

ABACHA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND DOMESTIC POLITY

Abdulrasheed Adamu Ph.D

rasheedbau14@gmail.com

+2348035682719

Faculty of Social and Management Sciences

Department of Political Science

Bauchi State University, Gadau

Abstract

The essence of foreign policy is to respond to internal and external political and social stimuli. This theoretical outlook seems to dictate the preference of foreign policy by most states within the international system, most especially the developed nations of the North. One of such stimuli is national interest, which most states will like to uphold and consider in formulating and executing foreign policy to maximally reap the benefits therein. Some state leaders, especially in most developing countries of the South, dictate to certain extent the direction of foreign policy of a state. Such may explain the Nigerian foreign policy between 1993 and 1998. The Major-General Sani Abacha regime, which lasted between 1993 and 1998, took a downward spiral on the formulation and execution of Nigeria's foreign policy. His dictatorial stance on domestic political terrain was also extended to foreign policy and such later had a boomerang effect on Nigeria as a whole. The focus of this article therefore is to appraise and evaluate how Abacha's regime took a different outlook in formulating Nigerian foreign policy as opposed to previous regimes and administrations. In addition, the article elucidates how such highhandedness on foreign policy affected the internal socio-economic ecology in Nigeria. Thus, the article takes an analytical and narrative outlook toward the regime's foreign policy making to uncover why such hard stance led to socio-economic hardship on Nigeria and Nigerians as a whole. The article adopts interpretative, process tracing and hermeneutic approach to mine data from all available sources.

Keywords: Foreign Policy; Abacha regime; Nigeria; Economy; Politics

Introduction

The complicated domestic political stalemate did not deter Abacha from foreign policy execution and implementation. In some instances, the foreign policy was used to reinforce and strengthen the regime. This could be seen in the way the regime was intransigent to the plight of international community to shield itself against the so-called external interference. Thus, this article examines the Nigerian foreign policy as conceived by Abacha

and the implications of such policies on Nigeria as a state. In the formulation of foreign policy, the most important consideration is national interest of a state and how such national interest pursuit will benefit the entire citizenry. This article starts with such theoretical background and tries to evaluate Abacha's foreign policy in relation to its effects on the entire populace. In addition, the article also tries to investigate the effect of such foreign policy on Nigeria as an entity and how external environment reacted to the policies as enunciated by the regime leader, Abacha. This is because, the foreign policy of a state is formulated in reaction to the externalities and how such externalities react to those foreign policies being formulated by a state. On this note, the article has two main foci: enumerating foreign policy issues addressed by the regime and evaluating the implication of pariah status on Nigeria as a state.

Policy of Realignment

The Abacha regime re-orientated the Nigerian foreign policy towards achieving the set goals and objectives of the regime. Having realised the obstacle presented before his regime, Abacha tried to realign Nigerian foreign policy towards the East and some other countries outside western orbit. Instead of mending fences with those countries that were known to be critically relevant to Nigeria, the US, who was the largest buyer of Nigeria's crude oil, the EU which is the largest market, and Nigeria's Anglophone partners in the commonwealth, the regime branded them as 'hostile' (Abegunrin, 2003:48). In fit of range, it committed the diplomatic blunder of breaking diplomatic relations with Canada, a prominent commonwealth member and long-standing ally. It continued to defy the West, and sought closer ties with other discredited dictatorships and fellow renegades such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea and Indonesia (Obi, 2006). Senior officials of the junta were sent on high-profile visits abroad to solicit greater ties with those countries. In one instance, Chief of Defence Staff General Abdul Salam Abubakar, went on a seven-day visit to China and North Korea to explore the possibilities for cooperation (Chibundi, 2003:23). On his return he sought to justify the trip, claiming that after all, "since the western allies have decided to abandon us, we might have to look elsewhere" (Abacha, 1995). The regime also made serious overtures to the francophone community, and even joined a largely Islamic grouping called the "D8" spearheaded by Turkey, all in futile attempts to shore up its flagging international credibility in the face of western and Commonwealth sanctions (Pine, 2013).

Earlier in October, 1996, Necmetin Erbakan, the Prime Minister of Turkey, led a 25-man delegation to Abuja for talks with General Abacha (Olaniyonu, 1998). The discussion bore fruits some three months later when

Nigeria, in concert with seven other countries namely, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the host Turkey announced the formation of a new group known as D-8. Fashioned after the G7 comprising the seven industrialised nations of the West. The new organisation, according to Erbakan, would seek solidarity at international fora as well as cooperation in economic fields including banking, investment, technology, as well as small and medium scale industries (Mogunoluwa, 2013:148). Notably, negotiations were on for a Turkish firm to be awarded a communications contract. Ghaddafi of Libya was also noteworthy in foreign policy terrain. In May 1997, Ghaddafi arrived Kano with a retinue of security personnel, where he opened the Kofar Mata Jumat Mosque (Fafowora, 1998:59). Ghaddafi had earlier visited Niger Republic, and had on his entourage to Nigeria, the Head of State of Niger Republic. On the international scene however, Ghaddafi's visit had a backlash of negativism especially by the Western countries. They adjudged Nigeria guilty of conniving with Ghaddafi in flouting the United Nations air embargo imposed on the country in 1992 (Kasali, 2007:128). It will be recalled that The United Nations Security Council resolution 748 had prohibited Libyan aircraft from engaging in international flights as a punishment for Libya's refusal to hand over two suspected ring leaders of the bombing of a pan AM plane over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1992(Olaniyonu, 1998).

The Abacha administration also increasingly courted the industrial giants of Asia. Li Peng, the Vice President of China paid a two-day working visit to Nigeria in May, 1997 (Chibundi, 2003:28). Li Peng was in Nigeria to sign some investment agreements with the Nigeria's government. These included the promotion of investment and oil industrial giants of Asia. Li Peng, the Vice President of China paid a visit to Nigeria to sign some investment agreements with Nigerian government. These included the promotion of investment and oil cooperation, the undertaking of electricity projects in Nigeria and bi-lateral co-operation in the steel industry (Oladimeji, 2017:18). China was just one of the several countries from Pacific Asia whose loyalty the Abacha administration had carefully cultivated since the face-off with the West. The Asian tigers, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, who because of their economic prowess have been metaphorically referred to as Tigers in the East, equally offered special attraction for the Abacha's administration (Fawole, 2004:28). Furthermore, when the Vision 2010 committee held its second workshop on January 16, 1997, the Abacha government especially invited Noordin Sopice, Director General of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia (Etekepe, 2013:289). Sopice was a Principal Co-ordinator of Malaysia vision 2020 project launched in 1991. Similarly, South Korea's friendship was courted by the Abacha's administration. There were plans to award the construction

of the Abuja national stadium to a South Korea company, while Ministry of Sports officials travelled to South Korea to procure designs for the stadium (Kolawole, 2005:878). The only known friend Nigeria had in the West during the Abacha's era seemed to be France. The Abacha regime made conscious efforts to maintain a warm relationship with France. On February 20, 1997, Abacha attended a meeting of francophone countries in Yamaussoukro, Cote d' Ivoire, as observer (Chibundi, 2003:12). It was the first time Nigeria would attend such a meeting, since she is not a francophone country. Nigeria's friendship with France was further demonstrated too long ago, when Nigeria strategically transferred the European office of Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) from London to Paris (Kolawole, 2005:878) He played host to Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) a day before he died.

In Africa, other veritable dictators like Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, Omar el-Bashir of the Sudan, Barre Mainassara of Niger republic, and Yahya Jammeh of Gambia, became the junta's new friends (Folarin, 2013:12). In defiance of a subsisting UN air embargo on Libya, Colonel Gaddafi flew to Nigeria accompanied by a publicity blitz and caused a stir (Obi, 2006:51). In return for his effrontery and solidarity with the embattled General Abacha, he was conferred with the nation's highest honour that only a handful of the Nigerians, dead or alive, had ever received. President Barre Mainassara of Niger Republic was similarly rewarded for his steadfast support of the Abacha dictatorship (Alli, 2012:47). Meanwhile, the regime snubbed South Africa and Zimbabwe, two prominent Commonwealth members that initially supported its suspension from the organisation (Audu, 1998:118). The Super Eagles, Nigeria's national football team which were the defending champions of the African cup of Nations, could not participate in the 1996 continental soccer edition of the championships hosted by South Africa. This was done apparently to spite president Mandela whose government was perceived to be hostile to Abacha's murderous rule (Akinboye, 2005:218).

Indications that the regime was about to shift focus to East Africa also came to the light immediately after Abacha's death. Having fairly pacified West Africa, with 'friends regimes like Barre Mainassara in Niger Republic, Matthew Kerekou of Benin Republic, Ahmed Tejjan Kabbah in Sierra Leone, Yahya Jammeh in the Gambia, and others like Jerry Rawlings in Ghana and Eyadema in Togo, opposition to Abacha was perceived to still remain only in East and remained critical of his democratisation programme and human rights posture (Ngara et.al., 2014:45). It was in an effort to pacify these countries to drop their sharp opposition to Abacha that his National Security Adviser, Ismaila Gwarzo reportedly asked for and

received \$40 million, \$80 million and N250 million from the Central Bank of Nigeria (Oladimeji, 2017:65). Unfortunately, the project to pacify these countries through financial inducements could not be accomplished before Abacha's sudden demise on June 8, 1998. If it had been done, it would have massaged Abacha's ego and perhaps gained a few more allies, or at least severely curtailed the trenchant international criticism that trailed the regime.

Policy of Reconciliation and Image Laundering

This project could be linked to well-designed propaganda machinery in a war situation. The Abacha administration in particular left no stone unturned in this regard. It became a battle of attrition from domestic scene to various international capitals. The high profile departure of Chief Odumegwu Emeka Ojukwu, the leader of the defunct Biafra, to London in June 1995 was significant (Ate, 2011:89). It was evident that the administration of General Sani Abacha at last decided to abandon its laid-back attitude which was the hallmark of its public/international policy heretofore. He adopted the "mission Strategy" to tackle the problem of its poor image abroad (Durotoye, 2014:29). The first mission was seen off at the Murtala Mohammed international Airport in Lagos by Foreign Minister, Chief Tom Ikimi . It was obviously a deliberate public demonstration of official endorsement of the trips. These missions became very necessary in the light of vocal and credible opposition from National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) members outside the country (The Guardian, June 4, 1995). Again, echoes of successive Nigeria's failure at various international fora forced the Federal Military government to address the problem of pariah Syndrome. This trend started with the loss of Nigeria's candidate for one of the Assistant Secretary-Generalships of OAU in Addis Ababa, by the Burkinabe nominee (Audu, 1998:113). This development was a clear signal of disapproval of the Abacha administration. The Addis-Ababa failure only opened the floodgates of Nigeria's misfortune suffered internationally.

The American Mission

In order to further salvage the image crisis Nigeria found itself under Abacha, the regime embarked on American missions, ostensibly to convince the world of the efforts of the regime in clearing the mess left by the previous regime. Thus, on Sunday September 4 1995, a ten member delegation of Nigerian political mix bags, led by Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu, arrived in Washington DC (Audu, 1998:112). The delegation was warmly received by the officials of Schiller Institute Inc, a Lyndon Larouche organisation which was used as the conduit to admit these Nigerians into the United States (Eugene, 2014:9). Other members of the delegation whose assignment was to convince American officials and media executives of the

sincerity of General Sani Abacha's determination to return the Nigeria to Civil Rule, within the delegation's one week stay includes Chief Anthony Anenih, the former chairman of Social Democratic Party who helped to negotiate the illegal Interim National Government in 1993 and as a reward served as a delegate to the controversial and largely boycotted national constitutional conference. Also a member of the delegation is Mr. Paul Unongo, a former minister for steel during the government of Shehu Shagari Unongo was also a delegate to the Abuja conference (Ajetunmbi & Omotere, 2012: 198).

Prior to the arrival of the delegation, the Schiller Institute Inc has sent round invitations to prominent Americans and Key officials of the American government. In one of the Invitations dated 28 August 1995 and signed by Pierre Beaudry, the Assistant Director of the Lyndon Larouche organisation which has been handling the publicity of the Nigerian government in American since early 1995, the members of the Institute stoutly defended Abacha's economic policies at the Economic Summit held in Abuja (Fawole, 2004:13). According to the institute, "Members of the delegation are prominent Nigerian political leaders who are all united in their belief that Nigeria is making real and significant progress in over-coming the many obstacles that have arisen in the transition to democracy" (Ibid, 2004). Those who attended the gathering were of the view that the people will provide a far more balance views of what is actually happening in Nigeria and the positive steps to improve conditions than is currently available to policy makers in the United States. In inviting prominent Americans to the meeting therefore three pages situation reports were presented to them. So, it was with the joy of one who had prepared the grounds for a smooth sailing that officials of Schiller Institute Inc received Chief Ojukwu and his fellow travellers into Washington for an image laundering mission which was to be rounded up on Friday 8 September 1995 in the conference room of Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC where Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu would make the opening remarks and answer follow-up questions on the Constitutional Conference report as well as the prospects for General Abacha's promised October 1, 1995 announcement of a time table for civilian rule in Nigeria (Alimi, 2005:339). But how so smooth would the mission be and what success could come out of it? If the record of the members of the delegation and the organisation hosting them is anything to go by, this effort of the embattled Nigeria junta might well be tantamount to chasing after the wind. Not only does the leader of the delegation. Most of those sent to the mission had some dents. Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu, who was described as a prominent politician by Schiller Institute, was seen as having no political base in Nigeria (Babatope, 2000: 49). For the other members of the delegation, especially Chief Tony

Anenih and Mr. Paul Unongo, their inclusion in the delegation seem to be by a very defective approach for a regime that wants credibility.

The records of the man behind Schiller Institute Inc, the organisation hosting Abacha's courier men in Washington DC is not also pleasing. The man, Lyndon H Larouche Jr. had been convicted on charges involving illegally Soliciting unsecured loans and tax code violations by a criminal indictment in Virginia U.S (Omoiya, 2012:10). Prior to that, the presidential candidate, in 1987, had been involved in a Boston court case of credit card fraud and conspiracy to obstruct justice before the case was declared a mistrial due to numerous delay. With such a man behind an organisation handling a package image laundering for Abacha regime, it cannot be anything less than a "mission impossible" (Agwai, 2010). Interestingly, the members of the Washington delegation would not be the last to be sent on such a mission many Nigerians of similar circumstance would have at one time or the other gone abroad to preach the case of Abacha. While Chief Tom Ikimi, the Foreign affairs minister and Dr. Walter Ofonagoro have been junketing abroad in their capacities as ministers in the regime and talking nineteen to the dozen to whoever cares to listen about Abacha's sincerity and progress so far, some other people like Chief Abiola Ogundokun, Chief Tele Olukoya, Paulinus Akpeki, Wada Nas, Yakubu Gowon, Shehu Shagari, and Oba Okunade Sijuade have turned into message bearers for the Army General for various overt and covert reasons (Babtope, 2000:197). As more people get recruited into General Abacha's bandwagon of message bearers, as more people embark on foreign image laundering mission and as the military junta continues to waste tax payers money in paying foreign public Relations firms, placing front page adverts and financing all-expenses paid trips to foreign capitals, the nation continues to drift nearer to the cliff edge. The mission, at the end, did not achieve the intended desire and goal as NADECO continued to discredit the regime and accused it of human right violation on all fronts.

The hostility against Nigeria and its consequences

Having assessed the policies formulated and executed by Abacha regime to salvage the ostracisation from the international environment, it thus necessary to evaluate the result of perceived ostracization, sanctions and hostilities towards the regime. This therefore will be the focus of the next section. Even before the Abacha regime assumed power on the 17th November, 1993, world hostility against Nigeria-had already manifested (Babatope, 2000:21). However, it was the "luck" of the regime to largely manage this hostility. Sanctions and other hostile attitudes against Nigeria were to continue unabated throughout the administration of General Sani Abacha. Nigeria's traditional trading partners canvassed for sanctions and

many actually imposed them, pointing to Nigeria's lack of a sincere democratization programme and human rights violations (Abimboye, 1998). The sanction measures, therefore, were aimed at coercing the Nigerian military regime into having a rethink over these two vexed issues.

Right from the onset, there were different reactions from Nigeria over these sanctions. While some particularly, the pro-government group tried to play down the factor of sanctions against Nigeria, others, whom one would rather call the opposition, saw sanctions as a positive step forwards taming the Abacha regime. To this group, which included the various human rights and pro-democracy groups, though sanctions were welcome, their application was far below expectation, both in type and degree. Thus they canvassed for tougher sanctions which should include a total embargo on Nigerian oil (Ado and Esiere, 1998). Though it is the focus of this study that sanctions on Nigeria failed to have the desired effect, which means they failed to change the attitude of the regime in Nigeria in the direction for which sanctioning states sought. It was never doubted that deliberate reactions will come from the Nigerian government as it confronts international hostility. Again, although sanctions might not have the desired effect, they nevertheless affected Nigeria adversely, particularly the ordinary Nigerians. According to Professor Ogaba Uche, the head of research unit, Nigeria Institute of International Affairs,

It would be wrong of anybody to assume that the international hostility and sanction was not effective. The effect was felt throughout the abacha regime and beyond as price of ordinary commodity soar by 100 per cent. Life of ordinary Nigerians instantly became miserable and people were subjected to untold hardship. The regime might pretend to be immune from the sanction but deeply it bore the brunt of its action indirectly (Ogaba Uche, Personal Interview, May 25, 2015).

As widely publicised as the sanction saga was, only a few countries actually rolled out sanctions against Nigeria. Apart from the United States and Canada, only the European Union countries have actually articulated and imposed punitive measures against Nigeria and seem to be carrying some out. Within the European Union itself, it was clear that most countries were only carrying out the sanctions programme in name. Interestingly there are other measures which have been taken against Nigeria, which do not come under sanctions, at least from the standpoint of the sanctioning states. Though Nigeria views these measures as sanctions, it is being treated here simply as "international hostility" (Emeanuwa and Haruna, 1998). Two issues are involved here. There are the severance of air link with Nigeria by the United States and Britain and the continued refusal of the United States

to certify Nigeria on drug related matters. The consequence of these actions on Nigerian and the government reaction to it puts them at par with other sanction measures.

The overview of the Sanction Measures

The effects of a comprehensive international economic sanction on Nigeria, bearing in mind the structure of Nigeria's economy, which is largely based on foreign cooperation and aid was enormous. The effects of such sanctions on Nigeria even from Britain and the United States alone are better imagined, indeed, when the spectre of economic sanctions became a reality to Nigerians, it was believed in several quarters that, economic sanctions against Nigeria involved trade. Thus it was believed that, since Nigeria depended so much on imports from outside, her economy would be crippled if indeed sanctions were effective. The various sanction measures as enunciated by the sanctioning states did not include trade, but the mere fact that economic sanctions were clamped on Nigeria served to indicate that trade sanctions would necessarily be involved (Chibundi, 2003:6). It must have been in the realization of this fear that, Rear Admiral Jubrila Ayinla, former Minister of Commerce and Tourism and the Chief of Naval Staff, assured Nigerians that no trade sanction of any form has been imposed against Nigeria by the international community. (Barika, 2014:56). He went on to add that, "all the European countries that hitherto imposed some sanctions against Nigeria have their nationals in the country running their businesses and all these activities have received a boost". Such official statement no doubt douse tension among Nigerian citizens.

For a clear understanding of the impact of sanctions on Nigeria, we must come to terms with what the various measures entail. In terms of foreign investment, military cooperation, trade and aid, the United States and western European countries constitute the most important associates of Nigeria. Since these countries constitute the actual sanctioning countries, a brief reconsideration of the nature of their sanctions will be worthwhile. Indeed, a very close look at the nature of sanctions against Nigeria indicates that, those of the United States are not very different from those of the European Union countries. In the light of these similarities, a consideration of the sanctions as announced by the European Union countries in 1993, and reaffirmed in 1995, will be enough to capture the major elements of the sanction measures. The common position of the European communities on sanctions on Nigeria, reaffirms the following measures adopted in 1993,

Suspension of military cooperation, visa restrictions for members of the military of the security forces, and their families, suspension of visits of members of the military, restriction of movement of all military personnel

of Nigerian diplomatic mission, cancellation of training courses for all Nigerian military personnel, suspension of all high level visits that are not indispensable to and from Nigeria, Visa restrictions on members of the Provisional Ruling Council and the Federal Executive Council and their families, and Embargo on arms, munitions and military equipment (Folarin:2013:25).

It is clear that, these sanctions were informed by the desire to seek a change in the behaviour of the military regime in Nigeria by depriving it of something it valued. But it is also clear that these measures as enunciated above were enough to force the regime to reconsider its domestic policy. One major sanction measures has to do with the military cooperation, both in terms of training and arms supplies. However, arms supply is a tricky business and most governments find it difficult to effectively control such (Ado and Esiere, 1998). Again, a country denied arms can indeed buy the same arms from a third party. Defence correspondent with the Guardian Newspaper, Madu Onwuorah, opines that, despite an arms embargo, the military may still be able to buy weapons on the international market and the big losers will be the major western defence contractors (Cited in Albert 2010:124). Even with this limitation, Nigeria was not deterred from going into Sierra Leone and forcefully confronting the Bakkasi Peninsula row with Cameroon. Indeed, in terms of weapons, personnel and upkeep, Nigeria continues to be the power behind the ECOMOG force. It seems from the foregoing that, while the sanctioning states continued to maintain sanctions, deliberate efforts were made, not to disrupt trade with Nigeria. Indeed, almost all European Union countries witnessed increases in trade with Nigeria within this period. These include the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Germany (Ajulo et. al., 1998). Only Denmark, Finland and Ireland generally witnessed a lull in trade activities with Nigeria in the under study General Sanni Abacha regime (Oladimeji, 2017:15).

Through trade and other commercial activities, relations continued between Nigeria and her major trading partners, but the atmosphere for investment was polluted. Not so much by sanctions but by the democratizing process which generated intense anxiety in the private sector. The Logos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) director lamented that "of particular concern is the whole question of the credibility of the entire transition programme and its potential implication for the stability of the polity....These worries are rooted in the fact that business cannot move on successfully in a politically unstable and volatile environment" (Al-Hassan, 2009:56)).

The Effects of Sanctions on Nigerians

Again, while the various sanctioning countries insisted that sanctions were not targeted at the ordinary Nigerians, it was indeed this category of Nigerian that suffered as a result of the sanctions. For instance, in the area of sports, the cancellation of Nigeria's hosting rights of the 8th World Youth Championship by the federation of International Football (FIFA), was a bigger loss to the millions of football loving Nigerians than the Abacha regime, the ordinary Nigerians would have no doubt made some public relation gains if it had hosted the tournament. Though FIFA itself said the cancellation was on health grounds, there can be no doubt that pressure on FIFA by sanctioning states was a major factor (Folarin, 2013:24). Relatedly, it was a fall-out from international hostility that eventually saw Nigeria out of the African Nations Cup Competition on two consecutive times in both South Africa and Burkina Faso (Fagbemi et. al., 1998). Nigeria's rather unexpected poor performance at the World Cup tournament in France (1998) could be attributed partially to its failure to feature in the last two tournaments of the African Cup of Nations.

Another area in which ordinary Nigerians suffered is in the area of political asylum. Though the French embassy in Lagos, in an interview with the Guardian Newspaper had claimed that, genuine Nigerian asylum seekers in Europe generally were negligible, and that most of the papers sent back to European embassies for verification in Nigeria are not genuine and there can be no doubt that genuine political asylum seekers are being denied this privilege (The Guardian, September 19, 1997). In the first place many visa applicants were turned down. The French embassy which is even more liberal in this respect turned down many visa applicants in for most part of Abacha years (Ate, 2011: 89). Similarly at the British High Commission, Visa Section, it is on record that many Nigerians are refused entry visas. Not only this, their passports were stamped, indicating that visa was refused thereby limiting their chances of getting visas into Westerns countries during the period. Again very high fees were charged and whether these visas were issued or not the money was not refunded (Ibid:91). This sort of treatment has a moral link with sanctions that were clamped on Nigeria by these countries. To Individuals, a visa denial could mean very much. According to a report by a Nigerian newspaper, over 90,000 asylum applications were received by Britain between 1993 and 1995. Out of this number only 4 were granted asylum while 15 were allowed to stay on compassionate groups (Effiong, 2102:28). In addition, Germany had 10,000 Nigerian political asylum seekers in 1992, but fewer than 10 were granted political asylum (Phillips, 2013). Both Britain and Germany confirm that almost all Nigerian political asylum seekers were not genuine. It is clear that Nigerians were taking advantage of the political situation in the country to seek economic gains elsewhere. But with the fake documents and stories

they took abroad, they must have blown the political crisis in Nigeria out of proportion and this served to stiffen the resolve of the international community against Nigeria. Conversely, they would have also unwittingly credited the Abacha Administration by proclaiming that they were being persecuted by the government, when it was later found to be untrue..

Other areas in which sanctions took a visible toll on Nigeria is in the area of aid. Here again, it is the ordinary Nigerian that suffered the brunt of the sanction. This is because, most of the agencies that benefited from such aids and grants that were stopped or severely reduced were of immediate importance to the people. One of these agencies is the Sokoto Environmental and Protection Agency (SEPA) which was being financed by the European Union and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Oladimeji & Zaki, 2015:86). Others include the Animal Trypanosomiasis project at the University of Ibadan, funded by the European Union, the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria, which depends largely on the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which had its assistance reduced considerably and the stoppage of USAID assistance to the State' Ministry of Health (Ngara et.al., 2014:21). There were several other projects which were of direct benefit to the people, but had to be suspended because of sanctions.

When Tom Ikimi, the Foreign Affairs Minister closed down Nigeria's High Commission Offices in Ottawa Canada, the Canadians refused to retaliate immediately, but eventually had to temporarily close shop in Nigeria. The consequences of these actions were that, Nigerians seeking visas to Canada or wanting to have anything to do with the Canada High Commission necessarily had to go to Accra, Ghana (Kolawole, 2005:879). No doubt, this represented another burden on ordinary Nigerians as a result of the hostilities between Nigeria and the Western countries. Similarly, the severance of air link with Nigeria by the U.S. and Britain brought upon ordinary Nigerians so much hardship. For instance, Nigerians travelling to the U.K out of Lagos had to route through other European countries since European airlines operating into Nigeria were not allowed to fly directly to the U.K with Nigerian passengers without a stopover in their countries (Ado and Esiere, 1998). Again, U.S. bound passengers had to go through Europe or take Ghana Airways from Accra or Air Afrique from any of the West African countries. All these represent financial and Psychological inconveniences to Nigerians brought about by the hostilities. It can thus be discerned from the above analysis that though sanctions served to batter Nigeria's image abroad and denied Nigeria assistance at home in many areas; it is indeed the ordinary Nigerian citizen that bore the greatest burden. The targeted military regime of General Sani Abacha itself lost a little.

Sanction and the loss of ADD's Presidency

The sanction and international hostility led to diminishing effect on Nigeria's influence in global political arena. Most West African countries, who would ordinarily want to respect Nigeria, began to show some sense of resentment to its leadership in Africa. There is no doubt that the failure of Nigeria at the 1995 ABD's poll further confirmed the pariah syndrome that was fast catching up with the country. Though the issue of who succeeds Babacar Ndiaye, the former African Development Bank's Fifth Executive President started in a very subtle manner about a year before his final exit. However, the 31st Annual General Meeting of ABD in Abuja, Nigeria held between 24 and 26 May, 1995 was marked with the failure of the AGM to produce a new president for the ABD against all hope and aspirations of the bank owners. This was not without some fundamental issues that borders on international economic diplomacy. The Nigeria government however pulled several strings and mounted diplomatic pressures on regional and non-regional members to ensure that Abuja hosted the meeting. She succeeded, because of her interest in occupying the seat of ADB's presidency was unequivocal (Omeje, 2004:45). Thus having won the first round, she expected the miracle of home-advantage as in soccer to follow suit. But, prior to the AGM, three major blocs had emerged, whose learning can determine the winner of the ADB's presidency. The three broad camps that emerged were; the Nigeria camp, backed by other military governments in West Africa plus Sudan; the francophone camp, led by Paris, backing Morocco's candidate; the Southern/non-regional camp, backing Lesotho's candidate (Mogunoluwa, 2013:148). The names of the candidates are Yesufu Seyyid Momoh Abudulai (Nigeria), Omar Kabbaj (Morocco), Richard Kaijuka (Uganda), Mohammed Salem Lekhal (Mauritania) and Timothy Thahane (Lesotho). The most interesting part of the contest was that all were capable hands and thus had influence in their own countries. Besides, the votes cast for an ADB President are weighted by the voting country's shareholding in the Bank. For example, Nigeria, the largest shareholder has 10.2 per cent, while Egypt has 6.02 per cent, the United States 5.9 per cent of shares (Mailafia, 2010:214). All candidates, however small their vote, can stay in the race for all five successive rounds. Because it holds the largest share of the regional votes, Nigeria could be the kingmaker if not the king. As it later turned out, Omar Kabbaj of Morocco later won the seat, though, with the assistance of Nigeria. The lost, according to a report, stated that the francophone countries did not want Nigeria to assume the position given the political hegemonic position of Nigeria in the region. Another reason for voting against a Nigerian was the international human rights and democratization records of Nigeria under Abacha regime (Chidozie et.al., 2013:15). The accusation was that if Nigeria was voted in, some

international donors might want to capitalize on that to distant themselves from assisting the ADB. In this manner, Abacha regime was voted against and not the candidate presented by Nigeria. In his comment, Professor Abolade Adeniji of International Relations Department of Lagos State said that, the African countries are not fools. How would you expect them to vote in a country with pariah status in global system knowing fully the implication of doing so. I did not pity the guy that lost as he should have sensed it before going to the poll. Although, it was a clear embarrassment for Nigeria but that was unavoidable. It is part of international politics and normal human relations etiquette; nobody would like to be a friend to an outcast (Abolade Adeniji, Personal Interview, March 12, 2015).

University The loss of ADB Presidency represented an indelible mark to the Abacha regime and a obvious resentment of Nigeria's leadership posture. Given that Nigeria holds the largest share in the ADB, the loss thus curtailed the extent to which Nigeria could control the multilateral financial institution.

Conclusion

Foreign policy is a choice that a state adopts towards external environment, and as long as such choice rests on the political intricacies of external environment the principle of rationality has to take precedence. This is not the case under Abacha regime. The regime seemed to be of conviction that personal aggrandisement and intransigence could lead to policy prudence. Such mistake can only be made in a state where foreign policy institutions and apparatus have been compromised. Abacha took over the mantle of power with the sole idea that external milieu played little role in determining the courses of event. He did not really understand that the external environment is beyond his control and the way he continually manoeuvred the domestic politics could be replicated at endogenous milieu. Although, Abacha court the friendship of some countries, most especially the West African neighbours, he did so to neutralize the sanction placed on it by the West and its allies. Such might explain the role of South Africa under Nelson Mandela towards Nigeria. Overall, Abacha's foreign policy, taking into consideration the domestic stress suffered by the citizens, marked a disastrous turning point in the history of Nigeria's external relations.

References

- Abacha S. (1996) Nigeria's National Interest and foreign policy. An address by the head of state during the Nigeria institute of international affairs patron's dinner.
- Abegunrin, O. (2003). Nigerian foreign policy under military rule, 1966-1999. Lagos: Greenwood Publishing Group

- Abimpboye, A. (1998). *IBB's Hand, Abubakar's Voice*. The News. Independent Commission Network Limited. Lagos.
- Adebajo, A. (2002). *Liberia's civil war: Nigeria, ECOMOG, and regional security in West Africa*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Ado, E. And Esiere (1998). *A season of Long Knives*. The Week. Lagos.
- Agwai, M. L. (2010) 'Nigeria's Military Capacity for Regional and Global Peace Support Operations', lecture presented to Participants of National Defence College Course 18 on 30 March 2010.
- Ajetunmobi R.O. and Omotere, T. (2012). *African-Centeredness Of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Moving From Anthropological Diplomacy To Citizen Diplomacy*. A Paper presented at the biennial conference of the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Abuja, (pp. 190-212).
- Ajulo, S. Et. al. (1998). *Twelve Killed as Police, Sect Clash*. The Guardian, Lagos.
- Akinboye, S.O. (2005) *from confrontation to strategic partnership: Nigeria's relations with South Africa, 1960-2000*. In O.U. Joy (Ed) *New Horizons for Nigeria in world affairs* (pp.211-230). Nigeria: Nigeria institute of international affairs.
- Albert, I. O. (2010). "When the State Kills: Political Assassinations in Abacha's Nigeria. In W. A. Adebani, *Encountering the Nigerian State*. (pp. 199-215). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Al-Hassan, M. (2009) "Nigeria-Africa Foreign Policy: Time for Sober Reflection" retrieved from <http://www.economicconfidential.com/Aug08f>, on 25/12/2014.
- Alimi, T. (2005). *The role of the media in Nigeria's external relations*. In O. Joy (Ed.) *new horizons for Nigeria in world affairs* In (pp.335-342) Lagos: NIIA Publications.
- Alli, W. O. (2012). *The role of Nigeria in regional security policy*. Nigeria, Abuja: Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung.
- Ate B. E., (2011), *Nigeria 's Relations with its Immediate Neighbours: A Security Political Analysis*, in Ate B.E. and Akinterinwa B. A. (Eds) *Cross-border armed banditry in the northeast: issues in national security and Nigeria's relations with its* (pp. 85-94). Lagos: NIIA Publications.
- Audu (A. N. (1998). *A critical analysis of Nigeria's Foreign policy during the Abacha regime: 1993-1998*. A thesis submitted to the postgraduate school, Ahmadu Bello university Zaria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of master of science (International Relations).
- Barika, N. L. (2014) *Nigerian Foreign Policy from 1960-2003 "Implications for Present and Future Leaders"*. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 19 (8), 52-58.
- Bobboyi, H. (2010) *Nigeria, ECOWAS and the Promotion of Regional Integration in West Africa*. in Jega, A. & Farris, J. (Eds), *Nigeria at Fifty: Contribution to peace, democracy and development*(pp. 100-121). Abuja, Nigeria: Lynne Rienner Publisher.

- Carlsnaes, W. (2008). Actors, structures, and. Foreign policy: theories, actors, cases, in Smith, S. Hadfield, A. And Dunne, T. (eds) Foreign policy, theories, actors, cases. Oxford: United Kingdom.
- Carlsnaes, W. (2013). Foreign Policy. In C. Walter, R. Thomas and S. Beth (eds) Handbook of International Relations. Second Edition. (pp.298-325). London: Sage
- Chibundu, V. N. (2003). Foreign Policy: With Particular Reference to Nigeria (1961-2002). Nigeria: Spectrum Books.
- Chidozie, C., Godwin, A., & Samuel, O. (2013). Nigeria's 'Megaphone Diplomacy' and South Africa's 'Quiet Diplomacy': A Tale of Two Eras. Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs (CUJPIA), 1(2).
- Dauda, S., & Bako, U. Y. (2012) impact of shuttle diplomacy on foreign direct investment in Nigeria, 1999-2007. International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences 1(6), 1-17.
- Durotoye, A. (2014). One Personality, Two Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Nigeria's Foreign Policies under Olusegun Obasanjo. International Affairs and Global Strategy, 24, 22-32.
- Effiong, J. (2012). Reflections on Nigeria's Foreign Policy. Journal of Social and Psychological Sciences, 5(1), 25.
- Emenuwa, A. And Haruna, G. (1998). Isolate Nigeria From Sporting Meet. Thisday. Lagos.
- Etekpe, A. (2013). ICJ Judgement on Bakassi Peninsular and Lake Chad: Litmus Test for Peace and Integration in Africa. African Journal of Political Science and International Relations, 7(6), 286-294.
- Eugene, E.O. (2014) Nigeria In International And Intra-National Military Interventions: From Pre-Colonial Times To Independence. Journal of History 1(3), 1-12.
- Fafowara, O. (1998). Nigeria: Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Disarray. African Journal of International Affairs, 1(1), 51-56.
- Fagbemi, A. Et. al. (1998). US, Britain, South Africa fault coup verdict. The Guardian, Lagos.
- Fawole, A. (2004). A continent in crisis: Internal conflicts and external interventions in Africa. African Affairs, 103, 297-303.
- Folarin, S. F. (2013). Nigeria and the Dilemma of Global Relevance: Foreign Policy under Military Dictatorship (1993-1999). Covenant Journal of Politics and International Affairs (CUJPIA) Vol. 1, No. 1 (Maiden Edition) , 15-33.
- Jackson, R. & Sorensen, G. (2013). Introduction to International Relations, Theories and Approaches. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kasali, A. (2007). The Impact of Domestic Factors on Foreign Policy: Nigeria/Israel Relations. Turkish Journal of International Relations, 6 (3), 123-142.

- Kolawole D. (2005) from isolation to globalisation: transformation of Nigeria's foreign policy from the Abacha regime to the Obasanjo administration, *Pakistan journal of social science* 3(6), 873-879.
- Mailafia, O. (2010). Prometheus as Good Samaritan: Nigeria's Bilateral and Multilateral Assistance since Independence in Jega, A. & Farris, J. (Eds), *Nigeria at Fifty: Contribution to peace, democracy and development* (pp.160-187). Abuja, Nigeria: Lynne Rienner Publisher
- Moguluwa, S. C. (2013). Nigeria foreign policy and reputational projects: an evaluation of the implications and prospects. *African journal of social sciences*, volume 3 (number 3), 140-159.
- Obi, C. (2008). Nigeria Foreign Policy and Transnational Security Challenges in West Africa. *Africa Journal of International Studies*, 13(6), 132-145
- Ogunsanwo, A. (2005). Nigeria and the European union (EU): past, present and the future. *ECOWAS in O. Joy (Ed.) new horizons for Nigeria in world affairs* (pp.199-210). Lagos: NIIA Publications
- Oladimeji, T. (2017). An Appraisal of Economic Dimension in Nigeria's Multilateral Diplomacy. *Global Disclosure of Economics and Business*, Volume 6, No 2/2017 Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3130793>.
- Oladimeji, T. and Mohammad Zaki, H. (2015). Nigeria as a regional hegemony in the periphery since 1960: an empirical analysis. *Journal of International Academic research for Multidisciplinary*. 3(10), 77-97.
- Olaniyonu Y. (Thisday, May 29, 1998). Abacha Should Quit in Military Interest.
- Omeje, Kenneth. (2004). The Smouldering Conflict over Bakassi Peninsular: Is Sustainable Peace in Sight? *Journal of African renaissance*. 18(1).
- Omoiya, S.Y. (2012). An Historical Appraisal of Nigerian Democratic Experience, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(9), 9-14.
- Phillips, T. (2013, November 10). We Remember the Ogoni Nine, Executed for Struggling Against Shell in Nigeria. Retrieved June 30, 2015, from *Activist Defense Today* :
- Rosenau, J. N. (1997). *Along the domestic-foreign frontier: Exploring governance in a turbulent world* (Vol. 53). Cambridge University Press.
- Thom-Otuya, B. (2013). Nigeria's federalism: an exploration of its dilemma. *Developing country studies*, 3(5), 65-70