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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# THE “SHADES OF GREY” IN THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF NIGERIA’S EXTERNAL RELATIONS: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE HISTORICAL IMPERATIVES

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## Abstract

This paper did set out to examining nexus between the fundamental problems of Nigeria’s foreign policy and the historical imperatives. Social, political and economic problems of the current Nigerian state had left the managers and policy makers wandering on how best to articulate a foreign policy that would stand the test of times especially in the modern international environment that is brutish and nasty to third world states. To some school of thoughts in Nigeria, the wobbling and fumbling over the execution of domestic policies by the state had caused or impacted on the Nigerian state not being able to develop an effective foreign policy. The continual failure of Nigeria’s foreign policy over time did cause the paper into examining the shades of grey that underpins the consistent failure of foreign policy articulation, implementations, and thrust. The attempt at understanding the shades of grey that underpins the consistent failure of foreign policy projection and thrust of the Nigerian state over time caused the paper delving into the history of the “coming into being” of the Nigerian states. Again, the need to examining the historical and the fundamental imperatives of the consistent foreign policy failure caused the paper into seeking for more the nexus between the domestic environment (realities) and international environment in which Nigeria’s foreign policy operates. All of these examinations had lead the paper to several conclusions that includes the colonial experiences and legacies being a contributory factor that had help tied Nigeria’s economy to the Western capitalist economy, thus being incapable of been assertive and independent. Furthermore, the skewed, yet, inherited structural imbalance in Nigeria which had elevated the problems ethnicity, nepotism thus hampering national cohesion and nation building had further exacerbated the problems of articulating and implementing Nigeria’s foreign policy. From the conclusions the paper slide into recommendations canvasses herein.

**Keywords:** Dependency, Structural Imbalance, Afro-centrism, Foreign Policy, Global Environment, Domestic Realities, Military and Civilian Rule.

## INTRODUCTION

Like most state(s) that were created in Africa by the policies of the European colonialist, the modern Nigerian state was a product of the intense colonial rivalry and activities in the African continent, thus, its historical root being traceable to the

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Berlin conference of 1884-85. At Berlin (1884 – 85), the leading European states (powers) met to set up modalities for the scramble and partitioning of the African continent. The scramble for Africa, in the words of Pakenham (2011) meant;

In half a generation, the scramble gave Europe virtually all the whole continent: including thirty new colonies and protectorates, one million square miles of new territories territory and 110 million dozed subjects acquired by one method or another Africa was sliced up like cake, the pieces swallowed by five rival nations-Germany, Belgium, Portugal, France and Britain with Spain taking some scrape(s) and Britain and France were at each other's throats. At the center, exploiting the rivalry stood the enigmatic individual and self-styled philanthropist, controlling the heart of the continent Leopold II king of the Belgians.

From the posture and analysis of Pakenham (2011), there was the acknowledgement that modern state making and building in Africa commenced with European adventure in the continent. Whether this was true is a subject or discussion for another day. For purpose of the thrust of the paper one salient fact that needs noting is that the current Nigeria state was one of the countries that came into being through the “inglorious desires” of the colonial masters/ administrators during the period of colonialism and imperialism. These inglorious “twin policies – imperialism and colonialism and their impact was laced with clandestine politicking, treaty making, gun boat diplomacy and outright conquest which these African scholars acknowledged Onabanvoro, (1958) Crowther (1980), Tamuno (1984). The summation of the thoughts of these African scholars was that the British conquest of Nigeria was a long process, involving important measures like the removal of all visible opposition to the imposition, expansion and consolidation of British central authority over the territories that later became known as Nigeria. The charge of the British to actualizing their colonial dream in Nigeria was lead firstly by the explorers, then the missionaries, traders (politicians) or colonial representatives.

By 1900, the conquest of modern Nigerian was almost done and colonial administration had started in earnest, thus, Lasisi, Ige and Yusuf (1999) adding the thoughts to the ongoing logic and fact that the conquest of the different pre-colonial Nigerian people was undertaken by the British at different times through the deployment of several military contingents, especially, between 1851 to 1903. Consequently, by 1903, the entire country had been brought under British control. Again, This line of thoughts runs through the analysis of Tamuno (1990) Osarwenre (2000) Gana and Egwu (2003) Anam-Ndu (2003), but the crux of the matter, was the fact that just as the British administration was gaining grip and evolving, so too the colonialist were coming to term with the local realities, with a “pinch” of external conditions that helped accelerate the decision for the creation of modern Nigeria through the “mirror” of “Amalgamation”. In the words of Tamuno (1996), the *raison d'être* for the amalgamation was pragmatism. Tamuno (1996) noted *inter alia*:

Pragmatic, economy based, considerations, such as these provided the *raison d'être* of the 1889-1914 schemes concerning amalgamation in Nigeria. Local public opinion, for or against these schemes, was neither sought nor given. The prime movers were British; their own interests no matter how strictly defined and applied, matter most to them. Their prime consideration (that of the 1889 Selborne committee) was to else the funds available from

the richer south to offset the adverse financial standing of the less prosperous North and so reduce fiscal dependence on scarce imperial grants-in-aid.

The import of Tamuno's (1996) declaration was the salient raking up of a major historical and fundamental problems of Nigeria's foreign policy articulation and implementation for the singular reason of the amalgamation coagulating over 250 ethnic tribes and cultures together without any national ideology. Nigeria's External Relations are encapsulated in Nigeria's foreign policies. The British colonialist, by all intent purposes, were able to use the divide and rule tactics clothed in the guise of indirect system of governance to effectively situate Nigeria for the exploitation and benefits of Britons. From 1914 to 1960, Nigeria was under the yoke of colonialism, thus, her foreign policy articulation and implementation was not in her hands. To appreciate the historical and fundamental problems of Nigeria's External Relations therefore, one need to have a firm grasp of the history of Nigeria and the concept of foreign policy generally.

### **Evolution of Nigeria's Foreign Policy (Colonial Period)**

The evolution of Nigeria's foreign policy can be divided into two - colonial period and post-colonial era / period. The division by all intent and purposes was done for the effective articulation of the historical imperatives and the fundamental problems of foreign policy articulation and implementation. The colonial period covers the period 1914 to 1960. one salient fact that need noting is the fact Nigeria within this period was not a sovereign a sovereign state therefore all external relations was carried out on her behalf by the British colonialist, thus, Ofoegbu (1998) declaring and summarizing all happenings concerning Nigeria during the colonial era in the following words:

Nigeria's external affairs were fully in the hands of the British governor general of Nigeria. External affairs were among the subject reserve for the governor general, a Briton. The sessional paper on foreign policy (1956) which was the first serious foreign policy paper on Nigeria was a product of the joint efforts of the governor general, his secretary (also a Briton), the British colonial and commonwealth reaction offices. Primarily Ofoegbu (1998) declaration essentially sums up Nigeria's position especially as it concerns foreign policy articulation and implementation under the colonial period as Nigeria was not required to think for her.

### **Post-Colonial Period Foreign Policy/External Relations of Nigeria 1960 - 2025**

The post-independence or colonial period saw the coming into being of Nigeria as a true sovereign state with the paraphernalia of decision making and government fully in her custody. It follows that Nigeria as a state could take and make far reaching decisions including those on foreign policy without the decision of a supervising external power thus Anyaele cited in Ebegbulum (2019) who noted inter alia that:

The protection of national interest has remained permanent in Nigeria's foreign policy, but the strategy of such protection has varied from one regime to another. This means that all the governments from independence till date have pursued the same goal and objective using different instruments. From the administration of sir Balewa in the first republic to the present



administration of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, the objectives of Nigerian foreign policy remained the same.

Ebegbulum (2019) did raised some key pertinent issues that should be considered as the primary responsibility of a sovereign state in articulating and implementing foreign policy, therefore, national interest, consistency in policy and objectives must be taken into cognizance by the managers of the state. Nigeria at independence was at a crossroad on how her foreign policy, which was previously under the supervision of an external power, would inculcate/ integrate the referenced indexes noted above into its foreign policy. To this end, Nigeria at independence made the total liberation of the African continent and the protection of every black person globally a priority in her foreign policy. This posture of the Nigerian state at independence is encapsulated in her thoughts under her “manifest destiny” mantra. But the caveat that needs noting is the fact that at independence, Nigeria’s foreign policy articulation and implementation had strong British undertone, to the extent of claims of it being an extension of colonial British Nigeria. One of the shades of gray that confronted the nation (Nigeria) at independence was for the first Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to define Nigeria’s position in world politics. Nigerians of all walk of life and blacks in the diaspora looked up to Nigeria for direction, thus, their express desire that the foreign policy articulation should be based on the existing traditional and cultural values that are prevalent in Nigeria. In the same vein the elite too had expressed hope of the foreign policy favoring and integrating all aspirations including those that would see Nigeria becoming one of the leading nations/ players not only in Africa, but in the world at large. How was the Nigerian state hoping to achieve these lofty aspirations? The very first place to start is the raking up of the meaning of external relations before the highlighting the shades of grey underpinning the Nigeria’s external relations. To this extent therefore, an understanding of the “shades of grey” (basic problems) of Nigeria’s External Relations requires a good appreciation of the prevailing socio-political cum-economic issues of the time which informed the Nigeria’s Foreign policies as it affect countries of Africa and beyond. What this potent for the thrust of the paper is that there is a nexus between domestic conditions and external relations.

Foreign policy here is seen and construed as a predetermined, formal pattern of behavior adopted by a state in relation with both states and non-state actors within the international/ global system. A nation’s ability to interact with other nations is a reflection of its acceptance internationally, and evaluation of its level of civility in terms of behavioural conformity with international legal principles. Ajayi, (2005), posited that Foreign Policy since time immemorial, remained an important aspect of state craft, so, more often than not, it takes lead in directing the conduct and affairs of states. According to Chibundu (2009) and Adeniyi(2005) , a country’s foreign policy consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve its goals within the international relations milieu. Both scholars elucidated further that foreign policy is the aggregate of a country’s “national interests” or core values which are results/ product of the interaction of internal conditions or factors over time and space. Thus, foreign policy is a derivative of the domestic policies condensed in the national goals. It is the vent through which states present their desired images and pursue diverse goals in the global system.



Foreign policy has many sides and these include- political, socio-cultural and economic sides.

From the standpoint of the exposition on what is meant by foreign policy, it becomes clear that the responsibilities bestowed on Abubakar Tafawa Balewa at independence was a huge task, thus, Balewa attempted espousing on Nigeria's policy thrust with the following considered the cardinal principles under his watch – promotion of Nigeria's national interest and world peace (2) Pursuance of the policy of neutrality and non- alignment (3) Respect for sovereign equality of all nations (4) Maintenance of the principle of non – interference and non – aggression in other countries of the world (5) Promotion of the rapid de- colonization of Africa. (6) Maintaining a Modest approach to the pursuit of Nigeria 'foreign policy (7) support for a free and democratic world (8) Promotion and support of corporation and integration among African states (Asogwa, 2009, Adeniyi, 2005). The question then and here was how far reaching was the posture of Nigeria and her foreign policy under Balewa? By all intent and purposes, the general consensus amongst and across the spectrum of Nigeria's foreign policy scholars is that overtime, its wobbling and fumbling had become obvious, thus, in the words of Fawole (2004) the pendulum of Nigeria's foreign policy swings between mediocrity and ignorance hence the incoherent foreign policy thrust. But to some other scholars like those who share in the sentiments of Anyaele (2005) who posited Nigeria's foreign policy is believed to be in a state of flux and one of the dominant perspectives of Nigeria's foreign policy being constantly in a state of flux is the intricate connection between internal and external dynamics inherent in any given administration or regime. Some other scholars argue however that irrespective of the frequent changes, the substance of Nigeria's foreign policy has remained the same. The latter group of scholars maintained and argued that the protection of Nigeria's national interest, which in itself is dynamic, has remained the permanent focus of Nigeria's foreign policy, whether true or false is a subject for another day. These scholars contend that what vary between the different regimes are the strategies for the protection of Nigeria's national interest which actually is a function of perception, disposition and global trend.

Notwithstanding the polemics, Nigeria's foreign policy at independence made Africa its focal point- afro centrism which by all intent and purpose fell short of expectations of Nigerians, the Nigerian state could not effectively untangled herself from the policies of British colonial administrators including policies on external relations. Certain fundamental problems have been identified as major challenges to Nigeria's foreign policy from its inception - independence. Some of these problems stem from the Nigeria's colonial history and the attendant structural imperfections of the Nigeria's Federal structures.

### **Nigerain's Foreign Policy under Military Regimes**

After articulating Nigeria's foreign policy at independence, the stand out feature or cardinal principles under Balewas was non – alignment, peace resolution of conflicts, regional economic integration and non- interference in the internal affairs of other states. According to Ogoke (1993) Nigeria's hope of achieving all the lofty objectives through her membership of and participation in the United Nations organization (UNO), the Commonwealth of Nations, Non Aligned movement, the





organization of African unity and Economic Community of West African states (Ecowas). From the standpoint of Ogoke (1993) analysis the salient point to note is that from 1960 till date each government having a distinctive priorities and style. This means that the country's foreign policy had been pursued within broad conceptual framework. It follows that under the civilian administration under Balewa the conceptual milieu was different from those under military rule. From General Yakubu Gowon (1966-75) administration that was immediately saddle with Nigeria's external relations during and after the civil war, through the period of Murtala Mohamed, to the period of Abdusalam the last military junta, the mantra and thrust of Nigeria's external relations did not fundamentally change from those espoused by the Balewa Administration. Aside the intermittent spice brought into the pursuit of external relations by the different administrations the cores of Nigeria's foreign policy remain same, thus, Adeniyi (2005) corroborating this fact with his declaration:

In this segment of development of Nigeria foreign policy, Nigeria was involved in a civil war. While the cardinal principles remained the same, the focus of government policy was the defense and protection of the country's territorial interiority, cessation of hostilities and peaceful resolution of the conflict. The civil war and its management posed completely new challenges for foreign policy.

The experiences acquired in prosecuting the war and the eventual restoration of peace brought dividends in terms of lessons and bitter truth that affected the country's foreign policy and external relations. For instance, the contradiction and negative role played by Britain and some other leading western countries especially France in supporting Biafra secessionist reaffirmed the need for self-reliance and continued and unabashed neutrality or non – alignment. The mythical and foul suspicion of any close relationship with East was broken thus the fostering of a new relationship and corporation with the Eastern Block. The experiences of the War triggered the Nigerian state into reassessing it foreign policy and external relations thrust, thus, Nigeria worked assiduously for the collapse of settler's colonialism and apartheid. To this extent, General Gowon at the 1971 summit conference of the OAU, exhorted African leaders to step up efforts to hasten the liberation of the remaining colonies within the next three years government. By all intent and purposes, this posture of Gowon and Nigeria led him to further declare that the racist minority regimes in south Africa and Rhodesia, as well as Portugal and their friends will stop at nothing in turning the hands or tide of history which inadvertently is an affront to the collective conscience or consciousness to the black man and to the political independence of the states and by extension the continent. The minority regimes in South Africa at this point in History were fast becoming "Octopus" in nature as their reach in exporting racist policies and penetrating the affairs of other African states were becoming worrisome. Another salient point to note is that it was not only South Africa that felt the reach of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust, but the west African sub region too also felt its reach, as Gowon with the collaboration of Head of State of Togo - Eyadema Gnassingbe – toured the region for support of the integration idea. The idea of "Ecowas" the Economic community of West African States was eventually birthed on May 28th 1975. But the crux of the matter was that within the Nigerian state certain group of officer felt Nigeria's external relations was too docile and subservient to the British. To these group of officers, the Nigerian



state was not asserting itself enough in the task set for her by the founders of the Nigeria's foreign policy and external relations. Murtala Mohammed was the arrowhead of these group of officers that felt dissatisfied with the regime of Gowon thus by July 29th, 1975, a coup was announced, with Murtala Mohammed emerging as its leader. Though this administration / regime of Murtala Mohammed only lasted for six months. By all intent and purposes, this administration / regime was a star regime and trail blazer amongst successive administration. The first task undertaken by the regime was the public announcement and proclamation that "Africa" will remain the cornerstone of Nigeria's external relations and to this end the regime threw its weight behind the popular movement for the liberation of Angola (MPLA). The MPLA was among the several guerrilla groups that took up arms against the Portuguese colonialist for the independence of Angola. The contribution of the country towards the total liberation of the continent caused Nigeria to be classified as a frontline state. Nigeria stood tall in championing the cause of African liberation in all international fora especially with her mantra of "manifest destiny" – of God and Man bestowing on her the fate of all Black men on her. To this end, (BP) British petroleum was naturalized; couple with the intense mobilization and lobbying of all countries in the global system that believed in the "rights of colonial people to self-emancipation" in almost all fora globally for the liberation of South Africa. In the same vein, support was also extended to Mozambique – front for the liberation of Mozambique. For the reason of the active financial and human/ material support given to almost all front line states and the liberation movements, Nigeria under Murtala was made to wear the toga of a frontline states. Though the administration was short live, it was focus liberate and discipline in the conduct of external relations. The pole position and dynamism it brought to the conduct of Nigeria external relations made it stand head above shoulder amongst all other successive military administrations. In simple terms it made all other administration look churlish and ordinary. Other successive military administration includes – General Olusegun Obasanjo (1976 – 1979), was the head of the military Junta that took over the reins of government after the assignation of Murtala. He followed through on the policy thrust of the previous government. For the disposition of British investments in Nigeria by this administration in the 1970s was a clear message to the British government that Nigeria is ready to go any length to accomplishing it foreign policy objectives towards the liberation of African states. This posture of the Nigerian states did forced the British government- Prime Minister Margret Thatcher to change its stance on the dubious power transfer to but selective local Zimbabweans led by the white minority regime of Ian smith. The popular liberation fronts in Zimbabwe were to be "thrown under the bus"- Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) thus at the commonwealth summit of August 1979 the prime minister of Britain – Margret Thatcher was forced to organize the Lancaster House talk that resulted in true independence for Zimbabwe. In simple terms, the administration never really move away from the template of Murtala Mohammed, so too other military administrations that followed. Major General Mohammadu Buhari (19783 – 1985) led junta was to follow that of Shagari who led a democratically elected government that was laden with corruption, nepotism, Maladministration and ineptitude. The Buhari Administration attempted a cleanup of government institutions and country with what was considered "draconian laws". The



highpoint of efforts in managing Nigeria's external relations made by the administration was the recognition extended to the Saharawi Arab democratic republic (SADR) as an independent country in Africa in spite of Morocco protest. While the low point of the administration's efforts at managing Nigeria's external relations was the attempted smuggling out of Nigeria's former transport minister – Umarru Dikko from Britain. This failed attempt of the Nigeria's government caused the British government declaring some Nigeria's government official (military regime) persona non grata. In the same vein, the Nigerian government under General Buhari reciprocated by demanding that the British high commissioner too leave Nigeria immediately. This course of action (retaliatory actions) became the regular and an expected response to any maltreated of Nigerians and Nigeria globally, thus, fawole (2003) passing a damning verdict on the administration by positing that administration instituted the most far reaching and draconian rule of any military regime till date. He outlawed criticism by tempering press freedom hauled politicians into jail, outlaw politics and banned political discussion about the country's future. The life of this administration came to an end on August 27th, 1985. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babaginda (1985 – 1993), the highpoint of the administration was the intervention Liberia and Sierra Leone (Ecomog intervention force). Both countries at the time had serious internal crisis that had resulted into full scale war that had serious security implications for the entire sub region of the economic community of West African states. Nigeria under Babaginda lead the charge of collective efforts of the sub regional intervention force (Ecomog) in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The intervention restored peace to both countries but left Nigeria with huge financial burden, thus the questioning of the rationale behind such venture. The "unique" Nigerian domestic pressures mounted on the administration caused Babaginda administration to cook up the contraption called "interim government". By all intent and purpose, the Babaginda Administration was quickly followed by a "contraption" cooked by administration when it brought chief Earnest Shonekan to head an interim government because of huge cry for a democratically elected government which most Nigerians consider illegal and illegitimate. The political mood of the state accelerated and caused the overthrow of Babaginda administration's contraption of interim government. As General Sani Abacha (1993 – 1998) quickly moved in to overthrow the illegitimate government of Shonakan, the general was not ready to give listening ears to any form of discerning voices and opinion. This best explain his stance against the international community and leaders with international clout that tried intervening in Nigeria's internal /domestic politics and affairs. This stance of the administration made Nigeria to be ostracized in the "comity of nations". Be that as it may, the standout contribution of this administration towards Nigeria's external relations is the uncompromising stance on the territorial integrity of the nation. To scholars and managers of Nigeria's external relations this contribution may be innocuous, but with the verdict of the International court of Justice in 2000 over Bakassi, it became apparent that Abacha was truly a lover of the Nigerian state. To this date the people of "Bakassi" are without a "land" and "a state". With the clandestine politics of France in the West African Sub - region, it is obvious for the reason of geo politics, it is understandably too why France played the role she played in swaying the judgment of the court in favor of Cameroon, years after Abacha demise. To General Abdulsalami Abubakar (1998 – 1999), his administration





had to contend with domestic pressures of returning the country back to civil governance. The pressure and demand for civil governance in the country had been mounting since the annulment of the June 12th elections of 1993. By all intent and purposes, one recurring decimal in all of the military juntas/ administrations was the discipline and the making of external relations the exclusive preserve of the head of state and those of the inner circle of the head of state. All of these regimes only borrowed queue from the administration of Murtala but without the vigor and forthrightness required for the conduct and implementation of foreign policy and execution of external relations. Again, what is another “shade of grey” in Nigeria’s external relations under all the military regimes is the personalization and the making of foreign policy design thrust and implementation the exclusive preserve of the head of government.

To all the successive civilian administrations that had grace the turf of governance in Nigeria, when it comes to external relations or thrust, there is little or nothing to hold on to except the ceding of Bakassi to Cameroon under the Green tree Agreement supervised the eminent Jurist Ajibola. The eminent Jurist was among other jurist that wrote the minority report of the judgment of the international court of Justice (ICJ) where they a swipe at the Judgment for failing to recognized and taking into cognizance the issue of historical and sociological affinities raised by Nigeria. Again another Issue raised in the minority report was the faulty premise on which the court based their verdict - the Anglo German Treaty of 1913, but theretofore the modern Nigerian state was born in 1914. The question here how did Nigerian state get to this precarious situation? It is a well-known fact that the Nigerian state went to the world court with her “second eleven”; if allowed to use the footballing parlance. The second coming of President Obasanjo (1999- 2007) as a civilian President, did not leave much to be desired and for the reason of the “shades of grey” in the domestic politics of Nigeria helped in shaping the abysmal records of the administration in external relations and foreign policy thrust. Ethnicity and the wrongful definition of Nigeria did combine to leave the nation sprawling before crooked politicians that have made politics crude, violent, and zero sum game. How does this related to what transpired at the world court? The people of Bakassi are minorities in Nigeria’s political descriptions, they are considered inferior to the majority tribes – Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, therefore at the operational level of society in Nigeria, the minorities are only considered good enough for their economic and human resource; so when issues concerning them arises, they are treated with levity. This is what played out in the Bakassi case and how else can one explain the kid glove the Nigerian states treated the case by sending a constitutional lawyer to the Hauge. The second coming of Obasanjo was a disaster in term of foreign relations. Other civilian administration that followed include those – Umaru Yar’ Adua (2007-2010 ), Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) that was plagued by the terrorist insurgency that believed that Sharia law be imposed on the entire territories of the Nigerian state. The actions of the terrorist group culminated in kidnapping of secondary school pupils in Chibok secondary school (Maiduguri) by members of Boko Haram terrorist group. As it concerns external relations, Nigeria became a state associated and considered an exporter of terrorism and terrorist. Nigeria’s external relations under this administration took intense battering from the global community especially from the “Bring Back our girls” campaigners globally. The



question of Boko Haram became one germane reasons for the fall of Jonathan Administration as the insurgency called into questioning the corporate existence of Nigeria.. Mohammadu Buhari (2015 - 2023) took over the reins of government from Jonathan and the highpoint of his administration is the attempt at restoring some dignity to corporate existence of Nigeria by recapturing territories taken by the insurgency even though prior to his administration he chastised the method deployed by the previous administration in tackling Boko Haram Insurgency. Tinubu (2023 till date)

### Shades of Grey in the External Relations of Nigeria

The shades of grey and the historical imperatives of Nigeria's external relations did highlight the fundamental problems/ flaws in Nigeria's foreign policy thrust, implementation and articulation. It is these flaws that this paper considers the "shades of grey", as these shades had hampered or inhibited the effective usage of foreign policy to the advancement of Nigeria's core national interests or values. These shades of grey and the historical imperatives include all such factors that had impacted negatively Nigerian's common aspirations and desires - be it economic, political and socio-cultural desires. According to Kingibe (2015) who had earlier posited:

Our vital interest are those that relate to our core values – our cohesion and collective survival, inviolability of our territorial integrity, the guarantee of our sovereignty, the protection of our citizens and resources, and the defense of our democracy which enables us make independent decisions about our national life. The Nigeria's core national interests/values include all that promotes Nigeria's national pride, sovereignty, security, economic rejuvenation, political stability and protection of the rights of every Nigerian everywhere in the world.

It therefore requires interrogating all such hindrances to Nigeria's national interest and core values dating back to the formative stages of the Nigerian state. Thus, the fundamental problems of Nigeria's foreign policy can be situated within the following historical realities:

The Nigeria's Colonial Experience

Structural Imbalance in Nigeria's federal system.

Afro-centric philosophy of the Nigeria's foreign policy

Let us look at these problems one after the other.

The Nigeria's Colonial Experience - the fact that Nigeria is a product of colonialism meant colonialism posing a serious challenge to her foreign policy articulation, implementation and thrust. Like every other country, Nigeria's foreign policy is intricately woven and connected to domestic factors such as history, economy, and size. Nigeria's colonial history had constituted serious impediment and burden to the processes of articulating and implementing of Nigeria's foreign policy for the simple reason that Nigeria's "coming into being" was not for Nigerians but for the sole benefits of the colonialist and the capitalist colonial powers.

At independence, the Nigerian colonial economy existed only to service the economic interests of the colonial powers (colonialist) and not for the development of viral and self-sustaining national economy in Nigeria. The conditions of the colonial economy inadvertently helped in the reinforcing of ethnic and regional differences in



the country. The import-export structure of the global economic relations during the colonial era greatly hampered the economic integration of the various parts of the colony, as the patterns of linkages and integrations of the colonial economy was primarily with the metropolis. The local economy was patterned and fashioned in a manner that linkages of the different regions of the Nigerian state during the colonial era most unattainable, therefore, it was situated as a source of raw materials to the shipping ports. The absence of any effective linkages in the colonial economy threw up quasi nationalist that saw in the liberation struggle an opportunity of replacing the colonial masters in both their ways and values. This posed a challenge to articulating a foreign policy at independence that would truly serves Nigeria's economic and socio-political interest given the nature of the arising ethnics/regional economic cum political competitions. The economic cum political competitions were generally marred with ethnocentrism as politics was made crude, brutish and violent. Political power became a tool for ethnic or parochial agendas.

Structural Imbalance in Nigeria's Federal System – the structural imbalance notice in the Nigerian state system was a well-crafted mechanics (antics) of the colonial masters. Historical traditions in Nigeria have it that one of the reasons for the amalgamation was for economic and political expediencies. Since the British could not cope with the republican spirit of the "south", it was only natural for them to find an ally which they did. They found in the northern elites ready accomplice in their desire of entrenching their divide and rule tactics which was at the detriment of the local populace and to the benefit of the British. Simply put the state structure of Nigeria was tilted in favour of the North. Till date the Nigerian state is still struggling on how to correct this imbalance. The question here how did this impact on foreign policy articulation and thrust? Foreign policy is a product of national interest.

Difficulties of endangering national cohesion occasioned by the skewed federal structure were deliberately tilted in favour of one section of the country consequently affecting the articulation and pursuit of national goals of Nigeria. The point being made here, stems from the fact that internal schism and mutual suspicion amongst the ruling class in Nigeria impacted and has continued to impact Nigeria's national goals and core values as nation had continually failed in articulating its core values . This point is a necessary given in the sense that a country's foreign policy is and must be driven by some domestic factors/ conditions. More importantly, Nigerians and Nigeria ought to understand that an assertive foreign policy as demanded by Nigerians must be based on a strong economy and domestic stability. On the strength of this fact, the paper contends that the structural imbalance in the Nigerian state will remain a serious impediment to the articulation and implementation of the country's foreign policy given that Nigeria's core national values are sacrificed on the slab of ethno-religious feelings.

### **Afro-Centric Philosophy**

Another problem of Nigeria's foreign policy is its Afro-centric philosophy. Nigeria's foreign policy is largely Afro-centric in orientation. This means that Africa is the Centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Nigeria plays the role of a 'big brother' within the African continent and has variously intervened in the crises/problems affecting other African countries to such an extent that evoked criticism locally. To Ayodele et al (2015), there is a disconnection between national interest and Nigeria-



African relations. These scholars contend that the nation (Nigeria) is doing too much in the African continent without corresponding or reciprocal reward or positive outcome. Obadiah in Ogunseye (1999) posits 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. He concluded his analysis by arguing thus that every single action of the Nigerian state should be adjudged by how much it advances her national power, objectives, purposes and influence. To Ukaeje in Machridis (1985), Nigeria's false generosity abroad and penury at home are proof that we are pretending to be what we are not thus his insistence that Nigeria has been overstretching herself in her Afro-centric foreign policy. This pathetic posturing of the Nigerian state in her foreign policy thrust had informed the call for paradigm shift as regards Nigeria's foreign policy.

### CONCLUSION

The greatest undoing of Nigeria's foreign policy is the imperatives of colonialism on Nigeria's external relations. The greatest "shade of grey" that had inhibited the proper and effective articulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy is the underpinning of colonialism. The British through their clandestine politicking and politics had made sure that the mutual suspicion, corruption, Maladministration, and ethnicity continue to blur and hinder the development and growth of the external relations policies (foreign policy) over time and space. Another shade of grey is the problem associated with the ruling class that seems not to outgrow the divisiveness that had been implanted by the British. These elites had inadvertently made politics, crude, brutish thus making politics a zero sum game. Foreign policy is a reflection of domestic policies/ core values that are externally projected. Obviously, Nigeria's foreign policy from inception was intricately woven around British foreign policy in Africa. While Kwame Nkrumah was busy expanding the horizon of Africa and Ghana external relations by demanding for the emancipation of all black men and Africa, Nigeria on the hand, was busy licking and dusting up the designs and blueprints left behind by the British colonialist for the conduct of Nigeria's external relations. This reason underpins the localized and Afrocentric foreign policy, thus, the need for Nigeria joining hands with other African states in the fight against the forces of colonialism and apartheid regime. To this end, Nigeria, therefore, found it necessary to assist fellow African countries / states to gaining independence and forming cooperation against colonialism. Aluko (1981), in corroborating the localized and the afrocentrism foreign policy observed that in 1960, the principles guiding Nigeria's foreign policy were premised on the following -

Respect for sovereignty and equality of other states.

Non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Commitment to cooperation as a means of promoting African unity.

The paper, therefore, concluded that since foreign policy is a product of national interests, Nigeria's foreign policies during the first republic were essentially informed by the false mantra of "Manifest destiny" and the dictates of the British designs for Nigeria's external relations given the size and potentials of the country. It never took into cognizance the interest of Nigerians rather it mark the beginning of making foreign policy elitist realm in Nigeria. Colonialism in Nigeria had created deep seated schisms and rivalry between the major ethnic nationalities/ groups such

that national integration and cohesion had become problematic in Nigeria. Colonialism had bequeathed on Nigeria an economy that is tied to the global capitalist system. The contemporary issues of corruption, bad leadership, prebendalism are all fallout of colonial hangovers, westernized and disoriented emergent ruling class. These fallout and neo-colonialism has continued to influence Nigeria's foreign policy to the detriment of Nigeria's core values or national interests.

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