

Defending the Africa Renaissance: A Critique of Nigeria Policy of Afrocentrism

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Abstract

Nigeria's commitment to the development of the Africa project through its foreign policy of afrocentrism has been unparalleled but without corresponding values for the Nigerian people. Moreover, There is currently a disconnect between Nigeria external policies especially as regard pan-Africanism from current domestic realities such as; dwindling national reserves, increasing debt profile, corruption complex, insecurity and high rate of unemployment. This work interrogates the sustenance of Nigeria Afrocentric foreign policy against the backdrop of global realities and domestic challenges. It also reviews Nigeria foreign policy since independence. It attempts an evaluation of the Afrocentric foreign policy against the backdrop of Nigeria's national interest. This work concludes that the Afrocentric foreign policy of the Nigeria state can no longer be sustained due to compelling domestic exigencies and consequently, recommend a re-evaluation in pursuit of concrete national interest in the international environment.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Afrocentrism, Africa Renaissance, domestic challenges, National interest.

Introduction.

Africa Renaissance, signifies the rebirth or revival of Africa, a cliché that aptly captured the historical reality of a post-colonial continent whose insidious invasion by colonial masters left an invidious legacy, "where economies have been structured over several centuries through extremely brutal forms of economic extraversion, and where radical, violent change has marked the past century and a half" (Marshall's 2009: 27), distorting the serenity of the pre-colonial identity and philosophy of Africa socialism upon which development were predicated. Africa Renaissance became necessary in order to create the Africa in-group from the brutal partitioning that characterize colonialism at the detriment of black brotherhood and communality in a continent, whose history was marked by fluid boundaries,

'Defending the Africa Renaissance' is captured in the Nigeria foreign policy of Afrocentrism, (Africa as center piece of her foreign policy) that presented Nigeria as continental hegemon whose self-ascribed role is the defense of the Africa project. However, this phenomenon was not limited to Nigeria. A few African countries like Ghana, Senegal align their foreign policies to Afrocentrism or pan-Africanism. The point of departure is the degree of pursuit and commitment to this policy that isolate Nigeria as a frontline state. Nigeria as the most populous Africa nation felt indebted to the development of the Africa project and consequently injected in its foreign policy calculus "Afrocentrism" which is the defense of Africa Renaissance, a project for the restoration of Africa nations from post-colonial ruin.

From inception, as early as 1960 prior to independence the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Abubakar Tafawa Balawa in his address to the parliament expresses Nigeria commitment to speak for Africa at the multilateral stage. Only a few weeks after this famous speech Nigeria was inducted into global politics, when the world body asked the country to contribute and deploy a contingent of its national troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo for peacekeeping under the United Nations auspices. This request provided the first unmistakable indication that Nigeria was already fully accepted as a credible member of the world community, and was expected to assume a decisive role in African affairs – a role duly motivated by her size and population. It also confirmed the deep-seated belief among Nigerians that their country was manifestly destined to play a leading role in African Affairs. From 1960 to date Nigeria's commitment to Africa affairs has been quintessential and remarkable without prejudice to domestic challenges.

This paper interrogates Nigeria's foreign policy of Afrocentrism (Africa as center piece of her foreign policy) against the backdrop of global realities, domestic challenges and demands. It also reviews Nigeria foreign policy since independence in order to establish consistency or otherwise and the dynamic nature of the various regime policies toward external relations. It eventually attempts a critique of the policy of Afrocentrism for the purpose of evaluation.

A review of Nigeria foreign policy since independence.

Chapter 2, Section 19 of the Nigeria 1999 Constitution, which contain fundamental objectives of foreign policy directive as provided in Section 19 (a-e) encapsulates the Nigeria's foreign policy objectives to include: (a) promotion and protection of the national interest; (b) promotion of African integration and support for African unity; (c) promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations, and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations; (d) respect for international law

and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and (e) promotion of a just world order (1999 Constitution of the FGN; Akindele, 2013:13; Saliu, 2013:171). Interestingly, the first objective provides for the pursuit of national interest which by interpretation presents Nigeria national interest as the overriding principle of external relations failure which all other principle objectives are rendered inconsequential. This is in consonance with the principle of international relations that ascribed national interest as the overriding principle of state relations.

Literatures on Nigeria foreign policy have generally asserted that there have been some level of consistency in the substantive content or focus and principal objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence (Akinyemi, 1989; Akindele, 1990; Isah, 1991; Akinboye, 1993; Gambari, 1986; Saliu, 1999; Ezirim 2011; Akintola, 2007; Obiozor, 2007; Ayam, 2010; Akinboye, 2013) this consistency has been without prejudice to different regimes of the Nigeria history (Akinboye, 2013:13). However, there have been slight modulations in the pattern, style and emphasis as dictated by historical circumstances.

The evolution of Nigerian's foreign policy could be divided into two historical phases, namely, pre-colonial times and post-independent period. The pre-colonial times is when the entity Nigeria came into existence i.e. from 1914-1960, a period of colonial rule under the British government, while the second phase is from independence to date. However, the attention in this paper is centered on the post-colonial period of independence.

The post independent Nigerian foreign policy has been described by some scholars as "chameleonic" in nature (Anyaele, 2005), this term described the changing character of Nigeria foreign policy. But some other scholars have argued otherwise reinstating the consistency despite modulated strategy of various regimes.

Nigeria's foreign policy in the First Republic was timid, docile, ambivalent, indecisive and, dissonant (Akinboye, 2013:5). This summation is connected with the colonial challenges of African state prior to the 60s and the structure and peculiarities of the international system. Nigeria's preoccupation after independence was to engage the international system first from the binocular of the African state in other to confront the challenge of colonialism and discrimination. Thus, upon gaining independence, Nigeria quickly committed herself to the decolonization of Africa state while taking part in global drive for peace, promotion of Nigeria's territorial integrity, eradication of all forms of racism and colonialism from African continent, protection of the rights of black men all over the world, and promotion of international peace and security (Ogwu, 1986:8, Olusanya&Akindele, 1986:3-5).

Nigeria's foreign policy was slightly interjected by the civil war of 1967 to 1970 and in the 1970s Nigeria emerged united and quickly committed itself to the liberation struggles going on in the Southern Africa sub-region expediting large sums to aid anti-colonial struggles.

Nigeria joined the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries OPEC in July, 1971 and has remained a key player in the international oil industry since the 1970s. Its status as a major petroleum producer figures prominently in its vicissitude relationship in the international system.

The post-civil war military governments of Generals Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo contended with two prominent issues which borders on the lopsided structure of the Nigeria state and the availability of large influx of foreign capital arising from oil. The increasing wealth from oil revenues and membership of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries provided Nigeria with the resources to pursue a more virile foreign policy often referred to as the "golden era" (Aluko, 1971; Nwolise, 1989; Gambari, 2008:p. 64; Garba, 1987; Fawole, 2003; Saliu, 2006a)

Nigeria foreign policy took a more visible posture as a result of its integration into the international oil politics with the surplus of foreign exchange. This help to gratify Nigeria's proclivity for showmanship culminating in a lavished foreign policy especially on the Africa project through the pursue of decolonization of countries like Angola, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe and anti-apartheid activism; peace-making, peacekeeping and conflict mediation in Africa; continental economic development and integration, to mention a few, which reinforce the concept of centrality of Africa as a driving force behind Nigeria's foreign policy.

Saliu (2006a: 211) however, argued that Nigeria's African policy pursuit has been without reciprocity, which appears to be a recurring phenomenon in her diplomatic practice. According to him, "the dictates of the global system frown at giving without anything in return". He therefore accused Nigeria of playing the "father charismas" in a century where national interest dominates state relations. He stressed that assistance is rendered without any visible reference to either short or long term benefit for Nigeria.

The next phase in the development of Nigeria's foreign policy started in 1979, with the return to civilian rule under President Shehu Shagari. This era witnessed little or no debate on foreign policy issues (Chidozie, 2014: 183). The period in focus was characterized with sloppy foreign policy. Emphasis of governance was focused on consolidating democracy in Nigeria. However, there were strong contentions to the direction of Nigeria foreign policy. Emphasis was to break the monopoly of western dependence on the sales and continuous flow of oil by shifting the foreign policy direction toward the East.

General Buhari came to power in 1983, he tried to refocus Nigeria foreign policy back to Africa in the

defense of the policy of Afrocentrism. Africa was to constitute the area of primary concern to the country (Folarin, 2010). However, this relationship was to be properly defined. The Buhari administration point of emphasis in Africa relations was primarily on good neighborliness which was to encapsulate member-states of the sub-regional body, Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS). The paradox here was that the nation's borders were permanently closed against its neighbors even against all appeal, thus, badly hurting their economies, (Akinrinade, 1992; Fawole, 2002:21; Adeniji, 2003, 2004; Akinboye, 2013: 33).

General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida came to power on August 27, 1985. The Babangida administration immediately expressed dissatisfaction over Nigeria's external relations under Muhammadu Buhari, this he felt was too inclusive and was shutting down Nigeria global relations and recognition. He asserted that this was inconsistent with the foreign policy focus of Nigeria and was against the philosophy of our founding fathers. According to Babangida, "Nigeria's foreign policy was characterized by inconsistency and incoherence. It lacked the clarity to make us know where we stood in matters of international concern to enable other countries relate to us with seriousness. And our external relations were being conducted by a policy of retaliatory reactions" (Saliu, 2006a: 297).

General Babangida quickly moved to remedy and correct the lapses in Nigeria's foreign relations. It opened the borders to the neighbours and resume active diplomatic relations with the western world especially Britain (Saliu, 2006a). However, there were some remarkable controversies that surrounded the Babangida administration, such as the membership of OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference). This was a religious body whose Nigeria membership became an issue for national security because it violated the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria that expressly prescribed secularism as the guiding paradigm of state practice. The decision by Babangida to make Nigeria a full member of Islamic grouping of states generated considerable opposition at home and remains one of the most highly contentious and unresolved issues in the country till date. Another challenge of the Babangida administration was the unending transition program and the eventual annulment of the June 12 presidential election in Nigeria. (Olukoshi & Agbu, 1995; Akinboye, 2013: 34).

The Abacha regime who eventually succeeded the interim government of chief Shenekon adopted combative and defensive foreign policy in Nigeria's history. For Abacha, his recognition meant "an eye for an eye" approach to international relations (The Guardian, 1998). The hostile and draconic posture of the Abacha regime threw Nigeria into pariah state because of gross violation of human Right. The international community apparently shut down diplomatic relations with Nigeria especially after the brutal murder of Ken Saro Wiwa, the environmentalist from Niger delta championing the course of Ogoni People. Accordingly, the United States and other Western powers actively encouraged and supported opposition groups in the country as well as those based abroad, and on some occasions, issued statements which amounted to gross interference in the country's internal affairs (Osaghae, 2002: 309).

Following the sudden death of Abacha in 1998 General Abdulsalaam Abubakar, his successor, initiated a transition programme that resulted in the coming to power of President Olusegun Obasanjo on 29 May, 1999. The pariah nature of the Nigeria state became an issue of principal concern to the administration of Obasanjo who then devised a strategy of reintegrating Nigeria into the international system through comprehensive globetrotting initiatives called "shuttle diplomacy". In fact, the Obasanjo administration initiated a reverse of the "four concentric rings" (national, sub-regional, regional and international) (Magbadelo, 2007) of foreign relation of Nigeria to reflect a balance between domestic and international imperatives. Alao (2011:7) captured this when he said; "This new era of foreign policy differed from the preceding period in Nigeria's diplomacy, in which it had always prioritized sub-regional and continental interest. The relative stability along these fronts enabled the country to strike a better balance between external policies and domestic interests". This was especially important because many Nigerians believed that the country had little or nothing to show for the generosity and sacrifices it had made in regional and continental diplomacy. Many also felt that Nigeria should replace its past practice of confronting major powers in the pursuit of an African-centered agenda with a new practice that better suited Nigeria's national interests.

Akinterinwa (2004) also argued that, the Obasanjo Administration in 1999 led to a paradigm shift from an African-centered, to a global-focused, foreign policy. In his opinion Nigeria's foreign policy remained essentially Africa-focused at the political level while it was global-centered at the economic level.

However, the Obasanjo regime were clouded with such issues as the; US\$30b debt negotiation and eventual forgiveness in 2006; the contested agreement on Bakassi Peninsula territory (Green Tree Agreement) facilitated by the United Nations (UN) between Nigeria and Cameroun in 2006; and the attempt to subvert the constitution in April 2006 to extend his tenure in office (Adebajo, 2008: 4; Menkene & Fonkeng, 2010; Alao, 2011: 21; Akinboye, 2013: 25-36)

President Obasanjo was succeeded by the Late Umaru Musa Yaradua who was reputed to have introduced the concept of "citizen diplomacy" as the thrust of Nigeria's foreign policy (Ogunsanwo, 2009:19). President Musa Yaradua adherent to the rule of law and defense of human right endeared him to the citizen. However, president Yaradua administration was characterized by ill health which grossly affected Nigeria

foreign policy.

Dr. Ebele Goodluck Jonathan who was vice to President Umaru Yaradua took over from him first, under “doctrine of necessity” invoked by the national assembly after the demise of his boss, President Umaru Yaradua, secondly, as a duly elected president of the federal republic of Nigeria in May 29, 2011. He barely settled into office when Nigeria slipped into national security challenge with the advent of Boko Haram insurgency. The attacked of the United Nations office in Abuja by this notorious group brought the Nigeria state to disrepute. It created an international challenge to the president whom the international community was patiently waiting to fix the crisis. Nigeria’s international image was greatly brutalized especially when the administration of Goodluck Jonathan was unable to manage the crises (Danjuma, 2014; Omitola, 2014; Omotosho, 2014; Onuoha, 2014; Sampson, 2014).

Defending the Africa Renaissance

The hallmark of Nigeria foreign policy formulation was the adoption of Africa as the center piece of her foreign policy. Upon gaining independence in 1960 Nigeria quickly committed herself to the decolonization process in Africa particularly the eradication of apartheid and racism from the continent of Africa. Arising from this commitment, Nigeria organized and hosted the first United Nations conference for action against apartheid in Lagos in 1977, and subsequently chaired the United Nations Anti-Apartheid Committee until that Committee was dissolved in 1994 (Idehen 2014).

Beyond the African sub-region, Nigeria championed the common wealth boycott of 1986 Edinburgh Games. Nigeria also championed the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth, which was successful and held until the end of apartheid and Nigeria established the big brother project of the Southern African Relief Fund (SARF) (Aremu, 2013). This was specially funded with deductions from the salary of every Nigerian worker, irrespective of rank, both in the public and private sectors as well as donations from ordinary Nigerians in all works of life, including students (Aremu, 2013).

According to Osuntokun, (2005) Nigeria, in defense of the dignity of the black man sacrificed the good will of the west and economic development in order to see to the total liberation of Africa. Nigeria’s courage at confronting its erstwhile colonial master was applauded when it nationalized the British Petroleum, the Barclays Bank and other British economic interest in Nigeria in the late 1970s because the British government as at then delayed in granting independence to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Nigeria under the Afrocentric policy framework played a crucial role in the establishment of the Organization of Africa Unity, and was instrumental to its transformation to the African Union, the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). One of Nigeria’s principal goals upon gaining independence was the decolonization of countries like Angola, Namibia South Africa and Zimbabwe. She pursued this goal by committing herself to anti-apartheid activism (Alli-Balogun 1986), this distinguishes her in international relations as the champion of African causes. Accordingly, in recognition and appreciation of this unparalleled commitments Nigeria was, in the mid-1970s, conferred with the prestigious status of a “Frontline State”.

Nigeria unilaterally championed peacekeeping operation in Chad in 1982 and was also credited with being the brain behind the formation of the Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and its operations to restore peace and normalcy in the West African sub-region, the responsibility which cost huge sum of financial and human resources. She has also been instrumental to the negotiation for peace to war-torn Sudan in the early 1990s and has been in the forefront of current international efforts to bring peace to Sudan’s Darfur region using her position at the United Nations Security Council. Similarly, Nigeria is also credited with the successful mediation of the restoration of democratic rule in Sao Tome and Principe and undemocratic seizure of power in Togo in February 2005 (Idehen 2014).

Nigeria has also used its position in the United Nations, to press other issues of Africa concern such as trade, debt relief and forgiveness, etc. Nigeria has successfully represented Africa on four occasions in the Security Council and is currently running its fifth term since 2014. Nigeria’s role in the United Nations Security Council has been essentially the defense of Africa, promotion of Africa integration and development.

An analysis of Nigeria’s role in conflict management within and outside Africa is situated within the context of its foreign policy objectives that is essentially focus on Africa. Although, these objectives have themselves evolved over time and has since dominated Nigeria’s foreign policy relations till date despite its persistent internal contradictions.

Theoretical Discourse

The traditional school of foreign policy is driven by the realist model that concern itself with the prevailing international environment as determinant of foreign policy behavior of states. But contemporary international theory of foreign policy argues that foreign policy is driven by both internal and external factors, and therefore relies heavily on the school of Innenpolitik (Gideon 1998) which stress the influence of domestic factors on

foreign policy.

This paper is rooted in Innepolitik from the "neoclassical realism" which explicitly incorporates both external and internal variables, updating and systematizing certain insights drawn from classical realist thought. neoclassical realism deals with the impact of both independent and intervening variables in the composition of foreign policy, "it carries with it a distinct methodological preference for theoretically informed narratives, ideally supplemented by explicit counterfactual analysis, that trace the ways different factors combine to yield particular foreign policies"(Keohane, 1986 ; Buzan et al 1993; Baldwin 1993). These Innenpolitik theories argue that internal factors such as political and economic ideology, national character, partisan politics, or socioeconomic structure and several other internal dynamics determine how countries behave toward the world beyond their borders.

There are many variants of the Innenpolitik approach, each favoring a different specific domestic independent variable, but they all share a common assumption that foreign policy is best understood as the product of a country's internal dynamics (Gideon 1998).

Nigeria case.

The reality for Nigeria therefore, is that there is currently a disconnect between Nigeria external policies especially as regard pan-Africanism from current domestic realities such as; dwindling national reserves, increasing debt profile, corruption complex, insecurity and high rate of unemployment. If the logic of Innepolitik is anything to go by, then it has become imperative for a re-evaluation of Nigeria's foreign policy to reflect current internal dynamics.

The crux of this is that the explication of the principle of Innepolitik is embedded within the framework of national interest. National interest seeks to draw a synergy between domestic imperatives and external relations of a nation and this relationship cannot be mutually exclusive. Therefore, whatever dynamics underscores the formulation of foreign policy if it does not encapsulate national interest rooted in internal imperatives it becomes an exercise in futility.

The Nigeria case presents a classic departure from the analysis above. Foreign policy and domestic imperatives are treated with mutual exclusivity. Those that crafted the Nigeria foreign policy were purposeful and had clear vision as to the direction of Nigeria foreign policy even though it appears to be within the hasty euphoria of independence. These policies were motivated by the drive to engage the global world first on behalf of Africa and then the international community without proper consideration for her dynamic national interest. Nigeria's commitment to the pursuance of these objectives through multilateral diplomacy had been very expensive. Hundreds and thousands of Nigeria soldiers, policemen and civilians have taken part in peacekeeping operations, truce supervisions, monitoring and observer missions in diverse regions from Africa to Asia and the Middle East.

Nigeria has committed a lot in terms of Human, material and financial resources to the liberation struggles of Africa nations yet without corresponding acknowledgment. The above scenario was clearly captured by Ambassador F. George who stated that:

"The historic contributions of Nigeria to regional peace missions in Liberia and Sierra Leon which cost the country the whooping sum of US\$ 10 billion, not to mention the gallant men and women of Nigerian Armed Forces who paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of peace, are hardly acknowledged by the international community" ...this does include the sum of about US\$ 90 billion that Nigeria single handedly incurred in the OAU Peace Keeping Force that was deployed to Chad in 1980s. This is in addition to the sum of US\$ 800 million Nigeria Trust Fund established under ADB to assist African countries obtain soft loan to execute vital projects." (Ikedinachi, 2015:142).

The current global reality of economic downturn and Nigeria internal challenges of insecurity, corruption, dwindling oil price due to global recession have made Nigeria flamboyant foreign policy a subject of review. Most importantly, the absence of foreign policy dividend in terms of reciprocation and value addition and the continuous humiliation of Nigerians especially from those whom she has sacrificed for, despite her domestic challenges call for worry. This phenomenon had attracted several scholarly attentions such as Dr. Obadiah Mailafiya, a policy and economic affairs analyst, who noted that "the centerpiece of any country's foreign policy ought to be that country itself if it seriously considers itself a rational actor on the world stage...Every single action shall be adjudged by how much it advances it national power and influence and how much it advances it interests, objectives, and purposes". Similarly, Akinboye, (2013) in his work "Beautiful Abroad but Ugly at Home" also lend credence to this assertion. One seem to agree with the above assertions taking into consideration the enormous human, material and financial resources expended in tackling various problems in Africa at the expense of domestic demands and without corresponding positive outcome. Some of the compelling domestic challenges are insecurity, corruption, international image, and economic down turn.

Insecurity

One of the domestic challenges of the Nigeria state is insecurity. The nation has been under siege for about a decade, Kidnapping in the south-south and south-East region, Boko Haram insurgency in the North and armed robbery In the West. Combating these crimes has been difficult for the state since 1999. The current security situation of the country requires urgent attention especially the arms struggle in the northern part of the country. There are cases of territory seizure and outright sack of communities by insurgent group in the north east. Attempt by the state to seek for assistance from the international community had been met with resistance. For example, Washington declined to sell the necessary arms which would have been used to contain insurgency in northern Nigeria under President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014. This is one of several international communities' inertia to assist Nigeria combats terrorism. Consequently it has become baseless to continue in the line of our foreign policy focus that takes so much from the country when the country is actually in dire need of finance and man power to combats the menace of terrorism.

Economy

As regards the economic downturn, there is the need to redefine our external relationship in view of current internal economic challenges as a result of global recession, dwindling oil price and the monocultural base of the Nigeria economy. Given the causes of the tremors in the economy, it is evident that we need to re-evaluate our foreign policy focus away from the current "father charismas" policy posture of the Nigeria state especially towards Africa nations in the name of "Africa renaissance". Other issues of economic concerns such as flared gas which continues to dominate our landscape by multinationals with dire consequence for the Nigeria economy and currency devaluation and inflation need to be focused on. There are also serious energy crises that require urgent attention, the unemployment rate is frightening, and there are pocket of social dislocations and humanitarian crises arising from the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east. Also, the developed countries continue to play host to several billions of stolen fund from Nigeria.it has become imperative for our foreign policy managers to take novel steps to safeguard Nigeria's interests by placing its national interest above regional sentiments.

Meanwhile, it is also interesting to note that since the discovery of oil in 1956 till date, the Nigerian oil industry has remained static. The economy is driving by oil yet there are no viable refineries and petrochemicals that could serve as the backbone for our industrialization. Nigeria lacked the economic infrastructure that could support the kind of foreign policy we envisage. This is so because the productive forces in the economy are grossly underdeveloped, there is the dearth of capital, a lack of entrepreneurial ingenuity, the economy is mono-culturally dependent on oil, politicized, corrupt and rent oriented. These are part of the reasons Nigeria has not profited from her foreign policy adventures, particularly in the sub-region. However, no foreign policy agenda can succeed on the basis of reliance on a single factor, such as the economy. Foreign policy is borne out of a multiplicity of factors, such as; culture, politics, history, patriotism, geography, military power, (Macridis1985),etc. indeed, the very basis for embarking on economic diplomacy in the first place was the inability of the Nigerian economy to withstand pressures of the international political economy.

International image

Foreign policy of a state helps create the image that propels the pursuit of national interest. It initiatives help to reinforce favorable image of a country to the external world. However, the image issue is a product of perception. There is yet no universally acknowledged scientific standard for perception as it is pervasively subjective, to the extent that human societies are complex, perception is a complex phenomenon (Zimako, 2009: 207).

Nigeria has suffered immeasurably from the challenge of image in the international system. The crisis of image is partly internally generated due to ineptitude, corruption, nepotism and poor democratic credentials (Nwoke, 2014:59). The image issue is grossly responsible for most of the shabby treatment of Nigerians all over the world, Nigerians are hounded, maimed, gagged, robbed, shot at and worse of all killed extra-judiciously on flimsy excuses or at the slightest provocation. If the above are not meted on Nigerians at home in Diaspora, they are confronted with embarrassing acts ranging from forceful deportation, harsh travel bans, xenophobic attacks, high visa fees, huge monetary down payment before travel among others (Oluwafunminiyi, 2013) .The policy of Afrocentrism which informed and guided Nigeria's foreign policy since independence, culminating in the country's massive investment in material and human resources in the prosecution of the "war" against racism and imperialism in Africa yielded little or no diplomatic dividends for the country. Akinboye (2013) puts it most eloquently;

"Unfortunately and disappointingly, many of the countries that have benefitted tremendously from Nigeria's largess often turned around to show ingratitude to both its citizens and the government itself. ...South Africa exhibited xenophobic attack against Nigerian citizens living in that country... Besides, the countries it has supported financially, diplomatically and strategically becomes the butt of derision and envy by them. Some of these countries equally harbour or even offer training facilities for terrorists, while others campaign openly

against Nigeria's bid to occupy one of the permanent seats of the United Nations Security Council. From these instances, it has become clear that the age-long philosophical notion of Africa as the centre piece of the country's foreign policy has become moribund, mundane and anachronistic (Akinboye, 2013: 43-44)".

Conclusion

Nigeria foreign policy of Afrocentrism has failed in its entirety to give the country and its people the modicum of respect and fear she deserved. From the study made so far on the subject of this paper, there is a consensus on the need to review and redirect the former orientation and aims of the country's foreign policy, especially the policy on Afrocentrism which as it presently stands, is in a deplorable state (Olukotun, 2013,Akinboye, 2013:42-48, Ashiru, 2013). Scholars have continued to call for a clearer articulation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives embedded in it national interest as specified in the 1999 constitution. Key government players like the Minister for Foreign Affairs had in several occasions opined that Nigeria foreign policy objectives have not produced the much desired impact with regards to economically improving the lives and lot of Nigerians. The reality is that Nigeria economy can no longer support the kind of foreign policy she has envisaged because of degenerative weakness and structural collapse in the face of hydra headed corruption and institutional decay. This work therefore concludes with a call for urgent rethink and reform of the Nigeria's foreign policy which must begin with an earnest effort to clean up domestically, by creating an exportable Brand Nigeria as well as undertaking a harnessing of our soft power indices.

It is therefore recommend that Nigeria re-focus its foreign policy away from the Africa project to areas that can galvanize substantial national interest. Nigeria should appreciate the enormity of her challenges and look inward towards confronting these challenges instead of this flagrant policy of Africa Renaissance that is not being appreciated by even the most benefactors.

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