

Impact of State Weakness on Nigerian Foreign Policy Reputation: a Critical Analysis

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Abstract- Nigeria has been portrayed in bad light due to its unimpressive image and reputation as a corrupt and mismanaged economy often blamed on bad governance and leadership. The paper basically examines the impact and consequences of state weakness on the Nigerian foreign policy reputation. Findings from the paper reveals that Nigeria since inception as a federation has been a fragile and weak nation, Nigerian foreign policy reputation has been greatly affected by some internal factors that have made the country not to secure a remarkable influence and respect in sub-regional, regional and global diplomatic relationship despite its wealth and commitment in assisting other countries, the weakness of the Nigerian state arises primarily from the incapacity of the state to deliver essential and basic needs to its citizens and the Nigerian state is a victim of high level corruption and bad governance, political instability, ethnic and religious conflicts among others. These challenges have clogged up the route to sustainable development, tarnished Nigeria's image and caused the diminishment of Nigeria's prominence both at home and abroad. The paper therefore recommends that, the Nigerian government should vigorously pursue goals of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights at home to ensure that its leadership role is credible abroad, Nigeria should urgently mount image and reputation management campaigns in the media and project the achievements and humanitarian efforts of the country, the anti-corruption agencies should be pro-active, sincere and expedite action in fighting corruption. The paper adopts qualitative method of data analysis, drawing from secondary sources.

Index Terms- State Weakness, Fragility, Foreign Policy, Development, Reputation, and Image.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since every sovereign state exists and operates within a much larger community of states, it has to relate with other sovereign members of that community. Foreign policy is the primary instrument for the conduct and management of that relationship, and its goal is to protect and promote the national interest of the country (Akindele, 1996:93). Foreign prestige is a function of home strength. No nation-state that is weak at home, politically or economically, can be strong abroad. Governments that tolerate no freedom at home and does not guarantee the rights of its citizens, does not adequately provide basic and essential needs of life to its citizens, does not protect lives and properties and ensure the development and growth of the domestic economy will not be taken seriously when it preaches abroad. As stated by Akindele (1996:93), an effective foreign

policy depends largely on the stability of the domestic political order, the strength, resilience and diversification of the national economy, the military might available for use if the situation arises, the level of industrialization of the economy and the quality of political and administrative leadership at home. The conduct of foreign policy must, therefore, pay attention to these domestic factors.

Recent years have witnessed increasing concern among policy makers about weak or fragile states. Today, it is widely accepted that development, peace and stability require effective and legitimate (strong) states that are able to fulfill key international responsibilities and provide core public goods and services as well as security (Newman, 2009). Nigeria has long been a case of interest for the study of political and economic development. Its polity experiences ongoing fragility and its democratic base is rather tenuous yet it exercises tremendous power and influence in its sub-region, Africa at large and to some extent the global stage. Its international profile was profoundly influenced by interactions with the United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth and the European Union (EU). Nigeria is the undisputed political leader of its sub-region and was the founding force of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In the 1990s, Nigeria initiated multilateral military peacekeeping operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as liberation of South Africa and some other African countries (Meierding, 2010:1).

The foreign policy of every country deals first with the preservation of its independence, sovereignty and security, and second, with the pursuit and protection of its economic interests. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has continued to play a strategic role in fostering global and continental peace through its foreign policy framework and principles which define Nigeria's relations with other countries. Nigeria has over the years designed and adopted series of strategies to safeguard its national interests and to achieve set goals in international relations. These strategies are diverse and range from humanitarian aid, diplomacy, economic actions (such as providing financial assistance to some other countries) (Clinton, 2001, Wikipedia, 2010). Nigeria's foreign policy thrust over the past years anchored on African countries, thereby playing the "big brother" role in her international relations posture. In recent times, due to deepening level of globalization and transactional activities, Nigeria interacts with non-state actors or non-African countries, particularly developing economies. This invariably, has led Nigeria to rethinking her foreign policy thrust to accommodate global realities. But, more importantly, this interaction is evaluated and monitored in an attempt to maximize benefits of multilateral international cooperation (Moguluwa and Achor, 2013:141). The country had overwhelmingly given both solicited

and unsolicited supports to African neighbours, intervened positively in their internal crisis, provided humanitarian services, doled out billions of dollars as charity, sent technical aid corps, sent military supports, and so on. In most cases, these flamboyant gestures were defiantly done against home interest and survival. Despite such, the economy underperforms and the great majority of citizens have benefited little. In the same vein, there has been continuous frustrations by Nigerians over the failure of the potentially wealthy nation to provide basic human needs, such as, education, food, potable and drinkable water, reliable transportation, policies free of rampant corruption, employment and poverty reduction. In fact, of all the nations in the sub-Saharan Africa and perhaps the world over, Nigeria is the only nation whose prospects for continuous existence are in doubt. The history of the country since independence has been replete with identity related issues and conflicts (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2006). The more powerful a state is, the greater its capacity to influence other states, that is to say, the greater is its ability to achieve the objectives of its foreign policy (Meierding, 2010:1).

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

State Weakness

According to Carey (2008), a state is weak when its structures lack the political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of its population. Newman (2009) on the other hand, lamented that the phenomenon of weak states refers to a situation where central government has a poor capacity to control public order within its territory, is unable to consistently control its borders, cannot reliably maintain viable public institutions, and is vulnerable to extra-constitutional domestic challenges. Indications of this condition can be found in poor levels of economic performance, human welfare, economic distribution, and conflict management amongst others. Weak and failing states are vulnerable to all forms of smuggling, including trafficking in small arms and light weapons through porous borders. This is one of the demonstrable sources of regional insecurity. Acemoglu (2005) and Easterly (2006) further identified the level of economic decadence in most African States like Nigeria as a direct offshoot of the weakness of the State. One of the defining factors of a weak state is the fact that the rulers and their cronies organize the affairs of the state around themselves and for their own selfish interest at the expense of the majority of the citizens. In a weak state, the government is unable to effectively collect taxes to finance expenditure on public goods resulting in the absence of social infrastructure and looting of public funds. A weak state is signposted as one with unstable social, political and economic institutions, low levels of government accountability, ethnically driven political institutions, poor tax system, a corrupt legal system, poor transportation networks, no respect to human rights, non observance of the rule of law and lack of freedom. Adeyeye (2013), while lamenting on the issue of state weakness stated that, the indicators of state vulnerability to fragility include social, economic and political indicators. The social indicators include demographic pressure, massive movement of refugee and internally displaced peoples, legacy of

vengeance-seeking group, chronic and sustained human flight and rural – urban drift or migration. The economic indicators are uneven economic development, sharp and/or severe economic decline and the political indicators include widespread violation of human rights; progressive deterioration of public service, rise of factional elites, intervention of other states or external factors. Fragility relates to poor records of state institutions in providing basic services due to either lack of capacity or failure to confer the due priority to fulfill basic state functions. World Bank and the IMF (2009) identified common features of state fragility such as the inability to mobilize domestic resources and dependence on external resources, reliance on primary products, concentrated export, low human development and poor infrastructure. Joel Migdal's "Strong Societies and Weak States" luminously discussed the issue of state weakness. Weak states are characterized by low levels of legitimacy; low capabilities to collect taxes and spend government revenue in a planned way; their administrative capacity is insufficient to implement decisions taken or policies adopted by the government; and they have very limited influence on the pattern of societal development in their countries.

Foreign Policy

To Goldstein (1999:147), foreign policies are strategies used by governments to guide their actions in the international arena. Akindele (1996:91-96) argued that, foreign policy may be conceived as a set of carefully articulated goals and objectives which a nation-state seeks to realize and actualize the conduct of its relationships with other states. In the conduct of foreign policy, the ultimate purpose is to protect the security of the state, enhance the social, economic and political welfare of the citizens, and maintain peace, without which development is hardly possible. The conduct and management of any country's foreign policy must recognize that international politics is a struggle for power, influence and prestige in a competitive international arena. To Ojo (1990:44) & Ezirim, (2011), foreign policy is a combination of aims and interests pursued and defended by the given state and its ruling class in its relations with other states, and the methods and means used by it for the achievement and defense of these purposes and interests. Foreign policy is the category of actions a government takes which deals with defense, security, international political and economic relations. It is the activity where by a state deal with other states, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and certain individuals (Ojo, 1990: 44, Ezirim, 2011). The shaping of foreign policy is a dynamic process involving the interaction between a country's internal and external environments (Pham, 2007- 142). Since the national interests are paramount, foreign policies are designed by the government through high-level decision making processes (Olumide, 2006). Foreign policy analysts argue that national interest accomplishment can occur as a result of peaceful cooperation with other nations or through exploitation (Edward, 2011). Foreign policy means the promotion of national interests at international level. Foreign policy therefore remains a reflection of domestic policy (Anyaele, 2003: 204).

Foreign policy and national interest are inseparable concepts in international relations, and indeed, the foundation of

a state's foreign policy is her national interest which in turn directs the course of the foreign policy. Thus, national interest refers to the totality or the aggregate of interests of individuals and groups within a given nation state. Nigeria's foreign policy is the explicit objectives which Nigeria pursues and achieves in its external relations. It is the instrumentality by which Nigeria influences the global environment and through which she realizes objectives that are in consonance with her perceived national interest. Nigeria maintains relations with other nations of the world and many diplomatic missions, i.e., embassies, high commissions and consulates abroad. Nigeria also hosts many foreign missions (Akinboye (1999:365-366, Dibia, 2008:224). Nigeria's foreign policy has emphasized the emancipation, development and unity of Africans both within and outside the continent (Akintola, 2007). In recent times, Nigeria's foreign policy thrust anchors on African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and other developing nations (Olufemi, 2008, Moguluwa and Achor, 2011:143). In short, the shaping of foreign policy is a dynamic process involving the interaction between a country's internal and external environments. Thus Nigeria's foreign policy cannot be considered in isolation from the country's domestic political context which, in turn, cannot be appraised without reference to the "congenital" identity crisis of the Nigerian state itself which some have made it a "crippled giant" from birth (Pham, 2007: 4).

Reputation

The image of a nation is determined by factors such as corporate performance, quality of life of its citizenry, the nature of its foreign relations policy, economic base, standard of living, technological growth, achievement, etc. The influence of these indices on the country reflects on the type of the image and reputation the country acquires. The image could be negative or positive, wrong or right, favourable or unfavourable (Achor, 2011). It is debatable that in the past since 1960, whether Nigeria as a country has acquired any good reputation or image to protect and defend. It is assumed here that Nigeria has failed in some aspect of its life that brought disrepute and made her notorious in the international community (Egwu, 2007). This explains why the federal government has been embarking on image repair projects.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY REPUTATION

History of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Since independence, there has been a succession of military and civilian administrations whose foreign policies differed greatly in terms of ideology, style, substance and even the personality of the leaders. In the initial years after independence, the Nigerian government pursued modest foreign policy aims. Leaders were primarily concerned with internal consolidation of the new federal state (Meierding, 2010:6). The Balewa's government in theory pursued the policy of non-alignment but its economic alignment with the Western bloc (Britain especially) prevents it from pursuing a genuine policy of political non-alignment. Nigeria gave support to liberation movements in Africa through the A.O.U. liberation committee. This government supported the expulsion of South Africa from the

Commonwealth in 1961, and championed international boycotts against Ian Smith of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1965. In 1961, the Balewa's government broke diplomatic relations with France over the testing of an atomic bomb in the Sahara desert. This bomb brought high fever epidemic to Nigeria. Nigeria also played a vital role in the formation of OAU in 1963. All these instances show that Nigeria, during the Balewa era, recognized Africa as the centre-piece of her foreign policy (Akinboye, 1999: 377, Anyaele, 2003: 209, Dibia, 2008: 225).

Following the counter-coup of July 1966 which swept away the General Aguiyi Ironsi regime and led to the emergence General Yakubu Gowon as the new Head of State, serious internal conflicts erupted which brought the nation to near state of disintegration. This had a serious impact on Nigeria's external relations as the country could not play any active role in foreign policy except that officials were merely junketing round the globe to explain the circumstances of the fratricidal civil war which raged uninterruptedly for thirty months, i.e. July 1966 to January 1970. Meanwhile, the pro-Western posture of Nigeria's foreign policy continued unabated and government had thought that by turning to her traditional friends in the West for assistance, the war would be expeditiously prosecuted. This was not to be the case however, as the so-called traditional friends turned her request for arms and ammunitions thus introducing a new dimension to the country's perception of friends or enemies in external relations. Consequent upon this, Nigeria relaxed relations with the Eastern Europe, and government began to shift ground and open up to the Eastern Bloc. Following the end of the war in 1970, Nigeria's economy became buoyant as oil resources boomed. By 1974, the oil sector had accounted for about 90% of the total revenue, and the country took dynamic steps to assert her leadership role in Africa. Nigeria now allows the embassies of both blocs to be established in Nigeria, and entered into bilateral agreements with countries irrespective of the national ideology. This era witnessed the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Akinboye, 1999: 377-378, Anyaele, 2003: 209-208, Dibia, 2008: 225, Meierding, 2010:7).

In July 1975, General Gowon's government or administration was toppled in a bloodless coup by the late General Murtala Mohammed who brought dynamism and activism into Nigeria's external relations. The administration's interest in foreign affairs was demonstrated by the setting up of Adedeji Commission to overhaul the entire foreign policy machinery of the country. Based on this, the Murtala regime made far reaching impact and achieved significant feat in foreign affairs. The most often cited was the Nigeria's dramatic and timely intervention in the Angolan-independence crisis in 1976 which remarkably illustrates the dynamic and action oriented Afrocentric policy of the administrations (Anyaele, 2003: 209-10, Akinboye, 1999: 378-379, Dibia, 2008: 225).

After the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed on February 13, 1976 following an abortive coup, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo continued with the same policy as laid down by Mohammed. Indeed, what Obasanjo did was to consolidate Murtala's effort, and Nigeria's voice continued to be heard in international community. One of the most outstanding things done by Obasanjo was the punitive measures applied to British companies following British unacceptable policy in Rhodesia

and apartheid South Africa. The British Petroleum was also nationalized in 1979 by the Obasanjo regime as a means of hastening the Lancaster's conference that was to usher in Zimbabwe's independence. The partial nationalization of Barclay's Bank and the taking over of British Petroleum because of their links with apartheid South Africa were no doubt practical demonstration of Nigeria's Afro-centric and non-aligned policy. Government also pursued with vigour its decolonization policy and provided financial and logistic support for the liberation movements particularly those in Southern Africa (Anyaele, 2003: 209-10, Akinboye, 1999: 378-379, Dibia, 2008: 226).

In accordance with the Murtala/Obasanjo regime's political transition programme, General Obasanjo successfully handed over power to the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari in October 1979. However, the Shagari's era witnessed a retrogressive reversal in Nigeria's foreign policy as the government dampened the momentum of dynamic and radical foreign policy posture bequeathed to it. Nigeria once again reverted to the conservative, pro-Western policy that was reminiscent of the Balewa era (Anyaele, 2003: 210, Akinboye, 1999: 379-380, Dibia, 2008: 226). In 1980 and 1982, the northern cities of Kano and Kaduna witnessed religious riots. In January 1983, the Nigerian government responded to the economic downturn by expelling illegal immigrants. This was the state's "worst international crisis since the civil war" (Abegunrin, 2003). It antagonised Nigeria's neighbours and further undermined sub-regional integration (Gambari, 1989). Amidst the deepening economic crisis, the Shagari Government was toppled by the military in December 1983, and the new military administration headed by major General Muhammadu Buhari reverted to the dynamic foreign policy posture of the Murtala/Obasanjo government.

The Buhari government also re-launched Nigeria's deep commitment to the cause of freedom and liberation struggle particularly in South Africa. The Buhari regime continued with the Shagari policy of expulsion of illegal aliens of West African origin and closure of land borders to stem smuggling and currency trafficking. This strained the relationship between Nigeria and her West African neighbours. Relations with Britain were adversely affected during this period. The Buhari administration maintained a strong anti-apartheid posture against South Africa, and saved the OAU from disintegration by recognizing the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). This represents affirmative action in Nigeria's foreign policy (Akinboye, 1999: 379-380, Anyaele, 2003: 210, Dibia, 2008: 226, Meierding, 2010:8).

However, that regime which was terminated in August 1985 in a palace coup that led to the emergence of General Babangida relaxed the radical posture of the Buhari government's foreign policy. One of the first things he did was to direct his Foreign Affairs Minister, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi to organize an 'All Nigeria Conference on Foreign Policy' in order to examine the various perspectives of the country's foreign policy. The conference came up with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP); and on the external plane, the regime adopted economic diplomacy as the thrust of its foreign policy. However, the Structural Adjustment Programme failed to restructure the Nigerian economy in a manner as to reduce its independence on the West. Thus, rather than reducing the nation's economic

problem, it has exacerbated it. The Babangida administration however made its mark in projecting the country's image as a regional power in the West African sub-region. Nigeria's leadership role in the recent Liberian and Sierra-Leonean crises clearly underscores this. Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which was set up in 1990 at the instance of the Nigerian government under General Babangida successfully brought peace to the war-torn Liberia. The peace keeping force on which Nigeria has expanded enormous human and material resources has also succeeded in achieving the same goal in the crisis-ridden Sierra-Leone. This era launched Nigeria back to the forefront of international relations. The establishment of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is a credit to the vision of President Babangida (Anyaele, 2003: 210, Akinboye, 1999: 380-381, Dibia, 2008: 226). Nigeria's international reputation degraded following a major electoral controversy in 1993. After the June 12th victory of popular presidential candidate Moshood Abiola, Babangida annulled the national election results. Nigerians erupted in protest and the EU and US threatened sanctions. These responses were only partially effective. Although Babangida was removed from office, democracy was not restored (Meierding, 2010:9).

Following Nigeria's debilitating political crisis precipitated by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election by the Babangida administration and following a brief period of interim governance by Ernest Shonekan, Sani Abacha seized power in another military coup. General Abacha on November 17, 1993 toppled the Interim National Government (ING) that was hurriedly organized by Babangida to stem the tide; and since then, the nation's foreign policy has been drifting forward and backward. The regime has been the footsteps of Babangida in the foreign policy matters. Indeed, apart from consolidating the achievements of Babangida's administration in the area of foreign policy, the Abacha's government has been pursuing a reactive foreign policy, and there has been no significant impact made to protect the image of the country outside. For instance, relations with some international organizations particularly the Commonwealth of Nations has not been cordial since the inception of the administration. A month after the regime change, Abacha rattled the region by invading Bakassi Peninsula, a purportedly oil-rich territory disputed with Cameroon. In March 1995, Abacha accused a large swath of the policy elite of a coup plot. The courts handed down over thirty death sentences. Following international condemnation and threats of increased sanctions, these were reduced to prison terms (Meierding, 2010:9). However, Abacha's clemency was short-lived. In November 1995, he executed nine leaders of the Movement for the survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), including Ken Saro-Wiwa. The US and EU responded to the new provocation by imposing broad sanctions. However, US sanctions did not include oil (Abegunrin, 2003). This emission weakened the effectiveness of external calls for democratization. In addition; Abacha was somewhat successful in spinning the sanctions locally as an anti-imperial struggle (Meierding, 2010:9). Internationally, Nigeria's reputation was marginally rehabilitated in 1997, when Abacha initiated an ECOMOG intervention to restore democracy in Sierra Leone. The Great Powers' failure to intervene effectively in Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990s had increased the attraction of regional peacekeeping efforts

(Adebayo & Landsberg, 2003). Domestically, however, Abacha's democratizing intervention was condemned for its hypocrisy and expense. This has led to the emergence of a democratically-elected government in that beleaguered country. His government should also be credited for carrying out similar assignment in Sierra-Leone where the military junta that seized power from a democratically-elected government has been flushed out by the ECOMOG peace-keeping force led by Nigeria. Of course, this singular event also poses a serious challenge to Nigeria in its quest to have an enduring, stable democratic system unchallenged by any form of military might (Anyaele, 2003: 211, Akinboye, 1999: 381, Dibie, 2008: 227).

His successor, General Abubakar, oversaw a transitional government before former military leader, Obasanjo again assumed political leadership through a popular election. Obasanjo's top foreign policy priority was to restore Nigeria's international reputation. Soon after he took power, Nigeria was readmitted to the Commonwealth of Nations. Sanctions were lifted. In 1999, Nigeria began pulling out of Sierra Leone, to cut costs and redirect resources to the Niger Delta, where the local security situation had deteriorated (Adebajo, 2000). In the West African sub-region, Obasanjo presented himself as a peacekeeper. When the International Court of Justice ruled in 2002 that the contested Bakassi Peninsula belonged to Cameroon, Obasanjo contained intense Nigerian opposition to the verdict and initiated implementation efforts (Meierding, 2010). Obasanjo also reiterated Nigeria's support for ECOWAS and his desire to pursue more extensive regional integration (Kaplan, 2006). Obasanjo's affection for economic integration and international institutions attracted some domestic criticism (Adebajo and Landsberg, 2003). His continued engagement of Nigerian troops in multilateral peacekeeping operations in areas such as the Sudan also generated internal resistance. The record of his successor, Yar' Adua, has been mixed. Nigeria continues to rank high on international corruption indexes. A cease fire has been brokered with the Delta insurgents, but inter-confessional instability had increased in the north. Most recently, Nigeria has appeared on international terrorists watch lists, in the wake of thwarted 2009 "Christmas Day bombing" and series of bombings. Nonetheless, the state's international reputation has improved significantly since the 1990s, in part because of the successful democratic power transition in 2007.

Main Objectives, Principles and Features of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

The objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy have, since the country's attainment of independence or nationhood in 1960, being broadly spelt out by successive administrations. The broad and overriding objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy and indeed the foreign policy of any country, is to promote and protect the country's national interests (Akindele, 1996:135). Since independence, different regimes have emerged in Nigeria, and in spite of their different orientations and leadership styles, the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy has been publicly proclaimed by them to be guided by the same principles which are also in conformity with the well-established principles of traditional law as well as the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (Akinboye, 1999:369). The main objectives and principles of Nigeria's foreign policy include: (i) the defense of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, (iii) the

creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defense of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time, foster national self-reliance and rapid economic development, (iii) the promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and respect for human dignity especially the dignity of black men, (iv) the defense and promotion of world peace, (v) Promotion and protection of the national interest, (vi) promotion of the total liberation of Africa from colonial rule and support of African unity, (vii) promotion of international cooperation from the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of racial discrimination in all its manifestations, (viii) respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and (ix) promotion of a just world economic order (Anyaele, 2003: 204-205, Dibie, 2008:228, Akinboye, 1999: 367).

Nigeria's foreign policy since independence incorporated the following principles: (i) Friendship and co-operation with all or other nations that respect her sovereignty or based on the recognition and respect of Nigeria's sovereignty, (ii) Non-alignment with any of the power blocs, (iii) Peaceful resolution of inter-state disputes, (iv) Respect for territorial integrity of other states in Africa based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, (v) Eradication of colonialism in Africa e.g. Apartheid in South Africa and liberation movement in Southern Africa, (vi) promotion of world peace and defense of justice, (vii) Africa regarded as the center-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy i.e. helping politically dependent states to be independent, and bringing co-operation and progress to independent African states, (viii) Belief in the sovereign equality of states and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, (ix) Consideration of issues on their merit, having regard to Nigeria's national interest, (x) Peaceful resolution of crises: Joining other states to find peaceful resolution to crises as in ECOMOG troops in Liberia, Sierra-Leone among other countries, and (xi) Consideration of issues on their merit, having regard to Nigeria's national interest (Anyaele, 2003: 204-205, Dibie, 2008:228, Akinboye, 1999: 367).

IV. THE PHENOMENON OF NIGERIAN STATE WEAKNESS

The weakness of states like Nigeria can be measured along three margins performed by governments of strong states which include security, the provision of basic social amenities or services and the protection of essential civil freedoms. Weak states like Nigeria are deficient along one or two of these margins (Coyne, 2006). Nation-states become weak because they are convulsed by internal problems and cannot adequately deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants (Porter, and Weinstein, 2005:136). Nigeria and Sierra Leone collapsed in 1990s (Rotberg, 2003: 9). Lebanon, Nigeria and Tajikistan recovered from collapsed and are now weak (Rotberg, 2003:10). Kyrgyzstan, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Nigeria all fit near Nepal on the continuum of weakness tending towards failure (Rotberg, 2003: 17). Nigeria faces developmental challenges in the economic, political, and social dimensions.

Economically, Nigeria has been on a roller coaster in the decades since independence, culminating in a long period of stagnation following the apex of the petroleum boom. The problems of flagging growth, rising poverty, and widening inequality arise from several factors, including an unfavorable economic structure, detrimental policies, adverse political conditions, and negative external shocks. Similarly, measures of income distribution (whether using the household income shares) describe a society where inequality is rising and income disparities are quite high by international standards. The emergence of a petroleum "monoculture," in which a single export provides nearly all foreign exchange and government revenue, renders the economy highly sensitive to external shocks and hinders the emergence of internal sources of growth. The failure to diversify from this narrow export base is an important underlying source of Nigeria's economic stagnation. At independence, the country inherited a reasonably heterogeneous export economy, based on a range of agricultural commodities and solid minerals. The sparse manufacturing sector consisted mainly of final consumption goods produced in a few urban centers and constituted no more than 6% of GDP (Peter, 1998).

Export revenues plunged by 53% between 1980 and 1982 (from US\$27.1 billion to US\$12.7 billion), dropping another 60% by 1986. Meanwhile, the value of external debt grew as commitments accumulated short-term borrowing increased, and interest rates escalated. Foreign obligations increased from US\$5.1 billion in 1978 (14% of GDP) to US\$17.6 billion by 1983 (50% of GDP), reaching US\$29 billion by 1987 (124% of GDP). Between 1980 and 1987, Nigeria's gross domestic product declined at an average rate of 1% a year. The downturn began under the Second Republic, whose politicians were loath to curtail spending or undertake politically costly adjustment measures. In the throes of the oil markets' collapse, the civilians were ousted by the military, but the regime of General Muhammadu Buhari avoided essential policy reforms as the economy spiraled downward. Babangida entered into a standby agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and initiated a package of policy reform in cooperation with the IMF and the World Bank. The government's stabilization efforts, embodied in the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), yielded an interlude of recovery. Macroeconomic reforms, aided by a fortuitous surge in oil prices during the Gulf War, boosted growth to an average of about 6.6% from 1988 through 1992. Thereafter, however, Nigeria experienced a decade of stagnation. Oil prices dropped soon after the war, and the Babangida regime veered toward economic indiscipline and malfeasance (Peter, 2002).

Political uncertainty gripped the country after the abortive 1993 transition to democratic rule, giving way to the predatory autocracy of General Sani Abacha. During Abacha's rule, prodigious corruption, political insecurity, and the deterioration of public institutions served as a brake on investment and growth. From 1993 to 1998, Nigeria managed an anemic 2.5% average rate of growth. Since the transition to civilian rule in 1999, performance has generally been lackluster, though the economy has been intermittently buoyed by higher world oil prices. The elected government moved inconsistently in its early years to impose fiscal discipline and pursue needed policy changes. To summarize, Nigeria's aggregate economic growth

from 1961 through 1998 averaged 3.6%, while the country achieved merely 2.2% average growth in the period from 1981 through 1998, significantly below the annual rate of population increase (about 2.9%). These trends, especially in a context of increasing income inequality, yielded a substantial increase in poverty. From 1961 through 1998, per capita GDP increased by a scant 0.7% annually, providing for little advance in living standards. Despite the general scarcity of statistics in Nigeria, credible figures show that the incidence of poverty has escalated steeply since the end of petroleum boom. The rate of poverty expanded from 28% in 1980 to 71% in 1999. Institutional malaise is evident in the poor state of public services and government functions, as well as the intractable political wrangling that seems to block effective reform. Nigeria became democracy in 1999, but the historic rivalries between East and West, South and North, oil-states and non-oil states, christian and muslim communities, democrats and autocrats, and soldiers and citizens that have bedeviled Africa's most populous state since independence in 1960 (and before) are still there. Inter-communal conflict could readily reoccur, and the north-south divide could once again become an obstacle to strengthening a state already softened by economic confusion, continued corruption and mismanagement. Nigeria also performs poorly as a state (Rotberg, 2003: 17).

Further evidence of Nigeria's thorough fetidity can be seen in the miserable condition the vast majority of Nigerians have been facing in since the late 1970s. These conditions are painful and shameful considering the fact that Nigeria is awash with human and natural resources which other countries around the world would die for. More unfortunately, the country's resources are being plundered, stolen and mismanaged; her institutions weakened; and the citizenry abused, disparaged and assaulted on a periodic basis. Most, if not all of the indices of failed states, declare Nigeria well on its way to joining that disreputable club. Nigeria boasts with a government unable to adequately deliver basic social services. It is plagued by corruption that is so endemic and monumental. It lacks the capability or discipline to prevent threats to public safety and national integrity and is assailed by active challenges to its legitimacy. The fragility of the imposed and inherited federation/political institutions has rendered Nigeria as a single entity, politically and economically fragile or weak to contain the centrifugal tendencies inherent in the forced union. The federal system of government is lopsided and unbalanced. It failed to provide an equitable distribution of power at the center. It is this quest for equitable and balanced political system that has been at the center of the Nigerian terrorism.

From the foregoing, it can be vehemently argued that Nigeria lies among weak states. Indeed, Nigeria is a weak state because it is convulsed by most of the characteristics associated with weak or fragile states. The next part of this paper deals with how these weaknesses affects Nigeria's foreign policy and reputation.

Impact and Consequences of State Weakness on Nigerian Foreign Policy Reputation

The Nigerian state have been exhibiting the character of "Weak or Failing state" that only have the legal status of sovereignty but lack the basic capability to provide adequate security, effective law and order and development. As noted by

the Transparency International (2006), Nigeria is rated as one of the most corrupt nations of the world, a ranking that has denied the country its pride of place in the international economic system. Even in comparison to other African states, Nigeria is lagging behind. South Africa, the other continental heavyweight, has a GDP per capita six times greater; Angola has a GDP more than 1.5 times higher; and Senegal, with exports largely limited to groundnuts and fish, enjoys more than twice Nigeria's per capita income. The country has abundant human and natural resources but still struggles with mass impoverishment. Agriculture, once its primary hard currency earner, has collapsed, and food imports now account for a sixth of the trade bill. Manufacturing is a smaller proportion of the economy with about 6% than at independence (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2006). The above is a result of the weakness of the Nigerian state which negatively affects Nigeria's influence over these small countries. These countries therefore undermine the strength of the Nigerian state in its relationship with them.

The structured ethnic diversity, chauvinism and religious intolerance which have historically fuelled the propensity towards political instability, the seemingly permanent fear of ethnic domination and chronic underdeveloped nature of the Nigerian economy weakens the capacity of the country to play a more influential role in the management of the wider international system. The deep internal economic crisis under which Nigeria has been suffocating since the early 1980s has exacerbated the vulnerability of the nation to neo-imperial dictation and control from abroad and has therefore, worsened its dependence on external forces. With its escalating and oppressing external debt burden and the dwindling financial strength available to manage its development programme at home, Nigeria's capacity to finance an active and dynamic foreign policy has become considerably reduced (Akindele, 1996: 145-146). A failed, corrupt and inept leadership coupled with inclement domestic socio-political environment have plunged development performance in Nigeria into the abyss. The exodus of skilled labour (brain drain) has affected the capacity of the Nigerian state to deliver public services effectively and efficiently and contribute to skill-pool requirements of the private sector. Where poverty is persistent, it leads to backwardness (Hope, 2006). That then affects the capacity of the state or government to raise domestic resources for effective foreign policy implementation. Poverty also exposes Nigerians to avoidable diseases and sicknesses, which curtail their ability to contribute meaningfully to the development of the country. The rate of pervasive poverty in Nigeria has been linked to the weaknesses and poor performance of African economies, high dependence on the export of low valued primary raw materials, which attracts low prices and negligence of the agricultural sector. As a result of sustained poverty in Nigeria, many people's livelihood and better standards of living are becoming increasingly undermined. This crisis of personal deprivation has manifested itself in social tension leading to open conflicts in Nigeria. Despite lucid dreams of prosperous future brought by the discovery of oil and, to a lesser extent, conceived Western commitment to development assistance, Nigeria still ranks as one of the world's poorest nations. It is obvious now that impressive levels of raw economic growth failed to trickle down and reach the country's poor. By absolute number of impoverished

population, Nigeria currently is being surpassed only by giants like India and China (Emmanuel, 2004:3).

Unemployment not only has social consequences as it increases the rate of crime, but also has resulted in more devastation of the economy by criminal activities. The unemployed often engaged in social vices such as armed robbery, prostitution and other criminal activities which are very detrimental to Nigerian foreign policy and reputation. Debt servicing drains the economy of Nigeria. The debt burden of the Nigerian state has served as a prelude for reluctance of Nigeria to approve new line of credit facilities for the country. In extreme cases therefore, the IMF and the World Bank have come in to bail the country out of this crises, by serving as guarantor for the country that needed new loans. But in order to make sure that Nigeria is not in default of paying their loans; Nigerian economy have been directly managed and controlled by the IMF officials in extreme cases. Such move is largely anti-people in most instances (Martin, 1997, Akinterinwa, 2007).

The poor state of infrastructure in Nigeria is one of the major factors inhibiting structural transformation and the attainment of sustained economic growth and development in the country. The poor state of infrastructure increases transactions costs and make it difficult for domestic firms in the country to compete in global export market. Ethno-religious conflicts, communal and sectarian violence have dysfunctional and disruptive impact on the state (Anugwom, 2000, Nairne, 2007). Without peace, there can never be a strong Nigerian state and that negatively affects the capacity of the Nigerian state in its domestic and foreign diplomacy. From the foregoing, the paper strongly agrees that the above challenges or factors among others impede development, weakens the strength and tarnish the reputation of Nigeria domestically, regionally and internationally.

As a result of the cancellation of the presidential poll held on June 12, 1993 by the Babangida administration, the United States, Britain, and the European Union criticized the annulment of the presidential poll, suspended military assistance, and suggested further paring their aid. The Abacha's regime's international standing reached its nadir in November 1995, when Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight compatriots were executed after a highly irregular murder trial. Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth, and the United States joined several other countries in extending sanctions on travel, aid, and trade. Over the next two and a half years, Abacha's isolation deepened amid a pall of domestic repression, assassinations of opposition figures. Foreign assistance dwindled. Policymakers in Washington were constrained by their considerable stakes in trade and investment, as well as by concerns for security cooperation in the sub-region, where Nigeria's role was crucial. These interests essentially trumped concerns over democracy, human rights, and economic reform. All these are result of the weakness of the Nigerian state.

The country's myriad trade, investment, and financial relations, along with its involvement in regional and international organizations as well as its traditional diplomatic and aid relationships, therefore furnish points of external influence and assistance. The United States confronts important challenges in moving the relationship with Nigeria beyond post authoritarian normalization to engagement on issues of improved governance

and better developmental performance. It is clearly risky to allow short-term exigencies to drive the bilateral relationship, as the symptoms of political decay manifest in corruption, transnational crime, terrorism, and escalating humanitarian needs can likely be exacerbated in the absence of underlying improvements in government and the economy. Since 1999, the Obasanjo government has placed a high priority on lobbying the United States for a cancellation of Nigeria's foreign debt (Forsy, 2000). On the other hand, the Nigerian government must get its acts right, most especially through its domestic policies. It is because the country is fast moving out of control from those who hold it together; that is why our foreign policy is not working out well for us. The contradiction of mounting vigorous external relations in a context of state decay eluded our earned reputation for successfully policing West Africa and Africa at large through interventions in Guinea Bissau, Togo, Sao Tome and Principe, Liberia, Sierra Leone and recently Mali among others. In recent times, due to corruption and the Nigerian factor, our troops have sometimes been provided with poor arms and equipment leading to them performing par and consequently United Nations and other small African countries like Chad, Niger and Cameroon's criticism of our troops' ineffectiveness and lack of courage". This is the international outworking of state dysfunction and anomie in which disorder and corruption at home are exported abroad, with serious consequences for our foreign policy reputation. The scuttling of Nigeria's unanimous election into the UN Security Council in 2010 by Guinea which absented itself and Liberia, Togo and Sierra Leone which voted against Nigeria is also the result of the negative impact of the weak nature of the Nigerian state.

As noted earlier, the civilian government has been concerned with the question of debt relief. Obasanjo and other senior leaders have raised the issue regularly in meetings with the U.S. government, seeking an arrangement comparable to the debt reduction mechanism under HIPC. In the absence of any credible commitment by Nigeria to economic reform or macroeconomic stability, the United States initially foreclosed the possibility (Peter, 2002). Although the ambitiousness and intensity of foreign activities decline when the state is economically weak or internally unstable, the overall character of the state has remained constant. Nigeria is also an economically less developed state, dependent on primary commodity production for the majority of its domestic revenue and almost all of its foreign exchange earnings (Meierding, 2010:10 & 12). Nigeria's physical might has also failed to deter boundary violations by its much weaker neighbours. On various occasions, Chad, Benin, and Cameroon have perpetrated minor territorial incursions. Local fear undermines Nigeria's sub-regional leadership aspirations (Meierding, 2010:9). Though the 1999 poll held the promise of ending misrule after Abacha's death and the excesses of military dictatorship, it only attracted a 25% turnout. International electoral observers reported widespread incidents of ballot box stuffing, numerous phantom voting booths and impossibly high claimed turnouts in some districts (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2006). It is also a volatile region characterized by poor governance, weak state structures, poverty, war, stagnant economy, corruption and disease (Dike, 2011). Recent events at the African continental fora where candidates backed by Nigeria have lost elections indicate that we are far from achieving our

objective of playing leading roles in African affairs. There is a seeming competition between Nigeria and some African countries. One of such obvious result was the way in which after ECOWAS decided to apply pressure to end the impasse in Côte d'Ivoire following the election which Alassane Ouattara won but President Laurent Gbagbo refused to vacate office, South Africa decided to support Gbagbo by stationing military ships on the West African coast. Conflicts within the continent have been a key challenge to the foreign policy of the country. There have been too many conflicts in the continent: from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, Rwanda and now Mali and several other countries across the continent, these have brought serious strain on the economy of the country. We have our own border conflicts with especially Cameroun which is still nationally to be resolved to the satisfaction of all (Lamido, 2012). Nigeria has a long history of involvement in peace keeping in countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan. In addition to these regional and other conflicts within the African continent, Nigeria itself has its own share of internal conflicts. This puts the credibility of the country in question in terms of our weight to intervene successfully to resolve African conflicts when Nigeria is not able to resolve its own internal conflicts (Lamido, 2012). The current security challenge of the Boko Haram insurgency is threatening the security and existence of the state and denting the image and might of the Nigerian military as the military from some of the smaller neighbouring countries are undermining the capacity of the Nigerian state in tackling insecurity. To worsen the situation, Chad, Cameroun, Niger and the Republic of Benin had to intervene in the Boko Haram insurgency issue by sending a joint military assistance (Ntamu & Ekpenyong, 2014, Aremu, 2015). Even the recent agitation by some separatists or secessionists for a sovereign state of Biafra among other insecurity situations is making Nigeria to earn respect sub-regionally, regionally and globally. Investors are not willing to invest in an unstable country.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A country's reputation or image is a strategic asset that creates competitive advantages and favourable climate for her survival and development. A nation's domestic prerequisite for functional foreign policy is a stable and inclusive political system with space for civil society, attention to the rule of law, and economic development anchored on diversification, accountability, and economic transparency. The totality of what a country does and her behaviour and attitude towards public issues, achievement or non-achievement among others defines her image and reputation ratings in the comity of nations. Nigeria's foreign policy has since independence been guided by almost the same principles and objectives. However, the emphasis that has been persistently laid on them by successive regimes in the country differs depending on the domestic context within which decisions are made, the external environment and the attitudinal posture of the foreign policy-makers at a given time. The key challenges to Nigeria's foreign policy making have remained basically the same. The Nigerian state is weak as it faces developmental challenges in the economic, political, and social dimensions such as political instability, bad leadership and

corruption which lead to many problems that negatively affect its foreign policy reputation.

It is recommended that, the Nigerian government should pursue goals of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights at home to ensure that its leadership role is credible abroad, the federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Information and Communications should urgently mount image and reputation management campaigns in the international media and project the good works, achievements and the humanitarian efforts of the country. The National Rebranding Campaign effort should be pursued with vigour. The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations should help in the crusade for behavioural change among Nigerians through public enlightenment campaign. The anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC and ICPC should be pro-active and sincere and expedite action in fighting corruption. Genuine efforts should be made by the Nigerian Government through relevant authorities at maintaining good governance, re-orienting and educating the populace against nepotism, corrupt practices and mediocrity. There is the need for a holistic revision and redirection of its blind focus on Africa to articulate foreign policy that is clearly focused on the country's national interests among others. Since all foreign policies spring from the economic base of a state, Nigeria's economic base should be re-orientated in such a manner that the country's dependency structure would be removed and a national economy that is capable of sustaining a realistic foreign policy goal be built. Efforts should be made by the Nigerian government to foster peaceful coexistence among the different ethnic groups in the country, among ECOWAS and AU members and the world at large. Nigeria's foreign policy can only be meaningfully conducted in a stable political environment. There is the imperative need by the relevant authority to evolve a stable polity and a complete transformation of the Nigerian political system. Nigerian government needs to articulate a clear foreign policy that is clearly focused on the country's national interests. Nigeria should maintain political stability and good governance which alone will lay the foundation for solid economic growth. Any rethinking and reforming of foreign policy must begin with an earnest effort to clean up our act domestically, by creating an exportable brand called Nigeria.

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