

Foreign Policy and National Development in Africa: A Comparative Study of Nigeria and South Africa

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Abstract

This paper examines Foreign Policy and National Development in Africa with particular attention given to Nigeria and South Africa as a comparative study. In order to interrogate the paper properly, relevant literature was reviewed which noted that vibrant foreign policy of a nation goes a long way to shape the national development of that country. To properly do this, the paper made use of ex-post factor research design, documentary method of data collection was employed while, content analysis was use as its method of data analysis. The paper adopted decision making theory as its framework of analysis. After rigorous review, the paper contends that though both countries have striven in their foreign policy objective and that has affected their development. After making a comparative survey of the two strong nations in Africa with emphasis on their foreign policy drive, the paper argued that, south Africans foreign policy has a strong objective and principle than Nigeria in terms of sustaining national development. To this end, the paper recommended among others that Nigerian foreign policy objectives should be more proactive so as to compete in international politics. The paper concludes that building a strong foreign policy objective is a task that needs skills, industriousness, and creativity among leaders and the lead, hence these are the core value of developing a nation.

Keywords: *Foreign policy, National Development, National Interest, Africa, Nigeria, South Africa*

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Background to the Study

There is a general consensus among scholars of international relations that, no state is an island of its own. This is predicated on the fact that states act together in order to achieve their common interest as well as foster development in their respective states. Complementing the above statement, Kolawole (2004) opines that no nation can emerge a champion unless she shows all the necessary attributes that are connected with being one which is difficult in contemporary international system. However, it is clear that the instrument of foreign policy which include economic, military, diplomacy, propaganda etc. are much more relevant to the existence and survival of nation states.

Fundamentally, Countries in Africa also play a significant role in foreign policy of their respective nation which help in their national development. For instance, Nigeria, south Africa, Ghana, Togo etc. all have foreign policy that connect them with one nation to another. Nigeria for example has her foreign policy traced back to 1960 when it gained independence. It did not have full control of its foreign policy until after Oct.1963 when it became a Republic and since then, it has been faced with lots of challenges as regards its policy decisions. However, it imperative to note that successive government in Nigeria brings in different foreign policy objectives, thus most has remained unchanged since independence.

South Africa on the other hand has attained a great height in its post – apartheid foreign policy objectives under the tenure of Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, and their predecessors. From the foregoing, the relevant impact of foreign policy to national development cannot be over emphasized. Hence it brings states closer to economic, political, culture and technological advancement. Arising from this work is set to unravel the following problematic;

- (a) Does foreign policy undermine national development in Africa?

The following hypothesis were raised based on the research problem

- (a) Foreign policy Undermined national development in Africa

Against this backdrop the paper is set to unravel foreign policy and national development in Africa with a comparative bias between Nigeria and South Africa. To intellectually handle the work properly, the paper has been structured into sections in such a way that we first undertook the introduction, followed by conceptual clarification, examine theoretical framework, make a panoramic analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy and that of south Africa, considered south African foreign policy which we be seen as a model for Nigeria to learn a lesson from, neat the work with recommendation and conclusion.

Conceptual Clarifications

Two basic variables are central to the understanding of this paper, Viz Foreign Policy and National Development

The meaning of foreign policy;

The concept of foreign policy cannot be boxed into a unilateral acceptable definition. This is because multifaceted attempt has been made by scholars to put in their views on the concept of

foreign policy. Despite the multilateral definitions most of the tenets of the concepts are intertwined. According to Goldstein, foreign policy is the strategy used by government to guide their actions in the international arena. It spells out the objectives state leaders use as guide in pursuit of its relations.

In a similar vein, foreign policy is an inter-play between a nation and the rest of the world. It borders on interactions and transactions among states, and involving high diplomacy with the sole purpose of achieving certain national objectives. It is within this purview of interpretation that Adeniran (1983:185) advanced that foreign policy should be perceived from the connection of the motives and benefits that underpin states relations. He further opines that goals and means are basic ingredients of foreign policy. Morgenthau (1973) ties the goals of a nation's foreign policy to what he calls "national interest". He believes that the objectives of a foreign policy must be interpreted in terms of the national interest (ibid: 9). Foreign policy is an inter-play between a nation and the rest of the world. It borders on interactions and transactions among states, and involving high diplomacy with the sole purpose of achieving certain national objectives. It is within this purview of interpretation that Adeniran (1983:185) advanced that foreign policy should be perceived from the connection of the motives and benefits that underpin states relations. He further opines that goals and means are basic ingredients of foreign policy. Morgenthau (1973) ties the goals of a nation's foreign policy to what he calls "national interest". He believes that the objectives of a foreign policy must be interpreted in terms of the national interest. Simply put, foreign policy is a country's response to the world outside or beyond its own frontiers or boundaries, the response which maybe friendly or aggressive, casual or intense, simple or complex. This refers to the calculated steps taken by a state which are intended to maximize the opportunities that are available outside its geographical boundaries, while at the same time, minimizing perils that abound (Saliu & Adeniran, 2013).

National Development

It is apt for us to define the concept development before understanding what national development is. Development as a concept has suffered a unilateral acceptable definition. However, attempt has been made by erudite scholars to conceptualize development. Gboyega (2003) define development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. According to Walter Rodney, development in human society is a many – sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, self – discipline and political well-being. This implies improvement in material well-being of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future. As a result, it seeks to improve personal physical security, livelihoods, and expansion of life chance. National on the other hand, implies a phenomenon that embraces a whole nation.

National development according to Ola (2011) argued that national development could be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political, as well as religious advancement of a nation. This is best achieved through development planning, which can be described as the country's collection of strategies mapped out by the

government. from the foregoing, the term national development can simply be defined as the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people by providing social amenities like electricity, education, water, etc. simply put national development is the ability of a nation to improve the lives of its citizens.

Theoretical Framework

Despite the efflorescence and profundity of writing on foreign policy and national development in Africa, virtually very little has been done in the area of extending theoretical postulations of these two concepts in international relations. Indeed, attempts by scholars and practitioners to evolve universally applicable theoretical framework in the explanations of these had always ended in contradictory intellectual nullity and barefoot prognosis. However, the theory we employ here is the decision-making theory. According to Kerlinger (1973;9), a theory is a set of interrelated constructs, definition and prepositions that presents a systematic view of phenomenon by specifying relations among variables.

To this end, the decision-making theory as propounded by Richard Sydnor et al (1971) remains vital in the course of this study. This theory focuses on the processes of foreign policy formulation and analysis, how effective the policies are and the rate at which it impacts on the national development of a given country. his theory is very vital in this paper `hence` decision making of a state go a long way to show how effective there are in international politics, as well as how good decision by leaders to pursue their national interest can bring about national development.

General Appraisal of the Nigeria Foreign Policy (A Historical Overview)

The history of Nigeria Foreign Policy could be traced back to 1960 when she gained independence. From the period of 1960 till date, Nigeria has experienced 12 different regimes which include the Tafawa Belewa's, Aguiyi Ironsi's, Gowon's among others. At independence, Belewa articulated the basic objectives of the Nigeria foreign policy during` his speeches to the Nigeria Parliament in August and another on to the UN in October 1 1960. His speeches contained the rhetorics of pursuing an Africa-based foreign policy; the dramatic abrogation of the infamous Anglo Nigerian pact was to be a revolutionary moment for Nigeria foreign policy. Left for the prime minister, he did not see anything wrong with the pact and in his government's reliance on th`` British which he proudly called master and friend and had hoped that the achievement level of the country and her standard should be a model for Nigeria. Nigerian under belewa later reversed herself and showed more interest at providing leadership for the Africa continent when she led the campaigns to expel South Africa from the commonwealth. The belewa's government formed the major underpinning of the Nigerian foreign policy today but was not considered a huge success bearing in mind that the foreign policy built upon heavy moralistic foundations.

Deriving from the experience of Belewa's administration, this work is of the view that the country since the attainment of independence has been pursuing a foreign policy that is grandiose and noble in its intensions but ineffective in practical terms. In other words, in the absence of a sustained dynamism, all other government after Balewa have not shown the

required understanding of what foreign policy is all about and have posted the profile of achievements that cannot make the first republic stand alone in its naive pursuit of Nigeria interest in the international system. it has been all motive without movement.

At her independence in 1960, some objectives were announced for Nigerian foreign policy. The thrust of these objectives was to underscore the importance of Nigeria in Africa and the global system after securing the territorial integrity of the nation. The immediate post independent foreign policy objectives were nevertheless exposed to many deserving criticisms. One common thread that ran through the criticism was their idealistic nature. It has been considered lacking in any achievable and measurable assessment, for instance, the objective of contributing to the maintenance of global peace and security was too utopic to serve any mobilization role among the citizens, Nigeria then and even now is not strategically placed to provide a stronger basis for her wide-ranging participation in peace-keeping operations. Also flying in the face of the nation's realities was the objective of defending the rights of black across the globe. A country that is not doing well at home can hardly be taken serious in the global system when she comes around with a bogus objective of being the champion of all blacks wherever they may be. All these observations and others may have been taken into consideration by the framers of the 1999 constitution as amended when they threw their weight behind a new set of objectives for foreign policy which includes;

- i. Promotion and protection of the national interest
- ii. Promotion of African integration and support for African unity
- iii. Promotion of international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among nations
- iv. Respect for international law and treaty obligations.
- v. Promotion of just world economic order.

In comparative terms, these new objectives are abit clearer and realistic, although it's still swimming in the pool of irrelevance and idealism. Notwithstanding, the foreign policy has made some noticeable achievements and at the same time recorded some failures. Going by the second objective which lays emphases on Africa integration and unity, a partial success can be returned to the country's foreign policy although integrative efforts are still ongoing in West Africa and indeed Africa.

Nigeria has also made noticeable failures in its policy implementation; this failure can be taken from the angle of citizen diplomacy. As the world is getting more globalized there has been an increase in the volume of traffic across the globe in goods and persons. The expectation is that in these areas of more movement of person and goods, the Nigeria nation will place her diplomacy at the disposal of the citizens. The country's diplomatic missions have however been too flat footed in rendering helping hands to the citizens on transit.

The episode of book haram ``and the failure of the Nigeria state to tame what started like a mob action has sketched a failure around Nigerian foreign policy. Indeed, there are many domestic issues that the country needs to respond to. There is no way a country that used to be the toast of the international system would not be on the downward slope when she cannot

match her initial rating due to the high level of corruption, badly damaged national economy leading to many of her citizens flocking to the world even under inhuman conditions to make a living. Unemployment has been allowed to outstrip government's effort at arresting it. The level of indebtedness has begun to harm local industries and insecurity is not seriously perturbed by government's effort at containing it. Corruption is openly displayed in government circle to the displeasure of Nigeria's external image.

Cumulatively, the domestic environment has more cause to disenable the country's foreign policy in recent times. Nigeria affairs instead of improving have deteriorated beyond reasonable level showing a situation of no policy impact. The whole policy has been invaded by the corrupt attitude of the officials who administer it. the world was taken aback when soldiers who had participated in peace keeping operation had to resort to demonstration and agitation both at home and in mission areas before they were paid their entitlement. comparatively, Nigeria does not pay her officers on foreign missions reasonably well and that has encouraged the display of anti-mission behavior which has questioned the rationale for participating in peace keeping or peace support operation when only the negative aspect of the country is showcased to the outside world. this coupled with the discovery that Nigeria's equipment's are always substandard and as a result, have lowered the image of the country is the mission area.

It will not be a bad idea to state that Nigeria foreign policy has not been able to come to terms with its policy goals. It has been 55 years of conceptual confusion. Despite her conceptual and doctrinal transitions, the foreign policy is not grounded in deep philosophical broad-based considerations to long lasting benefits of her national interests. Judging from the foregoing, Nigeria foreign Policy has not made considerable impact on National development as compared to its counterpart.

General Appraisal of the South Africa Foreign Policy

The South Africa post-Apartheid foreign policy can be traced back to the 20th century when the apartheid regime was dismantled in 1994. This period saw the end of international isolation and brought about the emergence of non-racial democracy. Nelson Mandela and his successor Thabo Mbeki saw to the invigoration of the conduct of international affairs. Under the tenure of Mandela from the period of 1994 – 1999, foreign policy was geared towards the promotion of human right, peace, justice, unity and democracy.

This period saw the pursuit of independent approach to international affairs. South Africa sought to redefine relations with both existing partners and those that supported the ANC in the liberation struggle. Upon completing his tenure, Nelson Mandela handed over to Thabo Mbeki (1999 – 2008) whose administration was more or less a continuity of his predecessor's. He also recorded a huge success by defining South Africa's position with the international system.

It was under Mbeki that South Africa cemented its' role` in the world as an emerging power. For clarity purposes, the South Africa foreign policy objectives will be outlined as follows:

- i. Multilateral and economy diplomacy
- ii. North – South dialogue
- iii. South – South Co-operation
- iv. The African agenda
- v. Bilateral relations with individual countries.

South Africa has recorded a number of successes as in meeting its foreign policy goals. It engaged in a bilateral agreement on the management and conservation of biodiversity (aimed at stopping poaching, particularly the poaching of rhinos), in the greater Limpopo cross – border park. The country's foreign policy also highlights the importance of multilateralism as a means of ensuring broad participation in international relations. It therefore played roles in multilateral fora such as North-South dialogue centered on trade, investment and aids.

South Africa foreign policy also embraces South-South cooperation which includes strengthening the political, social and economic linkages with partners in the developing world especially emerging powers like China, India, etc. the African Agenda as part of its objective was geared towards promoting socio- economic development within the frame work of Nepad and regional integration, strengthening bi-lateral relations and enhancing African unity. It will also be pertinent to note that South Africa foreign policy under Jacob Zuma, recorded some level of success as a result of its focus on building a better Africa and a better world, promoting human right and democracy respect and justice for international law. It also announced a major foreign policy on Syria which aimed at ensuring lasting peace in Syria. It ensures that the international community must reject all calls for regime change in the country. It must not also support external military interference or any action in Syria which is not in line with the UN charter.

Also, south Africa trade relation with Nigeria has brought development bearing in mind that it's telecommunication giant MTN, gained control over six million Nigerian telecommunication subscribers. this has enabled it to make huge profits from the Nigeria market. Other prominent examples include multichoice which controls 90% of the cable TV business in the country. other south African companies includes chevron in the petroleum/ gas exploration sector, south Africa airways in the commercial aviation industries, submarine in the shipping business and Stanbic Bank which is a critical factor in the banking industry.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that South Africa foreign policy has permeated national development. Although in recent times, South Africa could not sustain the efforts and goodwill of Thabo Mbeki and Nelson Mandela and as a result, suffered some setbacks in its foreign policy implementation, however, it's efforts so far has impacted on national development.

South Africa Foreign Policy and National Development – A Lesson for Nigeria

Flowing from the foregoing, South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy has played a remarkable role in national development. This is perceived through its activeness in UN, AU and common wealth. South Africa was elected in 2006 and again in 2010 to serve in the UN

Security Council which it did until 2012. This appointment underlines its actions as regards security challenges which its counterpart ignored and saw as irrelevant. South Africa foresaw the after effects of her advanced arm technology industry which could contribute to the development of ballistic missiles and as a result, joined the missile technology control regime (MTCR) on 13th Sept. 1995 which was aimed at proliferation of unmanned weapons of mass destruction.

In a nutshell, South Africa despite its lapses should be applauded for putting up a vibrant foreign policy which is geared towards international co-operation infrastructural and utility investment, minimum level of social income expenditure and human capital development. South Africa has the desire to lead the continent in a revival mission through the NEPAD process. This is indeed a lesson to Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper has pianistically examine foreign policy and national development in Africa with particular attention given to Nigeria and South Africa with comparative bias. In the course of the study, it was discovered that Nigeria as an actor on the global scene is very long on rhetoric but short in actions and accomplishments in inter-state relations alongside its foreign policy goals.

It is against this backdrop that this study recommends that the Nigeria foreign policy should first address the location of the country and what interest she should be pursuing on the global arena. In a nutshell Nigeria should pursue a foreign policy that will contain crisis of under development, challenges of poverty, leadership, terrorism, and a host of other maladies. Nigeria should therefore re-assess its position in the international system to know what kind of values to inject into her foreign policy.

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