nigerian professionals be convened to discuss Nigeria as it is and to proffer the modalities for moving the country forward. In September 2000, about 2000 Nigerians met in Atlanta, the United States and 505 other Nigerian professionals met in London. Again, last week, the City of Paris (*Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers*) played host to about 250 Nigerian professionals. The objective was also to design a new road map for Nigeria.

The London meeting, held on 15th and 16th September and personally attended by President Obasanjo, examined four problem areas: the contributions of Nigerians in Diaspora to health care delivery in Nigeria; the implications of globalization for Nigeria; the investment challenges and expectations of Nigerians in Diaspora; and the development of software as enterprise in Nigeria. The outcome of the meeting was important for Nigeria's development future in many ways. The meeting pledged its commitment to the development of Nigeria. Besides, the establishment of Nigerians in Diaspora Europe Foundation (NIDEF), covering the United Kingdom and mainland Europe, was agreed to. The NIDEF is to be an NGO, apolitical and is to be a technical partner, providing on a permanent basis, intellectual, technical and professional skills. It is also to provide assistance in the area of education, health and improvement of Nigeria's international image. In fact, a UK-based "Nigerians in Diaspora Europe Fund (NIDEF)", which is to be an investment organization that will promote investments by Nigerians in viable projects in Nigeria and assist in the development of infrastructure, is also to be established. This intention is good, considering that an estimated 500,000 Nigerian families reside in the UK and that, if two pounds sterling is contributed per family and on monthly basis, it means that one million pounds can be generated for development purposes. If Ghana can account for 80% of the yams imported to the UK and the East Africans are said to also dominate the fruits and vegetable market, there is no reason why Nigeria should not struggle to also share in the British market.

Additionally, the paramedical professionals identified four main problems in the health sector: collapsed primary health care system, drug shortages and inappropriate supervision of drug dispensing, severe shortage of modern equipment and lack of maintenance culture, and shortage of trained personnel and lack of training opportunities, especially outside Nigeria for deserving Nigerians at home. The professionals have pledged to assist in solving the problems, to set up a web site to encourage interaction with colleagues back home, and to establish a skills and conference centre in Nigeria in order to "allow for the stocking of information technology facilities as relates to medicine. "

The more important aspect of the meeting is probably not the economic but apparently the political, as well as the spread of organizations of Nigerians in Diaspora in Europe. Firstly, the London meeting, as noted in the "Reports and Recommendations Presented to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria," was "the first time in living memory," that "Nigerians living in the United Kingdom and Mainland Europe are brought together under one roof." Besides, "they resolved unanimously to stick

together on a permanent basis. This is a remarkable achievement by any standard. "

Without any gainsaying, it is a landmark success. Nigerians are used to disagreeing at home but seeking unity abroad, either along ethnic, tribal, or state, line. Many Nigerians also associate for social purposes and occasionally for professional reasons. Generally, on completion of studies, Nigerians prefer to return home until of recent when the domestic environment is perceived to be very hostile. Thus, this is the first time an association of professionals with a multi-disciplinary background would be set up. In fact, geopolitically, the professionals are not only from British institutions but from the nooks and crannies of mainland Europe. In other words, President Olusegun Obasanjo is not only using one stone to kill two birds by seeking the contributions of Nigerians in Diaspora to national development and encouraging national cohesion, but also carrying political governance to the door steps of all Nigerians outside of the country and involving them in decision making.

It is noteworthy that the professionals want to build a database on Nigerian professionals in Europe with their qualifications and areas of expertise, on the one hand, and act as a pressure group in the UK and Nigeria, in articulating the views of (their) professions on issues that impact on the well-being or the health of Nigeria, on the other. In doing this, the professionals ask the Federal Government, in return, to give more funds to the health sector, to refrain from its ad-hoc approach to the management of health care, to restore law and order, to expedite action on the poverty alleviation programme, to promote further consultation with Nigerians in Diaspora, and to consider them for the award of national honours.

It is equally noteworthy that the professionals identified seven major problems at the level of the implications of globalisation for Nigeria's progress. Nigeria's integration into the world economy, through free trade, free capital and technology mobility and through easy or uncontrolled migration, is made impossible because of widespread corruption, political instability, lack of shared vision, dishonest and unaccountable leadership, lack of a coordinated approach to human capital development, institutional and systemic breakdown in the utilities, as well as cultural and religious intolerance. In the thinking of the professionals, the solution is that "Nigeria must sustain its democracy, respect the due processes of the law, and create an enabling environment, under an effective and committed leadership."

As regards the spread of the organisation of Nigerians in Diaspora, the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation, France (NIDOEIF), was launched on Saturday, May 26, 2001 in Paris. As explained in a press release signed by Mrs. Ayo Adesugba, Information Attache at the Embassy of Nigeria, Paris, the NIDOEIF is to unite Nigerian professionals in France and "to harness their talents and resources so that they can participate fully in the visioning, planning and socio-economic advancement of Nigeria."

The Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Said, told the members of the NIDOEIF to imbibe President Kennedy's 1961 principle of not asking for what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country, and to consider the merits of UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKEN) Programme, under which nationals volunteer their services to their home countries and the UNDP not only pays them stipends but also pays for their return ticket. In this regard, in the keynote address of Alhaji Sule Lamido, delivered by Nigeria's ambassador to France, Mr. Edward Abiodun Aina, the doors of Nigeria "are widely open to our friends in the international community who

share our vision, aspiration and our goal." In the same vein, the Minister of Education, Prof. A.B.Borishade, not only emphasised the need to put a stop to human capital flight but also promised to "encourage Nigerians in Diaspora in all the areas of mandate of UNESCO, namely, education, science and technology, culture, communication, information and informatics." And more importantly, while Prof. Michael Omolewa, Nigeria's Permanent Delegate to the UNESCO, explained that "a first class character must be preferred to a first class brain" in the development process, Ambassador Aina told the NIDOEIF to always adopt the triple 'A' strategy (Asking, Acknowledging, and Acting) and to be cautious about the rule of FEAR (False Evidence Appearing Real) if the organisation is to operate on objective basis.

From the foregoing, it is President Obasanjo's foreign policy that has precipitated the new thinking at the level of Nigerians in Diaspora. If this policy is to achieve its aims, impression must not be given that the professionals at home are less patriotic or that they are foolish by staying at home because there are three categories of Nigerians abroad: those who left the country in protest, those who qualified abroad but refuse to come back home, and those who were sold into slavery and to whom the word 'Diaspora' correctly applies. If the second category is to come home, they must not be influenced by the first category. The third category cannot easily trace their roots and so may not come home. However, making the domestic environment conducive to all of them and for investments is the main challenge. More importantly, Government must assist those studying and living abroad to succeed before they can send money home like the Israelis, Pakistanis and Indians. Whoever is not able to help himself cannot be in a position to help another person. Thinking of what to do for Nigeria first rather than what Nigeria can do for its citizen is only meaningful if the Nigerian already has the means. Consequently, Nigerian missions abroad must be specially funded to enable a true dialogue between Nigerians at home and abroad.

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