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## A Study of the Nigerian Foreign Policy under President Olusegun Obasanjo, 1999-2007

John, Ilemona

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of History and International Studies  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

### Abstract:

*On assumption of office as president, Obasanjo made diplomatic moves to redeem the battered and shattered image of the country which was as a result of the unending transition to democracy, increase in the abuse of fundamental human rights and the regular killing of innocent citizens in the 1990s. This led to the imposition of international sanctions on Nigeria. However, with the return to democracy and Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy, sanctions placed on Nigeria were removed. And as part of Nigeria's commitment to make Africa the centre-piece of the country's foreign policy, Obasanjo continued with Nigeria's leading role in the maintenance of peace and conflict resolution in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Sudan, etc. This work is a review of Nigeria's foreign policy during Olusegun Obasanjo's second era and its impact on Nigerian citizens. It examined the plight of Nigerians in some countries where the country participated in peace keeping operations during Obasanjo second era. Other issues that affect Nigerian citizens which were discussed in this work include the case of Bakassi and the country's diplomatic moves for debt relief and investment. The central question addressed in this research is: What were the measures taken by the government to protect Nigerian citizens in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan where Nigeria participated in peace keeping operations; and in the Bakassi Peninsula which was ceded to Cameroon? However, the main focus of this research is to review and assess the impact of Obasanjo's foreign policy formulation and implementation on national life. It includes how his foreign policy affected Nigerians economically, socially and politically. The work was designed among other things to provide the historical account of Nigeria's foreign policy under obasanjo civilian era. In order to achieve this, it applied historical narrative and descriptive method of analysis. With the use of available evidence drawn from oral interviews (with some diplomats, political office holders, and scholars of international relations), books, and journals; this work has made attempt to examine the various strategies put in place to formulate and implement Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999 and 2007. The successful campaign for debt relief and the repatriation of looted funds are prominent among the results of his diplomatic maneuvering. Nevertheless, it has been argued in this work that despite the recovery of looted funds, debt cancellation, and the promotion of Foreign Direct Investment; there was neglect of the pursuit of vital national interests which include protection of territorial boundary and the lives of citizens, and the improvement of the well-being of citizens. And as part of the attempt to make contributions to knowledge, this work has provided the historical analysis of Obasanjo's foreign policy between 1999 and 2007.*

**Keywords:** *Nigeria's peacekeeping operations, obasanjo's diplomatic moves, Nigeria's image, abacha loot, ICJ judgement on bakassi, Nigeria's big brother role in Africa, debt relief*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background to the Study

The civilian regime of Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria pursued the same foreign policy and the same objectives adopted by various regimes right from the period of independence. Although the style tends to differ based on the idiosyncrasies of the number one citizen and his foreign affairs team, but the outcome has always remained basically the same. Promotion and protection of the national interests, promotion of African economic integration and support for African unity, promotion of international co-operation, respect for international law and settlement of international dispute are the major objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy as enshrined in section 191 of the Nigerian constitution which various governments tried to adhere to in pursuance of the country's foreign policy. The focus on Africa as the centre-piece of the country's foreign policy has always been maintained right from 1960. Tafawa Balewa laid the foundation. Shortly after independence, he demonstrated his commitment to the course of Africa by sending a large contingent of Nigerian soldiers and policemen to take part in the UN peace-keeping operations in Congo.<sup>1</sup> He also led the attack on South Africa's domestic policy of Apartheid which segregated the South African population along racial lines.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent regimes reinforced the African centred foreign policy in various ways such as playing a leading role in the formation of the Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS), supporting the struggle for independence in Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia; Murtala/Obasanjo military regime played a significant role in the struggle. Hence, Olusegun Obasanjo still maintained Africa as the central place in the Nigeria's worldview and policies when he returned as a civilian Head of State in 1999.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to May 1999 when Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as a new civilian president, the Nigerian armed forces had ruled the nation continuously for fifteen years. In this same era, Nigeria which was previously celebrated in the world as the foremost African nation fell into the pit of infamy, especially between 1993 and 1998.<sup>4</sup> This was as a result of the combination of domestic and external circumstances and the personal idiosyncrasies of the different military rulers which led to policy shifts, twists and turns.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the events that made Nigeria to become isolated before the transition to democracy in 1999 can be traced to when Shehu Shagari, a democratically elected president was removed from office through a coup d'état

It is important to note that democracy is partly an instrument for good foreign relations. However, Nigeria lacked this instrument between 1983 and 28 May 1999. On 31 December 1983, General Muhammadu Buhari terminated the democratically elected government of Shehu Shagari and placed many Nigerians in detention without any plan for a transition to democracy. Omo Omoruyi posits that there was no readiness on the part of Buhari to return power to the civilians.<sup>6</sup> Transition to democracy was not part of his agenda all through his stay in office before he was removed. The situation became worse under the leadership of Ibrahim Babangida due to his high level of deception. He gave different dates of handing over.<sup>7</sup> He promised to hand over power four times: 1990, 1992, January 1993, and August, 1993 and four times he failed.<sup>8</sup>

The decision of the military administration of Ibrahim Babangida to annul the presidential election in 1993 was a major setback to Nigeria's foreign relations. It was perhaps the most credible election in the history of Nigeria. This was confirmed by majority of Nigerians and foreign observers. The annulment of the election happened at a time when most countries particularly the G7 had made democracy, good governance and human rights essential determining elements in international politics and in their relations with developing nations. Hence, Babangida's regime gave a lethal blow to Nigeria's image abroad and its foreign policy in particular.<sup>9</sup> Nigeria's role as Africa's spokesman began to diminish rapidly. Worse still, *the June 12 Saga* was still lingering when General Sani Abacha took over from Ernest Shonekan, the leader of the Interim National Government without any agenda on how to improve Nigeria's foreign relations. This was reflected in his speech: "...for the international community, we ask you to suspend judgment while we grapple with serious task of nation building... Give us the chance to resolve our problems in our own way."<sup>10</sup> The late General Sani Abacha's statement is an indication of how he ruled in his own way without adherence to the tenets of rule of law and democratic norms. The violation of human rights which characterized his regime led to the imposition of various sanctions on Nigeria. Abacha's regime jailed MKO Abiola, the apparent winner of the June 12 1993 presidential election. And Kudirat Abiola who was struggling to restore the mandate of her husband was assassinated.<sup>11</sup> The execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight of his fellow activists from Ogoni land, the imprisonment of Olusegun Obasanjo and Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and the alleged killing of the latter while serving his jail term<sup>12</sup> are some of the human rights violations which heightened the disagreement between Nigerian government and members of the international community. Therefore, Nigeria could not escape from the international sanctions. Apart from one of the ECOWAS summits held in Abuja, Abacha never attended any international summit.<sup>13</sup> Hence, the need to bring Nigeria back to the comity of nations became inevitable

The mysterious death of General Sani Abacha and the enthronement of Abdulsalami Abubakar marked the beginning of the steps towards redeeming the battered and shattered image of Nigeria in the comity of nations. Abubakar's one year in office reflected the country's domestic priorities, particularly reconciliation and democratization. This won a lot of respect for the regime as it facilitated the return of Nigeria to the main stream of international community and once more gave 'credibility and legitimacy' to Nigeria's leadership credentials in Africa and beyond.<sup>14</sup> On ascension to the number one leadership position in Nigeria, Obasanjo's primary assignment was to bring Nigeria back from isolation because, no nation can experience meaningful development in isolation from the international comity. Therefore, he set up a committee called International Relations Club to enhance the country's foreign policy. Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, Professor Eze Osita, Ambassador Olujimi Jolaoso, and Ambassador Hamsat Amadu were among the members.<sup>15</sup> And he also attended various international summits in the course of his shuttle diplomacy.<sup>16</sup>

The Obasanjo's foreign policy was built on the already existing foundation of Nigeria's foreign policy with focus on Africa. It was conservative and centered on economic diplomacy. He tried to strike a balance between Nigeria-Western relations and Nigeria-Asian relations by strengthening the Nigeria-China relations.<sup>17</sup> He embarked on consistent foreign trips by which he hoped the damaged image of Nigeria would be redeemed in order to encourage and promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nigeria. As part of measures to pursue the economic diplomacy, Obasanjo intensified efforts in his campaign for debt relief; this was finally achieved in 2005 when the Paris Club decided to cancel a substantial amount of the billions of dollars that Nigeria owed them<sup>18</sup>. Also, he took diplomatic steps towards the recovery of the billions of dollars stashed in foreign accounts by General Abacha and his cohorts. Nigeria was able to recover some amount of money from some of these foreign accounts. Luxemburg is one of the countries where the late General Abacha and his criminal associates hid the money. Kudos to the Obasanjo administration for the effort towards recovering the looted funds, but it would have been more appreciated if more opportunities were not created for embezzlement of funds while he was in office. Even the so-called fight against corruption under his administration was selective.

Indeed, Obasanjo's foreign policy really demonstrated a renewed commitment to African affairs. He was at the forefront of the struggle for regional integration of African economies and the prevention, management and resolution of various conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. However, the main purpose of foreign policy of any nation which is protecting the national interests and improving the well-being of the citizens was not really achieved. For instance, Nigeria held on the practices of maintaining the number one position in terms of peace keeping operation without considering her national interests as topmost priority. Even when Obasanjo complained that the country could no longer afford to continue with the peace keeping operation in Sierra Leone due to its financial burden, he still promised to continue if the operation

could be funded by the UN. This was despite the fact that some Nigerian soldiers and civilians were the major targets of the rebels. They killed some of our citizens and amputated some of them. The same thing happened in Liberia. Two Nigerian journalists were tortured to death by Charles Taylor's rebel group; and the best way Nigeria could react to the situation was to grant asylum to Charles Taylor for about three years. Also, Nigerians were crying to the government for the withdrawal of Nigerian troops from Sudan due to constant killing of Nigerian soldiers there, he turned a deaf ear to the situation.

Another area in which the well-being of Nigerian citizens was neglected is in the case of Bakassi peninsula. The way Obasanjo signed the Green Tree Agreement as a sign of acceptance of the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) shows an act of negligence as a Nigerian representative. Although wrong steps were taken by Nigerian government since independence, but the way the case was handled at the ICJ and the refusal of the government to appeal against the judgment of the court that ceded the place to Cameroon could be seen as government insensitivity to the plight of Nigerian citizens who were residing in Bakassi. Still on the well-being of Nigerian citizens, Obasanjo constantly travelled to all the regions of the world in the name of encouraging and promoting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) without much consideration to the way the foreign companies treat Nigerian workers and exploit the country. For instance, about 37 Nigerian workers lost their lives in September 2002 when fire swept through two Chinese companies located at the Odogunyo Industrial Estate, Ikorodu, Lagos<sup>19</sup> If safety measures were properly put in place, the fire that started in West Africa Rubber Products Limited would not have spread to the Super Engineering Limited located adjacent to the Rubber Industry. And in most of these companies, Nigerians only occupy the position of drivers, cleaners, messengers and the likes. The Obasanjo's government celebrated the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) even when majority of Nigerians outside the ruling class could not benefit from the so-called growth of GDP. Although we cannot deny some of the achievements of Obasanjo's foreign policy which include getting Nigeria out of the international isolation to a prominent position among the comity of nations, but Nigerian citizens deserve more than that. Perhaps, the decision of Yar'Adua/Jonathan administration to pursue what they described as 'citizen diplomacy'<sup>20</sup> could be as a result of the weakness of Obasanjo administration in protecting the interests of Nigerian citizens.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

One of the objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy which is the promotion and protection of national interests is an ideal foreign policy objective of any ideal nation. However, the protection of citizens and territorial boundaries which should be the core national interest was neglected in Nigeria before and during Obasanjo second era. As part of Nigeria's commitment to the course of Africa since independence, Obasanjo still maintained Africa as the centre-piece of the country's foreign policy. 'Respect' for international law and the settlement of international dispute especially in Africa seemed to have overshadowed the protection of national interests under Obasanjo second era. The issue to be investigated in this study is to know the extent to which Nigeria's foreign policy made impact on national life under Obasanjo civilian government that claimed to have focused on national interests in the pursuit of the country's foreign policy. However, despite the mass poverty, grave insecurity, dilapidated economic and social infrastructure, Obasanjo civilian government still continued with the country's generosity abroad.

The accession of Obasanjo to power in 1999 was expected to usher some dynamism in the country's foreign policy. Indeed, the Obasanjo era witnessed heightened foreign policy decisions that would remain controversial such as the Bakassi issue and the debt relief. However, no serious historical account has been undertaken. Most of the materials available on Nigeria's foreign policy during Obasanjo civilian era were written on the pages of newspapers, magazines and journals without giving attention to historical methodology. This is also part of the gaps that this research tends to fill.

The civilian administration of Obasanjo tried to outline what has always been considered to be the objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy. However, literature reveals that, there has not been agreement as to what constitutes Nigeria's drive for foreign policy formulation implementation. For instance, Obasanjo continued with Nigeria's 'traditional role' of peace-keeping operations and donations even to the detriment of Nigerian citizens. What has the country benefited from her African neighbours despite the financial and human sacrifices she has made in the course of peace keeping operations? In Liberia, Charles Taylor led rebel group killed two Nigerian journalists and all that Obasanjo's government could do was to appreciate him by granting him political asylum. The well-being of Nigerian citizens which should be the mainstay of the country's foreign policy was neglected. Even the recent loss of Bakassi, the killing of some of the inhabitants by the Cameroonian soldiers, and the homeless state of those who fled from there show that all is not well with the country's foreign policy. Most of the available writings have focused mainly on how dynamic Obasanjo's foreign policy was. Though useful, but did not properly assess the actual benefit or setback of his foreign policy. Hence, there is need to review Obasanjo's foreign policy between 1999 and 2007, and to give relevant recommendations on what should constitute Nigeria's drive for foreign policy and how it can be implemented. The study suggests among other things that Nigeria should limit her diplomatic relations with some countries that are always at the receiving end with nothing to offer in return. The country's national interests should be well defined and no diplomatic step should be taken to the detriments of her citizens.

### *1.2. Purpose of Study*

The need to critically review the foreign policy of Nigeria inspired my zeal for this research. There is need to redefine the country's national interests and work towards achieving them through a purposeful foreign policy that can be

beneficial to the citizens and at the same time stand the test of time in this era of globalization. It helps to reveal the benevolent gestures Nigerian government has displayed through her foreign policy even to the detriment of her citizens.

This research is to provide more opportunity for future researches on Nigeria's foreign policy by presenting historical account of Nigeria's foreign between 1999 and 2007; an area of research which has not been given adequate attention. It is important to also note that this research was designed among other things to:

- Examine the various strategies put in place for the formation and implementation the country's foreign policy between 1999 and 2007.
- Identify the problems that militated against the successful implementation of some foreign policy objectives in Nigeria under Obasanjo civilian administration
- Examine the pain and agony Nigerian citizens go through as a result of the approach adopted by Obasanjo in handling Nigeria's foreign policy.
- Assess the degree of achievement or failure of Obasanjo's foreign policy during the period under review.

### 1.3. Significance of Study

This work is significant because it demonstrates the importance of the solution to most of the challenges of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999 and 2007. And the solution will help other administrations to improve human condition especially in Nigeria. It will also help Nigeria to place the national interests at the forefront while pursuing her foreign policy. However, it has been stated in this work that foreign policy does not favour a country that is backward technologically. Therefore, this work will also help to encourage the government on the need to develop the nation technologically in order to achieve her national interests in this era of globalization.

This research finding will also help to change the way people think about the status of Nigeria as a 'giant of Africa' which plays a major role in peace-keeping operations in Africa. Many Nigerians who are boastful of Nigerian peace keeping operations in Africa without considering its impact on the country would have a rethink.

### 1.4. Scope of Study

This study essentially covers the Nigeria's foreign policy of the civilian administration of Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999-2007. However, it also examines government decisions of the previous administrations that made the country to become isolated from the comity of nations before General Abdusalami Abubakar became the head of state in 1998 and started the process of bringing the country back from international isolation. The timeframe of this work is from 1999 to 2007. This period represents an era of transformation in Nigeria's foreign policy when it is compared to what was obtainable before General Abdusalami initiated the programme of transition to democracy.

1999, which is the starting date, is significant because it marked the beginning of Obasanjo civilian administration, and my intention is to examine the country's foreign policy during his civilian administration. It is also significant because it marked another phase of transition to democracy in Nigeria. 2007 is the limit of the focus of this study just as it marked the end of Obasanjo civilian administration.

### 1.5. Literature Review

There are many scholarly works on Nigeria's foreign policy during the civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo. However, the materials to be reviewed are classified according to how they relate to the chapters of this study. One of the works that fit into Chapter one is P.A. Reynolds' *Introduction to International Relations*.<sup>21</sup> It presents a unified picture of international relations; it does not only provide a picture of how international systems operate but it also offers an understanding of the methodological problems associated with the task of generating that picture. It concentrates on the nature and structure of international systems. The author's exploration of the nature of international relations was conducted from two different perspectives: the first views international relations in terms of the behavior of states: the second concentrates upon the nature and structure of international systems. However, he posits that relationships have become more complex, non-state actors such as multinational corporations have grown in importance, and interdependencies have developed. The book gives guidelines to analyze international relations and foreign policy. However, the focus of his work is not on Nigeria's foreign policy, it concentrates on the U.S foreign relations. Nevertheless, his analysis on the structure of international systems will help this study to review Olusegun Obasanjo's foreign policy.

Next in this category is W. Alade Fawole's work titled *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy under Military Rule, 1966 - 1999*.<sup>22</sup> The book covers the foundation, principles and purposes of Nigeria's foreign policy and external relations. It also captures the activities, accomplishments and shortcomings of various military regimes in the area of foreign policy. One of the most vital aspects of the work which will be very useful to this work is the analysis of the effort made by Abdusalami Abubakar to bring back Nigeria from the realm of isolation into the comity of nations and his achievement in the restoration of democracy which laid the foundation for another phase of Nigeria's foreign policy in 1999. His evaluation on Nigeria's foreign policy did not go beyond 1999, and it only covers the period before May 29. This work tends to cover the remaining aspects under civilian administration beginning from 1999-2007.

*Obasanjo Second Era*<sup>23</sup>, edited by Terhemba Wuam, Stephen T. Olali, and James Obilikwu is another important work that needs to be reviewed under this category. It covers a whole lot of issues on the civilian administration of Obasanjo. Each of the seventeen chapters of the book was written by different contributors from various disciplines such as history, sociology, and political science in an attempt to shed light on the impact of policies and actions of Obasanjo's government on development in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007. Part of the work which examines the personality and philosophy of

Obasanjo reveals the role he played as a diplomat who improved the image of Nigeria in the international community, negotiated avenues for peace in tough and unruly situations in Africa. The work also examines the role of Economics and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. However, it states that the anti-corruption war which seemed to be built around the personality of EFCC ex-Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, the battle axe of Obasanjo, diminished the merit of the fight against corruption. The book also gives a review of the Nigerian economy between 1999 and 2007; it gives statistical analysis of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Gross Domestic Product (GDP), debt management, and poverty level in Nigeria. It further states that though the performance of the economy between 1999 and 2006 had been quite remarkable, it however leaves much to be desired. Also, the analysis of the book on politics and administration under Obasanjo indicates that though progress was witnessed, it was not on the scale expected considering the nation's resources. Another important aspect of the book is where it examines Obasanjo's foreign policy between 1999 and 2007. It states how Nigeria bounced back to the international community after years of isolation. The work also evaluates the Nigeria's relations in Africa, the Nigeria-US and South American relations, and the Nigeria-China relations. It helps to shed light on the bilateral, multilateral, and other agreements Nigeria entered with different countries of the world. However, in this book, contributions focus on policies, programmes and projects that the Obasanjo's government undertook. It did not give details of the extent to which Obasanjo's foreign policy made impact on national life. This work shall bridge the gap by assessing the impact of Obasanjo's foreign policy.

Similarly, Ngozi E. Ojiakor's *Social and Political History of Nigeria 1970 - 2006*<sup>24</sup> which was published in 2007 covers both domestic and foreign policies of Nigerian government between 1970 and 2006. But it has limited information on Nigeria's foreign policy. It concentrates more on the domestic policy of each administration which makes it very relevant to this study because a country's foreign policy is a reflection of her domestic policy. It gives vivid analysis of the activities, achievements, and the loopholes of each administration beginning from Gowon administration down to the civilian administration of Olusegun Obasanjo. The work made attempt to provide the historical account of Nigeria's foreign policy. However, her analysis on Nigeria's foreign policy lacks depth; what was provided is the summary of Nigeria's foreign policy. This work will help to review Obasanjo's foreign policy beyond the level of summary.

In chapter two of Patrick Wilmot's work titled *Nigeria: The Nightmare scenario*<sup>25</sup>, he examines some events that took place during the era of military dictatorship especially under Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha administration. The work shed light on the anomalies that characterized various administrations in Nigeria especially from 1997 - 2007. It helps to reveal much hidden information concerning the administrations of Babangida, Abacha and Obasanjo. He examines the various human rights-abuses in Nigeria and how he was abducted and expelled from Ahmadu Bello University in 1988 by Ibrahim Babangida and Ismail Gwarzo, the head of state security service. This happened because Patrick Wilmot, who was foreign lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria was accused of teaching what he was not paid to teach: the author also gives analysis of the politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how to remake Nigeria. He posits that trade union, teachers, students, intellectuals' voluntary organizations, and patriot in every institution in the country must provide forums for the discussion of the country's future, of how it massive human and natural resources can be used to alleviate it torments. The author also argues that Obasanjo who survived the horrors of Abacha's sadistic prisons, did not look back at his experience and create protection for his people against cruelty; adding that Nigerian democrats veterans in the war against despotisms, expected General Obasanjo to have done better. However, this work lacks depth in its analysis of the various human right variations and embezzlement of public funds which contributed to the international isolation that Nigeria experienced. The gap will be covered in this research through other materials that treat similar topic and oral information from well experienced scholars.

Another one is *New Horizons for Nigeria in World Affairs*<sup>26</sup>, edited by U. Joy Ogwu. The work covers Nigeria's foreign policy in theoretical and historical perspectives. It also examines global powers and Multilateralism in Nigeria's foreign policy. It states that effective regional co-operation and integration in Africa is critical to the solution of the country's numerous problems. It looks at the role of external actors in the process of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It examines that for the respective foreign donors and non-governmental organizations that actively supported Nigeria's democratization experience, promoting democracy within the context of globalization was synonymous with promoting a free market economy and a favourable investment climate for western multinational corporations. But Nigeria's focus now should be on how to lay the foundation for a credible and transparent general election, free from every form of manipulation. This will help to boost our foreign policy because foreign policy is a reflection of domestic policy. However, the work is silent about the events that made Nigeria to be isolated before 1999. The vacuum shall be filled in this work that will among other things provide historical accounts of how Nigeria experienced international isolation.

Closely related to it is *Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under General Abdulsalami Abubakar*<sup>27</sup> an article written by Isiaka Badmus and Dele Ogunmola examines the foreign policy and the domestic environment of Nigeria during the administration of general Abdulasami. He gives analysis of the pain caused by General Ibrahim Babangida administration which annulled the 12 June 1993 presidential elections and how Nigeria finally became a pariah state during Abacha administration. The regime of Abdulsalami ensured that there was improvement in human rights; political prisoners were released, while opposition members in exile were encouraged to return home to contribute their quotas to nation-building. As Chairman of ECOWAS, he favoured negotiation in restoring peace in Guinea Bissau rather than open confrontation in spite of entreaties by President Vierra for ECOMOG to intervene in the crisis. He also helped to negotiate the resolution of the Sierra-Leone conflict. The article also examines the efforts of the administration with regards to changing the country's status from the realm of isolation and launching it back to its position of prominence in international community. Every aspect of this article is relevant to my study. Nevertheless, the work limited its focus to Nigeria's foreign policy under Abdulsalami Abubakar Administration. This work tends to continue with the analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy by

focusing on how it was played out during Obasanjo civilian administration which succeeded the administration of Abubakar.

In a similar vein, "Olusegun Obasanjo's Policy Score Sheet: Challenge of Leadership and Continuity."<sup>28</sup> An article of Sheriff Folarin in *Nigerian Forum, a Journal of Opinion on World Affairs* deeply examines the domestic policy of Olusegun Obasanjo and how it reflects on the country's foreign policy. The article gives analysis of military executive, economic, social, electoral, and political constitution reforms of Obasanjo administration between 1999 and 2007. It also examines the role of The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), one of the institutions initiated by Obasanjo and Mbeki of South Africa. NEPAD has been integrated into the African Union structures as a sustainable continental strategy for political and social-economic redemption. The work is important to this research in the area of the Obasanjo's effort in restoring the status of Nigeria in the comity of nations. However, the political score sheet of Olusegun Obasanjo as explained in the article is limited to domestic policy. This work is to cover the loopholes by assessing and reviewing Obasanjo's foreign policy.

In another category, *Nigeria and the Reform of the United Nation: An Overview*.<sup>29</sup> Edited by Abubakar S. Mohammed, et al examines the role of Nigeria in peace building, Conflict Resolution and peace keeping since 1960. The work helps to examine Nigeria and the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. It also examines the role of Nigeria at the United Nations in the past, the present and the future. It gives analysis for the role of Nigeria as a member of Common-Wealth, Non-Aligned Movement, OPEC, G77, and ECOWAS. Nigeria has been playing a leading role in the international effort to bring peace to Sudan. Nigeria successfully mediated the restoration of democratic role in Sao Tome and Principe. The work is related to the chapter 3 of this work. But it did not examine the impact of peace-keeping operations. It will be put into consideration in this work through information from other available materials and oral interviews concerning the role of Nigeria in peace keeping operations.

Also, *Nigeria and the Permanent Membership of the United Nations Security Council: An appraisal*,<sup>30</sup> an article of C. Nna-Emeka Okereke in *Nigerian Forum, a Journal of Opinion on World Affairs* covers the historical link between Nigeria and UN since 1960. It also examines the structures of United Nations Security Council and the need to increase its membership. The article gives analysis of Nigeria's contribution to peace keeping operation under UN and some other factors that make Nigeria qualify for the position of permanent member of the Security Council. Although the work did not did not comprehensively examine the Nigeria's peace-keeping operations, it will help to give insight in analyzing the sacrifices Nigeria has made to resolve crisis in Africa. Therefore, the work will enhance this research to examine the various atrocities committed against Nigerians in the course of peace keeping operations.

Similarly, *ECOWAS and Conflict Management in Cote D'Ivoire: Appraisal and Prognosis*,<sup>31</sup> an article of Dele Ogunmola in *Nigerian Forum, a Journal of Opinion on World Affairs* examines how ECOWAS member countries have decided to look inward for conflict resolution due to the lukewarm attitude of the major global powers towards African conflicts. It is in this regard that the article focuses on peace keeping operations in Cote D'Ivoire with the view to assessing the role and the performance of ECOWAS in conflict management in that country. The work centres on how ECOWAS managed the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire. It lays emphasis on the special role played by Nigeria in managing the conflict. It will help this research will consider the extent to which ECOWAS managed the crisis in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan.

In a related analysis, *Peace studies and conflict resolution in Nigeria*,<sup>32</sup> edited by Miriam Ikejiani-Clark examines peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria from independence to the civilian regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo. It explains the role of Nigeria in peace-keeping operations. It also states Nigeria's commitment to international peace and security as enunciated in the preambles of the Charter of the United Nations. It argues that Nigeria has never ignored the responsibility of maintaining peace in Africa right from the period of independence. Nigeria plays that role due to the perception of both her leaders and citizens that the country takes the lead in Africa terms of military strength. But the work is silent about how maintenance and resolution of conflicts in Africa affects Nigeria. The gap will be covered in this work through careful interrogation concerning the experience of some Nigerians within the conflict regions and the commitment of Nigeria for the peace keeping operations.

Micheal Omang Bonchuk's *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy in Nigeria*.<sup>33</sup> examines the civil military relations in a democratic government with the main focus on Nigeria. It helps to examine the extent to which military personnel help in strengthening democratic norms. It also helps to examine the likely reasons why military personnel may be reluctant in carrying out their functions as given by the commander-in-chief of the armed forces in accordance with constitution. For instance, in Sudan, Nigerian soldiers were the main target of the rebels; most of them were reluctant to continue with mandate given to them by Obasanjo civilian government because some of their men were dying and no diplomatic action was taken to rescue the situation. The author posits that military is a special instrument of State policy, designed and set apart to carry its constitutional role of defending the territorial integrity of the country.<sup>34</sup> Although, the work mainly examines the relationship between the military and civilians in a democratic government, but an aspect of it which gives analysis of the peace-keeping approach to conflict management is relevant to this research.

Similarly, *Nigeria's African policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: An Appraisal of Contending Issues*<sup>35</sup> by Ayo Akinbobola and Tunde Adebawale is an article in *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs* which covers a critical analysis of the evolution of Nigeria's African Policy, and its dimension in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It examines the historical antecedents or evolution of Nigeria's African Policy and Nigeria's role in organizations such as ECOWAS and AU with special reference to conflict, prevention management and resolution. It helps to compare the peace-keeping approach between the military governments in the 1990s and the civilian government of Obasanjo with regards to the money spent for the operations. Unlike the previous governments, Obasanjo reduced the excessive spending on the operations. Its extensive analysis on the issue of Bakassi peninsula is also very vital to this work. Although, the work lacks broad explanation on how the

evolution of Nigeria's African policy was played out in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This research will help to analyze the changes that occurred in Nigeria's diplomatic relations with Liberia and Sierra Leone between 1999 and 2007.

Also, *The Nigerian Law of Asylum and Charles Taylor*<sup>36</sup>, an article written by R. C. Changani gives analysis of president Obasanjo's decision to offer political asylum to Charles Taylor and the argument it generated. The writer posits that having granted asylum to Taylor in Nigeria, the country would not have done any other thing than to safeguard the recipient of the asylum; surrendering Charles Taylor due to pressure from US and the UK would negate the spirit of ECOWAS peace initiative aimed to restore peace and stability in Africa. But since Taylor was indicted before the period of asylum Nigerian government ought to have allowed justice to take its course rather than granting him asylum. The international politics behind the asylum granted to Charles Taylor in Nigeria which the article did not examine will be considered in this work through valuable information from foreign policy actors who worked within the period under study.

In another category, *Nigerian-Cameroon Tussle for the Bakassi Peninsula the Way Forward*<sup>37</sup>, an article of Michael Olusegun Jayeoba in *Nigerian forum a Journal of opinion on world affairs*, examines the legal tussle between Nigeria and Cameroon over the territorial ownership of the oil rich and fishing sub-marine shoals known as the Bakassi Peninsula, leading to the verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at Hague. The verdict of ICJ ceded the disputed Peninsula to Cameroon. The ceding of Bakassi to Cameroon has resulted to displacement of the Bakassi people from their ancestral abode and source of livelihood. However, the writer's view that the decision of Nigerian government to give the territory to Cameroon without appealing against the International Court Justice [ICJ] verdict is the best decision to take is questionable. Although he said it would help Nigeria to maintain good relations with the international community, but the interest of her citizens and the entire national interest should equally be considered especially when dealing with sensitive issues. The writer also gives historical analysis of the struggle and the Nigeria's withdrawal from Bakassi peninsula. The pain and agony that the former inhabitants of Bakassi are going through which was not examined in the article will be put into consideration in this research by analyzing the information from some of the former inhabitants of Bakassi Peninsula. In a related work, *Obasanjo and the New Face of Nigeria's foreign policy*<sup>38</sup> written by Abdulmumin Jibrin sees Obasanjo's diplomatic moves concerning the case of Bakassi as part of the strength of his foreign policy. It makes an attempt to give a historical collection of the foreign policy of Nigeria from between 1960 and Obasanjo second era. It concentrates on the civilian administration of Olusegun Obasanjo; it posits that it was a period of wide-ranging reforms in different spheres of Nigeria's domestic policies which have had definite implications on and impacted upon the external relations of the country. The book epitomizes Olusegun Obasanjo, his words and actions within the context of contemporary foreign policy of Nigeria. But Prof. Julius Ihonvbere's opinion at the back cover of the book which states that Nigerian democratic government under Obasanjo witnessed a strategically formulated and flexibly implemented foreign policy that was guided by strategic and economic factors is questionable. According to the professor, Obasanjo had a special concern to create a positive image for Nigeria in the comity of nations. The pain and agony that most Nigerians especially those who were formally residing in Bakassi peninsula are going through today is as a result of the so called 'good image' that Obasanjo administration wanted to create even when there was opportunity for his government to appeal against the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Specifically, section 12 of the 1999 Nigeria's constitution requires that no treaty shall have the force of law in Nigeria except to the extent that it has been approved by the National Assembly. Unfortunately, the performance of Nigeria's treaty obligation with respect to the handing over of Bakassi to Cameroon did not conform to this constitutional provision. Also, during 2007 general election campaign, Obasanjo said and I quote "I will campaign because this election is a do-or-die affair for me and my party". Is that how to consider political reality? The answer is definitely no. Although, Olusegun Obasanjo made positive impact towards Nigeria's Foreign policy during his administration from 1999 - 2007 but his impact should not be exaggerated. However, the book will help in analyzing judgment of the international court on Bakassi.

Osita Agbu's *Nigerian Civil Society Work and Debt Relief Campaign*<sup>39</sup> is another scholarly work that needs to be reviewed. The work deeply examines the role of Nigerian Civil Society as well as the effort of segments of the international Civil Society toward debt relief for Nigeria. The work argues that the government policy of campaigning for debt forgiveness indicates that creditor countries would have a rethink and forgive all of the unsustainable debts. It also posits that the decision by the Paris Club to write off some billions of dollars Nigeria owed the Club could be seen as part of the achievement of Obasanjo's foreign policy<sup>40</sup>. His work fits into the chapter 5 of this work which examines the Nigeria's diplomatic drive for debt relief and investment. Although, the main focus of the work is debt relief; this research will examine how money laundering and embezzlement of public funds led to the accumulation of huge debt.

Similarly, David Ugolor's *Global Debt Relief Movement and the Campaign for Debt Relief*<sup>41</sup> for Nigeria examines the effort of non-governmental organizations across the globe mounting pressure on creditor governments to cancel the debts of poor countries. It dwells more on the role of the Jubilee 2000 Campaign towards the debt relief. It also examines the diplomatic strategies of Obasanjo who worked with a team of experts in the fields of economics and international relations before the Paris Club arrived at their decision. However, the work did not examine the debt Nigeria owed. But it will help this study to review Obasanjo's diplomatic steps towards the actualization of debt relief and its implication on national life. Next in this category is *Nigeria's Foreign Policy of Good Neighbourliness: A Critical Review*.<sup>42</sup> It is article of Idowu Olawale which highlights the basis of Nigeria's policy of good neighbourliness which are: moral obligation, Nigerian security considerations, and the need to neutralize French influence in Africa. He gives analysis of specific good neighbourliness of Nigeria's foreign policy which includes the construction and purchase of equipment of a 200-bed hospital in Cape Verde during Babangida administration and the donation of an airplane to Sao Tome and Principe. In July 2004, the Obasanjo administration made available the sums of \$40million and \$5million to Ghana and Sao Tome and Principe respectively for financial assistance.<sup>43</sup>

He concludes by explaining that the financial and economic assistance given by Nigeria to neighbouring countries during Obasanjo administration were given only if such assistance is commensurate with expected gains accruable to Nigeria. However, he did not give instances on how assistance rendered by Obasanjo was commensurate with the expected gains. Nevertheless, the work will help this research to examine Nigeria's diplomatic moves in Africa.

Similarly, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in Obasanjo-Atiku Year*<sup>44</sup>, by Greg Mbadiwe gives an overview of the economic diplomacy of Obasanjo civilian administration. The work examines the efforts of Obasanjo toward enhancing and promoting Foreign Direct Investment, repatriation of ill-gotten wealth and the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It provides information on almost all the foreign trips Obasanjo embarked on in the process of attracting foreign investors. It also examines the extent to which some of the foreign investors responded to Obasanjo's call for foreign investments in Nigeria. It gives details of the various bi-lateral and trade agreements between Nigeria and other countries during Obasanjo administration. Some of those countries include United States of America, China, South Africa etc. The work also makes provision for the statistics of foreign direct investments in Nigeria during Obasanjo second era. Although, the author's analysis of the bi-lateral trade agreements between Nigeria and other countries lacks depth but it will enhance the analysis of such agreements in this research.

Also, *Continuity and Change in US- Nigeria Relations, 1999-2005*,<sup>45</sup> an article written by Hassan A. Saliu and Fatai A. Aremu, shed light on the evolution and development of Nigeria – US relations before and after 1999. The article indicates that Nigeria's relationship with the US was, to say the least, frosty and generally unstable in the late 1980s and almost all through the 1990s for the ostensible reason that Nigeria was under military dictatorships. With the successful enthronement of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, changes started occurring in Nigeria – US bilateral relations. But in certain areas, the bilateral cooperation remained shallow, fragile and generally unstable. The article highlights factors which drive US – Nigeria bilateral affairs and gives options for stronger and deeper relationship for the mutual benefit of both states. By late 1999, the US-Nigeria Joint Economic Policy Council (JEPC) was launched in Washington as a framework to strengthen bilateral consultation on economic reform, debt relief, investment and Aid.<sup>46</sup> It is important to note that the confrontation being played out between China and US over the control of global economy, and the growing economic ties between Nigeria and China may affect Nigeria – US relations, for good or bad. But the work did not examine the impact of US-Nigeria relations on Nigerian nation. It is part of what this research tends to cover.

In the last category of this review, *Challenges for Nigeria at 50: Essays in Honour of Professor Abdullahi Mahadi*,<sup>47</sup> edited by A. M. Ashafa deserves attention. The work examines the concept and practice of democratic principles in Nigeria. It also gives an overview of democratic project in Nigeria from 1999-2010. The work gives highlight of the challenges of democracy in Nigeria. These are the failure of leadership, high level of corruption, the challenge of credible elections, the challenge of political violence, heightened level of militancy and ethno-religious crises among others. This is useful to the concluding chapter of this research which will examine the internal challenges that directly or indirectly affect the country's foreign policy. However, its recommendation on how to solve the challenges are inadequate, this research will give further recommendations.

*Re-defining Nigeria's National Interest in World Diplomacy*,<sup>48</sup> an article written by Idumange John is another work that is worth reviewing. The work examines two main sources of Nigeria's foreign Policy Objectives namely: the Nigerian Constitution and the actions of the leaders. It focuses on the Afro-centric nature of Nigeria's foreign policy and states the need for the country to conduct bilateral and multilateral engagements with other countries. The article helps to analyze the problems of Nigeria's Foreign Policy and gives recommendations on how the problems can be solved. But the work did not adequately provide what should be the country's drive for foreign policy formulation and implementation. This and further recommendations will be provided in this work

*Nigeria's Foreign Policy, 1960 – 2011: Fifty-One Years of Conceptual Confusion*,<sup>49</sup> an article written by Atah Pine gives historical perspective of Nigeria's Foreign policy. The article analyses Nigeria's involvement in decolonization struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, and anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. The writer states that in spite of the huge financial expenditures and massive loss of human and material resources in the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Nigeria has not been able to reap any economic benefits. But even though there is an iota of truth in his statements, the way he labeled the fifty one years of Nigeria's Foreign Policy (1960 – 2011) as a conceptual confusion is too harsh, there are still records of some achievements on the country's foreign policy within these periods. Nigeria has never suffered military invasion from any country across the globe; that is an achievement to some extent. However, the work will help this research to re-examine the country's foreign policy within the period under review and provide recommendations on how best Nigeria can benefit from her foreign policy.

The M. A. project of Bulus Nom Audu, titled *Impact of Nigeria's Foreign Relations on the Armed Forces, 1990-2007*<sup>50</sup> also examines the impact of government relations with the outside world in such areas as military manpower development, acquisition of modern weapons of war, and participation in peace-keeping efforts at the regional level, the project extensively examines the Liberian crisis of 1990s, the sierra Leonean crisis which started around 1996 and ended in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. But the main focus of his work is on Nigeria and Sierra Leone. This research will cover the remaining gaps by providing an evaluation of the impact of Nigeria's foreign relations as it was played out in Sudan and Cote d'Ivoire and make recommendations on when and when not be involved in peace-keeping operations.

However, most of the evaluations of Nigeria's foreign policy in books, journals, magazines and newspapers concerning Obasanjo's civilian administration still need to be re-examined. This work will help to fill some of the vacuums in some scholarly works on Obasanjo's foreign policy as noted in this literature review.



### 1.6. Sources, Methods, and Organization

Right from independence, attempts at writing on Nigeria's foreign policy have relied on both oral and written sources. Both primary and secondary sources are vital for an effective research on Nigeria's Foreign Policy. Considering the fact that this is a contemporary study, it became necessary to obtain data through oral source in order to check and to supplement the written sources that were widely consulted. Oral information was obtained from interviews conducted with individuals across the country. Some scholars and diplomats that worked with Obasanjo during his civilian administration especially those within Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) were interviewed. However, the data from the interviewees was carefully scrutinized by the researcher.

Secondary sources consulted by the researcher include books, journal articles, internet documents, unpublished materials, and articles from newspapers and magazines. The researcher consulted materials from some establishment like public institutes, state library, internet, and universities for relevant information.

A sound historical method was applied in the course of this research. The researcher elicited much information concerning this study from MFA and NIIA. Some of the authors of the books consulted were once Ambassadors, Ministers in charge of foreign affairs, and Director Generals of NIIA under Obasanjo's civilian administration. Examples of those in these categories include Professor Joy U. Ogwu and Professor B.A. Akinterinwa. Nevertheless, this work is interdisciplinary in nature. Therefore, it is not limited to the discipline of history. The sources from other disciplines such as Diplomacy, International Relations, Political Science, and Strategic Studies were consulted. Some degree of evaluation was made based on the research findings. However, this study is based on qualitative approach which is a system of inquiry that seeks to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. This study is adopted a historical narrative and descriptive method of analysis.

Thematically, it discusses the major themes that characterized the Nigeria's foreign policy shortly before and during the civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The work is organized into six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction which covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and significance of study, scope of study, sources, methodology, organization, theoretical frame work and literature review. Chapter two examines Nigeria from the period of international isolation to 1999. Chapter three discusses Nigeria's diplomatic relations with some African countries between 1999 and 2003, especially on the aspect of peace-keeping operation. Chapter four examines judgment of the International Court on Bakassi Peninsula in 2002. It discusses the origin of the struggle between Nigeria and Cameroon over Bakassi. It also examines Nigeria's withdrawal from the place after the ICJ verdict, and the plight of Nigerians who were formally residing there. Chapter five examines the campaign for debt relief, the repatriation of the looted funds by late Abacha, the promotion of Foreign Direct Investment, and how they affect the well-being of Nigerian citizens. Chapter six is the conclusion of the entire work.

### 1.7. Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Issues

Theory can be defined as a set of statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, especially one that has been repeatedly tested or is widely accepted and can be used to make predictions about natural phenomena. It is the hypothetical description of a complex entity or process.<sup>51</sup>

And 'power' means many things to many people including scholars of international relations. But it is not that ambiguous and elusive to the extent of not being useful as an analytical tool. One of the finest definitions of power which tend to relate power to foreign policy is that proposed by John Stoessinger. His proposition is that "*power in international relations is the capacity of a nation to use its tangible and intangible resources in such a way as to affect the behaviour of others.*"<sup>52</sup> However, it is important to note that power theory seems to be the most appropriate theory for this research.

Gene Sharp's theory of power can be explained in terms of the claims it makes about power and the potential to effectively alter social operations through a non-violent means.<sup>53</sup> His power theory offers a frame work for understanding how non-violent action works.<sup>54</sup> This refers to building a potential for changing relations of domination and subordination such that this change benefits those who are dominated. Theory of power seeks to empower those who are traditionally regarded as powerless in an oppressive relationship, thus enabling them to alter their conditions. His non-violent consent of analyzing power theory has made the theory to be more relevant in the world too accustomed to the recorded accounts of dealing with conflict by violent means.<sup>55</sup> However Sharp's non-violent concept helps to explain Obasanjo's foreign policy which maintained the traditional role of Nigeria in peace keeping operations without being involved in violence

It may be argued that the historical and political tradition to which sharp's view of power belongs is Social Contract theory. Sharp cites the work of Rousseau, Hobbes, Machiavelli, and Montesquieu to develop and support his own view of power. Moreover, he is concerned with the very question that social contractarians sought to answer. Central issues of social contract theory may be described in this manner:

In the natural condition, 'all men are born free' and equal to each other; they are 'individuals'. This presupposition of contract doctrine generates a profound problem: how in such a condition can the government of one man by another ever be legitimate; how can political rights exist? Only one answer is possible without denying the initial assumption of freedom and equality. The relationship must arise through agreement.<sup>56</sup>

Sharp asked the same question: how is it that rulers have power? And he offers the answer; by the consent of their subjects.<sup>57</sup>

It is also important to note that traditional approach and behavioural approach which play vital role in the study of international relations make reference to power as the anchor of a country's foreign policy. The traditional approach takes descriptive or historical forms. It is also the approach of those who concentrate on 'power politics'. Those who employ this approach review state actions and history and interpret them according to their own best judgment. Some proponents of classical approach like Raymond Aron and Stanley Haffman examine history to describe the international system and look at sociology-man in groups to explain why. They see States as the sole actors and concentrates on the unfolding of political events.<sup>58</sup> However, Hans Morgenthau who also used traditionalist approach posits that traditionalists concept of international relations is that national interest requires constant accumulation of power for survival and security. To him and his disciples, 'power' is man's control over the minds and actions of others and can be determined by examining the relationships between actors, The belief of scholars who advocate this approach for purposes of analyzing and understanding international relations is that focus should be on power as the distinguishing aspect of international relations as well as domestic politics.<sup>59</sup>

The behavioural approach propounded by Ivan Pavlov is concerned with human behaviour rather than that of states or organizations in the analysis of international relations. It seeks to examine the behaviour, actions, and acts of individual rather than the characteristics of institutions where power operates. This is contrary to the approach of classicists or traditionalists who prefer to focus on the behavior of governments in terms of how they pursue their national interest. Despite the contradiction between the two, both of them view power as a vital instrument that can be used to achieve national interests. Hence, the personality of Obasanjo is to be put into consideration in analyzing his foreign policy. Obasanjo operated with authoritarian and confident personality. It reflected in the civil-military relations.<sup>60</sup>

George Graen's Linkage theory explains the nature of relations between a leader and the followers.<sup>61</sup> It can also be linked to power theory. The link between domestic policy and foreign policy explains why power theory can be applied in analyzing Obasanjo's foreign policy. For students of foreign policy, the linkage theory is an elementary explanation of how internal factors help in shaping and giving definition to the quality and direction of foreign policy.<sup>62</sup> In Nigeria Obasanjo exercised power with little or no restriction. It was played out in all the component units of the federation. For instance, in Ekiti State, he declared state of emergency and placed Adetunji Olurin, a retired military officer as the sole administrator. The military operations in Odi, Bayelsa State and Zaki-Biam Benue State and the indictment of some Governors by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) are all part of the ways Obasanjo displayed his power at the domestic level. Although in some cases, the power he exercised violated human rights. His personality as one of the powerful leaders in Africa reflected in Nigeria's foreign policy. A good example is the case of Sao Tome and Principe where President Fradique de Menezes who was removed through military coup was reinstated through the effort of President Olusegun Obasanjo. Here is Obasanjo's message to the coup plotters: "*Relinquish power now or be over powered militarily in the spirit of African union*"<sup>63</sup> It was also played out in the area of peace keeping operations especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the asylum granted to Charles Taylor. Hence, Nigeria has tangible elements of power (territory, population, national resources and military strength) and the intangible elements (leadership and organization) to operate as a force to reckon with in African region.

Power theory describes international politics and a hierarchy with a "Dominant State," the one with the largest proportion of power resources (population productivity, and political capability meaning coherence and stability); "Great Powers," a collection of potential rivals to the dominant state and who share in the task of maintaining the system and controlling the allocation or power resources; "Middle Powers" of regional significance similar to the dominant state but unable to challenge the Dominant State or the system structure, and "Small Power," the rest.<sup>64</sup> Nigeria fits into the "Middle Powers" because the nation operates power at the regional level but lacks the wherewithal to challenge the Dominant State. This happened when Nigeria lost Bakassi to Cameroon because some of the Great Powers like France and Britain were directly or indirectly behind Cameroon.

<sup>1</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy under Military Rule, 1966-1999*, (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited; 2003), 48

<sup>2</sup>Bankole A. Okuwa, "Nigeria Foreign Policy Review." Last modified 1 December 2010 <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com>

<sup>3</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy under Military Rule, 1966-1999*, (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited; 2003), 47

<sup>4</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Obasanjo's Foreign Policy: Nigerian's Return to Global Reckoning? Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol., 28 No. 2 (2000) 20

<sup>5</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Obasanjo's Foreign Policy: Nigerian's Return to Global Reckoning?...*

<sup>6</sup>Omo Omoruyi, "General Buhari and 'Defence of Democratic Struggle in the Past.'" Accessed 22 March 2014 [http://www.dawodu.com/omoruyi\\_12.htm](http://www.dawodu.com/omoruyi_12.htm)

<sup>7</sup>Omo Omoruyi, "General Buhari and 'Defence of Democratic Struggle in the Past.'" Accessed 22 March 2014 [http://www.dawodu.com/omoruyi\\_12.htm](http://www.dawodu.com/omoruyi_12.htm)

<sup>8</sup>Owei Lakemfa, "Clowns, the Tortoise and Babangida's Quest." Accessed 22 March 2014 <http://www.vanguardngr.com>

<sup>9</sup>Ebenezer Okpokpo, "The Challenges Facing Nigeria's Foreign Policy in the next millennium." Accessed 22 March 2014 <http://asq.africa.ufl.edu/v3/v3i3a16.htm>

<sup>10</sup>Effiong Joseph, "Reflection on Nigeria's Foreign Policy." Accessed 22 March 2014 <http://www.thefreelibrary.com>

<sup>11</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Obasanjo's Foreign Policy: Nigerian's Return to Global Reckoning?...*23

<sup>12</sup>Ishaka Badmus and Dele Ogunmola, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under General Abdulsalami Abubakar," *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 29 No. 1 and 2 (2003) 381

<sup>13</sup>Audu Kadiri, present Director, Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja. 19 May 2014

<sup>14</sup>Ishaka Badmus and Dele Ogunmola, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under General Abdulsalami Abubakar..." 381

<sup>15</sup>T. Adele Bamgbose, *Obasanjo's Foreign Policy, 1999-2007*, ed. Terhemba Wuam, Stephen Olali, and James Obilikwu, *Obasanjo Second Era* (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers; 2011), 328

<sup>16</sup>Audu Kadiri, Director, Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja. 19 May 2014. He served as part of the senior members of diplomatic corps that represented Nigeria in Switzerland during Obasanjo second era.

<sup>17</sup>Isiaka Badmus and Dele Ogunmola, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under General Abdulsalami Abubakar..."384.

- <sup>18</sup>David Ugolor, "Global Debt Relief Movement and the Campaign for Debt Relief for Nigeria," in U Joy Ogwu and W. O Alli (eds.) *Debt Relief and Nigeria's Diplomacy* . . . 229-247.
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- <sup>27</sup>Isiaka Badmus and Dele Ogunmola, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy under General Abdulsalami Abubakar . . .", 381-392.
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## 2. Nigeria: The Period of International Isolation, 1993-1999

This chapter discussed the events that led to the imposition of various international sanctions on Nigeria and how the sanctions were lifted after the country's transition to democracy. It examined the military dictatorship of Ibrahim Babangida who annulled the 1993 presidential election and how Nigeria's image became more damaged during Abacha's dictatorial government who had no respect for fundamental human rights. It also discussed Nigeria's reception in the international arena. This was fully realized when Olusegun Obasanjo became the president in 1999. In this chapter, it has been pointed out that unlike Abacha who did not attend any international organization summit outside the shores of Nigeria, Obasanjo was always available at various summits across the globe. However, it has been argued in this work that Obasanjo was engrossed in his international trips to a point that some domestic issues including insecurity and none-

adherence to the tenets of democracy which needed to be urgently addressed were given little attention. Nigeria's return to the comity of nations would have been more celebrated if the aforementioned issues were properly taken care of.

### 2.1. Events that Led to International Isolation

Between 1979 and 1999, Nigeria's international relations was adversely and positively affected by the expulsion of illegal immigrants from Nigeria, democratization, remilitarization, Bolaji Akinyemi's Consultation Doctrine and the 'Abacharisation' of Nigerian Politics. After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria was seen as the model of statehood in Africa. This led to an assertion that "as Nigeria goes, so goes Africa."<sup>1</sup> But the internal hope on Nigeria was shattered such that she was no more seen as a model of Democracy in Africa but rather as a country of incessant and unending military initiated transition programme to democracy.<sup>2</sup> The insincerity on the part of the military leaders with regard to the transition programmes became obvious especially after 12 June 1993 election was annulled.

General Ibrahim Badamosi – IBB's announcement to handover to the civilian in 1990. However, the date of handing-over which was shifted from 1990 to 1992 and then to 1993 did not see the light of the day. The presidential election was not even conducted until 12 June 1993. It was the most credible election in the history of the country but the military government later annulled the result on 24 of the same month for no substantial reason, IBB called it 'irregularities in voting' in his nation-wide broadcast. The results were mysteriously held back, although it soon leaked that Abiola had in fact won 19 of the 30 states and therefore, the presidency. However, the National Defence and Security Council decided to cancel the elections, and Babangida then issued a decree banning the presidential candidates of both NRC and the SDP from participating in the subsequent presidential election which he planned to conduct. It was vigorously argued that IBB connived with and financed the Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) to sabotage the June 12 election and in effect sustain the military power beyond their terminal date of 27 August 1993.<sup>3</sup>

In a speech delivered by IBB concerning the annulment of 12 June presidential elections, he stated that it was on account of irregularities that the election was cancelled. In his words:

Even before the presidential election and indeed at the party conventions, we had full knowledge of the bad signals pertaining to the enormous breach of the rules and regulations of democratic election. But because we were determined to keep faith with the deadline of 27 August 1993 for the return to civil rule we overlooked the reported breaches. Unfortunately, these breaches continued into the presidential election of 12 June 1993 on an even greater proportion.<sup>4</sup>

He further stated that there were proofs as well as documented evidence of wide spread use of money during the party primaries. However, it is important to assert that the reason for the annulment is IBB's quest to remain in office. If irregularities at the level of party primaries could be overlooked as stated by IBB, then, the so-called "irregularities" at the presidential elections would not have been responsible for the annulment of the election. Even if there was any case of election malpractice, it ought to have been handled by the judiciary. The annulment of 12 June election weakened Nigeria's is foreign policy as members of the international community lost confidence in the commitment of the military to handover to the civilian as a way of embracing democratic norms.

As the reflection on the annulment of the 12 June election and its impact on Nigeria's foreign policy continues let us also remember that it has been asserted that MKO and some of these colleagues were made rich by discredited and opportunistic military cabals. Sometimes the money came through ghost contracts. In the same token, the same discredited military cabal that made him rich turned against him when things were no longer at ease-things fall apart.<sup>5</sup> The ill-gotten health helped him to win the election. Therefore, while considering the anti-democratic decision of annulling the 12 June election and its implication on the country's foreign policy, the way and manner the winner of the presidential election and his cohorts connived with some of the bad eggs in the military to loot the nation's treasury which created bad image for the country at the international community should also be considered.

All was not well with the Nigeria-Western relations World in 1990s. The attempted effort of Babangida administration to scuttle the presidential election scheduled for 12 June 1993 which was promptly condemned by the United State Information Services (USIS) IN Lagos made the Nigerian government to expel the USIS Director, but the date of the election remained unchanged. However, the annulment of the election which was monitored by some Western observers (excluding USA) was to worsen the already fragile relationship, this was manifested in the imposition of sanctions on Nigeria. Hassan Saliu posits that a number of issues ranging from democracy, human right, and economic reforms exerted a lot of pressure on the relations between Nigeria and the western world in the 1990s. According to him, the deteriorating relations led to the imposition of sanctions on Nigeria by the USA, Canada, the European Union (EU), and Commonwealth.<sup>6</sup>

Richard Sklar asserts that after the annulment of the 12 June 1993 elections, Britain, the United States, and European Union imposed various sanctions on Nigerian, including suspension of military assistance, American economic aid, and denial of entry into United States for Nigerian officials.<sup>7</sup> The various sanctions placed on Nigeria adversely affected the nation's economy which would have experienced growth from unrestricted relations.

The ugly domestic policies and actions which unwittingly snowballed into diplomatic controversies during Babangida administration continued during the administration of Abacha who removed Ernest Sonekan, the Head of the Interim Government which Bagangida unlawfully put in place. Some of these domestic policies and actions include the ruthless crackdown on pro-democracy agitation, gross abuse of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the arrest and detention of Moshood Abiola in June 1994, the March 1995 coup hoax, the November, 1995 hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other eight Ogoni activists and the controversial coup plot of December 1997.<sup>8</sup>

The domestic decision that mostly provoked members of the international community was the hanging of nine Ogoni activists. Richard Sklar posits that the execution of Saro-Wiwa and eight of his fellow activists on 10 November

1995 while the Commonwealth leaders were assembling in Auckland, New Zealand, provoked an unprecedented decision to suspend Nigeria from the organization for two years, pending its return to compliance with the principles of the Harare Declaration of 1991 in which all members states pledged to foster democracy, human right, and judicial independence.<sup>9</sup> Fawole points out that the hanging of nine activists at a time that the Commonwealth summit was in session in Auckland was undiplomatic. An elementary knowledge of global diplomacy should have told the regime that such an act would ordinarily be regarded as a slight on the commonwealth.<sup>10</sup> Besides, appeal for clemency for the activists were pouring in from around the world including from Commonwealth members themselves. Justus Nwakanma asserts that Nigeria earned sanctions from the Commonwealth as expected.<sup>11</sup> Oladipo Kolawole points out that the killing of the nine activists while Commonwealth meeting was going on in Auckland was in utter disregard of diplomatic nicety and decorum.

Indeed, the execution of Saro-Wiwa and his fellow activist was considered by Commonwealth leaders as an affront and a sacrilege. Nigeria was immediately suspended from the Commonwealth. Besides the suspension of Nigeria, the country was given two years to return to democratic civilian rule. Individual countries withdrew their ambassadors while arms embargo was imposed on the country.<sup>12</sup> The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in their meetings in 1996; Canada, Jamaica and South Africa advocated the adoption of stronger punitive action including an embargo on Nigerian oil exports, but Britain was reluctant to place its considerable investment and trading relationships with Nigeria in jeopardy.<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that despite the effort by British government to call Nigeria to order, the suggestion for embargo on Nigerian oil exports was not supported because of how it would have affected their national interest. Bola Akinterinwa posits that while sanctions and hostile attitude vis-à-vis Nigeria was on, economic exploration of Nigerian mineral resources did not stop. Export of oil to Europe was not affected. In fact, the situation only provided additional opportunity for greater incursion into the conduct and management of internal affairs of Nigeria.<sup>14</sup> Even when Trans Africa, the Black America lobbied for African support and the Caribbean tried to lobby US to lead its western allies in a boycott of Nigeria crude oil,<sup>15</sup> it was to no avail. Osita Agbu posits that Nigeria was being pursued for not playing the game according to the rules of the 'global village'. However, underlying the perception are the various intrigues and interests of national and international actors involved in the Nigerian Saga.<sup>16</sup>

At the level of the UN, the failure of democracy and lack of observance of human rights by Abacha regime led to the anti-Nigerian government's resolutions by the United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations through its Human Rights Commission occasionally issued queries to the Nigerian government on the issues of human rights and rule of law.<sup>17</sup> Nigeria was seen as one of the lawless nations in the world.

However, other than South Africa, no African country had protested the executions to the extent of having recalled its ambassador in Nigerian due to the fear of losing the economic and security benefits that Nigeria renders in Africa. The highly respected Secretary-General of the Organization of African Union (OAU) warned against the isolation of Nigeria regardless of the prolongation of military rule in the country.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Abacha was even elected as chairman of ECOWAS at the organization's Abuja summit of July 1996. Fawole asserts that Nigeria was only able to retain some international relevance within the OAU and ECOWAS where it holds undisputed sway.<sup>19</sup> But when Nigeria was evidently informed by the freeze in the relationship between the country and the West, late Abacha shifted to South East Asia, in a bid to open a new diplomatic and trading front.<sup>20</sup> This could be seen as a struggle for international relevance. Abacha was recalcitrant to the point of death while on the throne.

### 2.3. *The Nigeria's Image in the International Arena under Abacha Administration*

The enormous damage to Nigeria's image abroad in the 1990s due to the undemocratic practice, abuse of human rights, and the killing of government critics especially the hanging of Ken-Saro-Wiwa and the other eight (8) activists was a serious concern to law abiding citizens of Nigeria.

Abacha followed the footsteps of Babangida in foreign policy matters. Indeed, apart from consolidating the 'achievements' of Babangida administration in the area of foreign policy, the Abacha government pursued a reactive foreign policy and there was no significant impact made to project the image of the country outside.<sup>21</sup> Nigeria's image abroad was seen to be very worse to a point that South Africa that Nigeria helped during the fight against apartheid policy banned Nigeria from participating in the four-nation football tournament in south Africa; the country also prevented Nigeria's reigning beauty queen from participating in the world beauty pageant held in south Africa. As expected, Nigeria responded by refusing to participate in the African cup of nations held in South Africa. It became so bad that Abacha and Mandela resorted to name-calling.<sup>22</sup> Abacha was quoted as saying "*I don't blame Mandela because having spent 27 years in detention, he has lost touch with global socio-political trend.*"<sup>23</sup> Tom Ikimi, the foreign affairs minister who was chased out of the Commonwealth Summit in Auckland due to the killing of the nine Ogoni activists was equally quoted as saying: We in Nigeria have held President Nelson Mandela in high esteem. Nevertheless, our experience as a people and a nation in the world affairs tells us that the succession of struggle for liberation does not automatically endow a new comer to the international arena with all the nuances to perform creditably. And also, whoever gave the South African president the song sheet to read has not done him honour.<sup>24</sup>

He also castigated the Commonwealth thus:

You should know that the Commonwealth really is not a serious organization. They have nothing for Nigeria, they have only come out with declaration which they cannot carryout.<sup>25</sup>

Although the inappropriate reactive foreign policy of Abacha should not be applauded; but Nelson Mandela went into extreme in his call on the west for more serious sanction on Nigeria. In an attempt to redeem the image of the country, some prominent Nigerians such as Yakubu Gowon, Emeka Oluwegwu Ojukwu and Tam David-West amongst other, under took diplomatic and propaganda shuttles abroad on behalf of the government. Osita Agbu describes the attempt as image-

laundering for the government.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately as expected, their effort could not redeem the image of the country that was still isolated.

Ogaba Oche's contrary opinion on Nigerian's image in the international arena in 1990s centres on this new adverse propaganda from western nations who were bent on, not only denigrating Nigeria's image, but also attempting to format domestic dissatisfaction, disharmony, and possible subversion.<sup>27</sup> In these words,

...Another myth that the western media has tried to propagate is that the Nigerian government is one that pays little or no attention to the human rights of its populace. Their claim is that critics of the government are not allowed to voice their dissent, and in instance where they are able to do so, they are quickly clamped in jail. In spite of the Western propaganda that is being disseminated to tarnish the image of Nigeria, whether they are derived from facts or fiction, a number of accomplishments made by the present administration of General Sani Abacha cannot be overlooked in order to set certain perspectives right.<sup>28</sup>

It is very important to note here that there are some sensitive issues in government that should not be sacrificed on the altar of loyalty. It is an undeniable fact that the abuse of human rights was common in Nigeria in the 1990s. This and other factors tarnished the country's image in the comity of nations before the successful transition to democracy in 1999 which removed the country from the status of a Pariah.

#### 2.4. Nigeria's Return to Democracy and Her Reception in International Arena 1999

Following the death of Abacha, General Abubakar took over the mantle of leadership. They latter expressed commitment of restoring democracy through the democratic transition programme outline by his administration. Within the first few weeks of Abubakar administration, his government had released a large number of people detained during the Abacha regime. Notable among these was former military president Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo later contested the presidential election against Chief Olu Falae, the only opposition candidate.<sup>29</sup> From the result of the general election, Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) defeated Olu Falae of the Alliance for Democracy. The formal handing over of power to a democratically elected president on 29 May 1999 signaled the end of the transition from military to civil rule in Nigeria.

General Abubakar took some steps to break Nigeria's diplomatic isolations. Quite unlike Abacha that was holed in the presidential, villa, Aso Rock; he embarked on a diplomatic shuttle to major world capitalist to convince world leaders of his sincerity. Barely three months after Abubakar became Head of State, he visited Britain, France, and South Africa, U.S.A on diplomatic missions. In his word, the nation's new foreign policy was "aimed at ensuring that our country assumes its rightful place as an accepted and respected member of the global arena."<sup>30</sup>

Nigeria's attempt to move from military dictatorship toward democracy got two significant boosts in October, 1998, one, from South African president Nelson Mandela, the other from the European Union. The 15-member EU, meeting in Brussels, lifted its 3-year-old diplomatic sanctions against Nigeria as means of encouraging Abdulsalami Abubakar to return the country to civilian rule.<sup>31</sup> And the improved relations between Nigeria and South Africa led to Abubakar's State visit to South Africa in August 1998 to mend the sour relationship between the two countries. He subsequently led the country's delegation to Durban, South Africa in September 1998, for the summit of the Non-aligned Movement.<sup>32</sup>

Abdulsalami was not without shortcoming. He took an unpopular step in March 1999 when he posited 41 ambassadors. In spite of the criticism that followed, he went ahead and approved 11 other foreign mission representatives barely a month to the end of his tenure.<sup>33</sup> As expected, the envoys were recalled when Obasanjo took over the leadership of the country.

However, according to Abubakar, the task ahead of President Olusegun Obasanjo was Herculean, "even if he is a man who is experienced, the task is very, very difficult for expectations are very high. The country was at the brink of collapse when this administration came in. The years ahead will be decisive: Obasanjo must succeed".<sup>34</sup>

At the inception of president Obasanjo's administration, the major foreign policy goals of the government were: the re-integration of Nigeria into international community, conflict resolution, regional integration and the resuscitation of the Nigerian economy.<sup>35</sup> As mark of Nigeria's acceptance by international community, Obasanjo visited France, Italy, UK, Germany, USA, Japan, Canada, Russia, Mexico Ireland, Australia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and many other countries. Virtually all of these countries have reciprocated Obasanjo's visit.<sup>36</sup> The foreign trips were justified to some extent. According to Tunji Oseni " Obasanjo undertakes no trip unless he is convinced it is absolutely necessary.<sup>37</sup> For instance, in reciprocation of president Mandela's visit to Nigeria at the inauguration of Olusegun Obasanjo in May 1999, the latter was at the country of the former for the inauguration of Thabo Mbeki as South Africa's second democratic president in June 1999. And subsequently, the two countries entered into strategic partnership for the promotion of economic integration.

Nigeria's full re-entry into the comity of nations was also demonstrated by its swift re-admission into the Commonwealth within the first month of the inception of the Obasanjo administration after a four(4) year suspension.<sup>38</sup> The hosting by Nigeria of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2003 is a reflection of the nation's continual rising profile in multilateral organizations.<sup>39</sup> But the definition of the country's rising profile in multilateral organizations should go beyond hosting their meetings.

The new civilian administration also brought restoration of confidence and credulity to Nigeria's contribution to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa and other parts of the world. Obasanjo mobilized and joined other African leaders to intervene in creating 'a space in which peace can be built' in places like Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sao Tome and Principe.<sup>40</sup> After his inauguration in May 1999, the first Major Policy action taken by his administration on the Sierra Leonean crisis was to give Nigeria's full diplomatic support to the then on-going first comprehensive conference in Lome.<sup>41</sup> However, it is important to note that Obsanjo fulfilled his electioneering campaigns

of pulling Nigerian troops out of Sierra Leone. This was because many Nigerian troops were dying in large numbers and the government had spent Billions of dollars with no sign of total peace in sight.<sup>42</sup>

The evidence of Nigeria's return to the international arena and recognition was also reflected in the new administrations' pursuit of economic diplomacy. These include the pursuit of the recovery of funds looted and stashed abroad by the late General Sani Abacha and others, campaign for debt forgiveness, as well as the attraction of Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) into the country. In response to the debt forgiveness campaign, Canada cancelled \$45 million which Nigeria owed her.<sup>43</sup> And on 29 June 2006, Nigeria's major creditor, the Paris Club offered to cancel 67% of Nigeria's external debt using the Naples Terms.<sup>44</sup> The Paris club accounted for 82 percent of Nigeria's total foreign debts as at 2004. In terms of the breakdown of the total debt of \$32.91 billion, the country owed Paris clubs \$27.446billion.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the unconditional debt relief was a sign of acceptance of the new government in the international arena.

The remarkable reappearance of Nigeria in the comity of nations was evident when Obasanjo was elected chairman of the group of 77 nations (G77) in year 2000. Nwangu Okeimiri cited the Group of 77 Nations (G77) as one forum where "Nigeria will now play a 'more active' role in the emerging world order."<sup>46</sup> As chairman of G-77, Nigeria became an influential voice in African affairs and a recognized major actor among developing countries.<sup>47</sup> As chairman of the G-77, during the year 2000, Nigeria successfully re-energized the Group by convening a Summit of the G-77 for the first time in its 36 years of his existence in Havana, Cuba from 12-14 April 2000. The South Health Care Delivery Programme proposed by Obasanjo and Muammar Gaddafi at the summit was adopted. The secretariat of the programme is based in Nigeria.<sup>48</sup>

The new administration of Obasanjo brought Nigeria to limelight again in the area of sub regional cooperation. The administration played a major role in the inauguration of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), in Libreville, Gabon, in November 1999. The GGC members are: Nigeria, Cameroun, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Congo, DRC and Angola.<sup>49</sup> The sub-region has always held a special significance for Nigeria because of its political economic and security implications.

Gbenga Ashiru, recalls Nigeria's *pariah status* before the country was returned to a democratic government in May 1999. In his word:

*"Obasanjo's magic wand in diplomatic circles opened the flood gate of visits by foreign dignitaries to Nigeria leading to the risen profile of the country. His efforts brought integrity to Nigeria ..."*<sup>50</sup> The return of Nigeria from the international isolation to the comity of nations in 1999 has actually witnessed a transformed foreign policy; but our national interest is yet to be clearly defined and vigorously pursued. For instance, even if Obasanjo fulfilled his campaign promise of pulling Nigerian troops out of Sierra Leone which was a reflection of the popular sentiment of Nigerians who remain skeptical of the country's wasteful involvement in foreign military adventures without benefits, his government still played a leading role in the task of reconstruction of Sierra Leone. Nigeria also contributed a sum of \$100,000 for the take-off of the special court to try war criminals.<sup>51</sup> It is a gross error to embark on international relations without placing the national interest as topmost priority. But it is important to commend the efforts of Obasanjo administration in bringing Nigeria back to limelight in the international arena. He helped to improve the security of Nigeria compared to what it used to be prior to 1999.<sup>52</sup> It is one of the achievements of Obasanjo's foreign policy. However, Obasanjo should have done better in the area of insecurity and financial crimes in Nigeria. Probably, the greatest challenge of insecurity in Nigeria in Nigeria during Obasanjo second era is the one witnessed in the Niger Delta. An analyst argued that *"more than 1000 lives and trillions of naira worth of property have been lost in the Niger Delta due to the heinous activities of the militants."*<sup>53</sup> Many Nigerians within the country and most of those abroad who would have returned to the country to invest withheld their money from the country, preferring instead to invest in safer countries including U.S.A, Switzerland, Britain, Ghana, South Africa among others. Lack of constant power supply, political instability and other unfavourable business and social conditions which should have been given proper attention seemed to have received less attention. Therefore, domestic issues that affect national life should always be addressed since foreign policy is a reflection of domestic policy.

<sup>1</sup>Bola A. Akinterinwa, "Nigeria's International Image at 47", This day Newspaper, 30 September 2007, 37.

<sup>2</sup>James Oladipo Kolawole, "Nigeria Foreign Policy and Military Rule", (Paper Presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture in University of Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, 16 June 2005).

<sup>3</sup>Ngozi Ojiakor, *Social and Political History of Nigeria* (Enugu: Evans Press (NIG), 2007), 108-110.

<sup>4</sup>Jide Ajani "Why we Annulled June 12 Presidential Election - General Ibrahim Babangida." Modified 14 August 2013 <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/06/why-we-annulled-june-12-presidential-election-general-ibrahim-babangida/>

<sup>5</sup>Carlisle U. O. Umunnah, "Five Billion, Doe, Abuja, Babangida, Obasanjo, Equal : June 12, 1993 presidential elections Annulment (part 1)" Accessed 24 August 2013. <http://www.ganjt.com/article6000/news6059.htm>.

<sup>6</sup>Hassan A. Salii, *Essays on Contemporary Nigerian Foreign Policy, Volume* (Ibadan: Vantage Publishers Limited, 2006), 24

<sup>7</sup>Richard L. Sklar, "Nigeria Fends of Sanctions." Modified 28 August 2013. <http://www.polis.sciencespobordeaux.fr/vol4n2/arti1.html>

<sup>8</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy under Military Rule, 1966-199* (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited, 2003), 189.

<sup>9</sup>Richard L. Sklar, "Nigeria during the Abacha Year (1993-1998): An Elusive Target; Nigeria Fends off Sanctions." Last modified 26 September 2013. <http://books.openedition.org/ifra/647/>

<sup>10</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy Under Military Rule, 1966-1999*, 210.

<sup>11</sup>Justus Nwakanma, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy; 44 Years after" Daily Champions Newspaper, Monday 4 October 2004, 35

<sup>12</sup>Oladipo Kolawole "Nigerian Foreign Policy and Military Rule" The Comet Newspaper, Thursday, 28 July 2005,

<sup>13</sup>Richard L. Sklar, "Nigeria during the Abacha Year (1993-1998). An Elusive Target; Nigeria Fends off Sanctions ...

<sup>14</sup>Bola A. Akinterinwa, *Nigeria's International Image at... 47*

<sup>15</sup>Edward O. Erhagbe, "Trans-Africa Inc. and the Politics of Liberation and Democratization in Africa, 1977-1995" *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (1996) 34-54.

<sup>16</sup>Osita Agbu, "External Pressure and the Quest for Democracy in Nigeria, Nigerian Journal of Internal Affairs," Vol. 22, No. 1 and 2 (1996) 1-6

<sup>17</sup>Hassan A. Salii, "Essays on Contemporary Nigerian Foreign Policy," Volume 1 ... 23.

<sup>18</sup>Richard L. Sklar, "Nigeria during the Abacha Year (1993-1998). An Elusive Target; Nigeria Fends off Sanctions. . .

<sup>19</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Obasanjo's Foreign Policy under Democratic Rule; Nigeria's Return to Global Reckoning?* *Nigeria Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (2000) 20-40.



- <sup>20</sup>Tunde Babawale & Hassan Saliu, "Trends in Nigeria's Foreign Policy and the Challenges of the 1990s". *Nigerian Forum, a Journal of Opinion on World Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 11 & 12, (1996) 219 – 226.
- <sup>21</sup>Cletus Okolodor, "International Relations and the Structures of Nigeria's Foreign Service: The Thrust Towards a Viable Foreign Policy," *Nigerian Forum, a Journal of Opinion on World Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 3 & 4, (2005) 99-120.
- <sup>22</sup>Osita Agbu, "External Pressure and the Quest for Democracy in Nigeria ... 1-16
- <sup>23</sup>Tayo Odunlami, "Africa: Traced to Mandela." Last modified 15 January 2001 <http://allafrica.com/stories/2001011501.html>.
- <sup>24</sup>Free Online Library, "Reflection on Nigeria's Foreign Policy, 1960-2007." Accessed 7 October 2013 <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/reflections+on+Nigeria's+foreign+policy.-a031443206>.
- <sup>25</sup>Osita Agbu, "External Pressure and the Quest for Democracy in Nigeria ... 1-16
- <sup>26</sup>Osita Agbu, "External Pressure and the Quest for Democracy in Nigeria ... 1-16
- <sup>26</sup>Ogaba Oche, "Nigeria's International Image, *Nigerian Forum, a Journal of Opinion on World Affairs*, Vol. 18 No. 4 & 5 (1997), 76-79.
- <sup>27</sup>Ogaba Oche, "Nigeria's International Image ... 76-79.
- <sup>28</sup>Isiaka Badmus and Dele Ogunmola, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy under General Abdulsalami Abubakar, *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 1 & 2 (2003) 381-392.
- <sup>29</sup>Tim Sullivan, "Nigeria's Military Ruler Pushes Reforms, New Role in World Community" Modified 1 October 1995. <http://business.highbeam.com/62734/article-lpI-19476648/nigeria-military-rule-pushes-reforms-new-role-world>.
- <sup>30</sup>Tim Sullivan, "Nigeria's Military Ruler Pushes Reforms, New Role in World Community ...
- <sup>31</sup>Solomon O. Akinboye, "From Confrontation to Strategic Partnership: Nigeria's Relations with South Africa, 1960-2000," in U. Joy Ogbu (ed.) *New Horizons for Nigeria in World Affairs* (Lagos: NIIA; 2005), 217.
- <sup>32</sup>The Guardian Newspaper, "Recalled Envoys and Nigeria's Foreign Policy" The Guardian Newspaper, Monday, 12 July 1999, 16
- <sup>33</sup>Isiaka Badmus and Dele Ogunmola, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy under General Abdulsalami Abubakar ... 381-391
- <sup>34</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years*, (Abuja: NEEW Consult, 2003), 319.
- <sup>35</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years*. ... 319.
- <sup>36</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years*. ... 319.
- <sup>37</sup>Tunji Oseni, "Why those Foreign Trips?" Sunday Times, Sunday, 28 April 2002.
- <sup>38</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years* ... 320.
- <sup>39</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years* ... 320.
- <sup>40</sup>Julie Sanda, "Peace Making in Nigeria's Foreign Policy: 1999-2003", in Bola Akinterinwa, (ed.) *Nigeria's New Foreign Policy Thrust: Essays in Honour of Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniyi* (Ibadan; Vantage Publishers Ltd., 2012), 276.
- <sup>41</sup>Funso Omotoso, *Image of President Obasanjo's Peace and Reconciliation Activities in Africa*, (Ibadan: Netview Books; 2007), 74.
- <sup>42</sup>Bulus N. Audu, "Impact of Nigeria's Foreign Relations on the Armed Forces, 1990-2007," M. A Project, History Department, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, 2009.
- <sup>43</sup>Hassan Saliu & J. S Omotola, "Nigerian Foreign Policy Under Obasanjo," in Hassan Saliu, (ed.) *Nigeria Under Democratic Rule, 1999-2003* (Ibadan; University Press Plc.; 2005), 248
- <sup>44</sup>David Ugolor, "Global Debt Relief Movement and the Campaign for Debt Relief for Nigeria," in U. Joy Ogbu & W.O. Alli, (eds.) *Debt Relief and Nigeria's Diplomacy* (Lagos: NIIA; 2006), 229.
- <sup>45</sup>Osita Agbu, "Nigeria Civil Society and the Debt Relief Campaign," in U. Joy Ogbu & W. O. Alli, (eds.) *Debt Relief and Nigeria's Diplomacy* (Lagos; NIIA; 2006), 217.
- <sup>46</sup>Arthur Oboyuwana, "Nigeria and the World" The Guardian Newspaper, Thursday, 13 April 2000, 8
- <sup>47</sup>W. Alade Fawole, *Obasanjo's Foreign Policy under Democratic Rule; Nigeria's Return to Global Reckoning?* ... 20-41
- <sup>48</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years* ... 342.
- <sup>49</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years* ... 323.
- <sup>50</sup>Leadership Editors, "Liberia's President Sir Leaf Hails Obasanjo Over Democracy", last Modified 6 March 2012. [http://Leadership.ng/nga/articles/18355/2012/03/06/liberias\\_president\\_SirLeaf\\_hails\\_Obasanjo\\_over\\_democracy.html](http://Leadership.ng/nga/articles/18355/2012/03/06/liberias_president_SirLeaf_hails_Obasanjo_over_democracy.html)
- <sup>51</sup>Greg Mbadiwe, *Nigeria's Foreign Relations in the Obasanjo-Atiku Years* ... 322.
- <sup>52</sup>Hussaini Yarima, 44, Politician, PDP National Secretariat, Abuja. 20 May 2014
- <sup>53</sup>Mike O. Odey and Terna P. Agba, "Poverty and Democratic Instability in Nigeria Since 1999," in Terhamba Wuam and Talla Ngarka Sunday, (eds.) *Governance and Economic Development in the Fourth Republic* (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers; 2010)

### 3. Nigeria's Diplomatic Relations with Some African Countries: 1999-2003

Chapter three discussed Nigeria's diplomatic moves in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe and some other countries in Africa. The major issue discussed in this section is Nigeria's peace keeping operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The diplomatic steps taken by Obasanjo to resolve crises in Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo were also discussed in this chapter. It investigated the extent to which Nigeria's involvement in peace keeping operations and conflict resolutions helped the country to achieve her national interests. Also, it has been pointed out in this chapter that Nigeria should reduce her *big brother role* in Africa and focus more on how to achieve the various national interests such as national security and economic growth and development in order to enhance the citizens' standard of living.

#### 3.1. Obasanjo's Diplomatic Strategies in the Intervention of Crisis in Sierra Leone

The internecine war between the national government, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and the other splinter groups in Sierra Leone to control the mineral-rich regions of the country, particularly the diamond-bearing areas,<sup>1</sup> attracted the attention of Nigerian government long before Obasanjo was elected as civilian president. The war started in 1991.

In May 1996, Tejan Kabbah, leader of the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP) was elected and sworn-in as President of Sierra Leone. Foday Sankoh, the head of RUF did not recognize the legitimacy of Kabbah's government. Sankoh had external assistance from National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) headed by Charles Taylor; while the crisis continued, series of peace meetings continued to take place between Kabbah and Sankoh. On one occasion, Sankoh was allegedly lured by some Nigerian officials to visit the Nigerian Head of state. But upon his arrival at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport Lagos, he was arrested and detained and placed under house arrest in Nigeria for alleged possession of arms.<sup>2</sup> However, Johnny Paul Koromah successfully led an assault and succeeded in expelling Kabbah from the presidential palace in May 1997 through a military coup. Kabbah was however lucky to escape to Lungi International Airport with the help of a detachment of Nigerian troops deployed at the presidential palace.<sup>3</sup>

General Abacha in February 1998 launched a blustering military junta into that country to unseat the recalcitrant military junta. According to Kolawole, "the regime spearheaded the restoration to power of the toppled administration of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah in Sierra Leone."<sup>4</sup> Abacha was very powerful in the West African sub-region due to the operations of ECOMOG. Although launched under the ECOWAS platform, it was almost a totally Nigerian affair because the force was made up primarily although not exclusively of Nigerian soldiers. Though the hated military junta of Koromah and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) allies were driven out of the capital Freetown, the retreating soldiers and rebels simply took over the rest of the country side; especially the valuable diamond mines and forests and resorted to wide plunder of national resources.<sup>5</sup> At the peak of the operations, ECOMOG<sup>6</sup> had 13,000 troops mostly Nigerians who conducted both peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations in Sierra Leone<sup>7</sup> Nigeria spent billions of dollars in the operation that also claimed many lives.

Abacha administration towed the extravagant line of his predecessor in the implementation of good neighbour policy. In an attempt to gain international recognition as the pillar of sub-regional stability, the Abacha regime expended billions of naira in sponsoring ECOMOG peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone and other troubled nations in West Africa. So engrossed was Nigeria in this extravagant show of good neighbourliness, that ECOMOG at a time, was being equated with the Nigerian Army.<sup>8</sup> The Nigeria's military operation in Sierra Leone was estimated as costing Nigeria about \$1 million per day.<sup>9</sup> President Obasanjo revealed in November 1999 that Nigeria had spent about \$8 billion on the entire ECOMOG operations from 1990.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Obasanjo needed to take a drastic step to prevent further outrageous expenses on peacekeeping operations especially in Sierra Leone.

Within the first three months of Obasanjo administration, it was clear that he had an exit strategy for Nigerian troops in Sierra Leone. Some thousands of Nigerian troops, sent in by Abacha, had been bogged in operations against RUF-AFRC rebels.<sup>11</sup> His strategy included involving the UNO in order to reduce the financial and personnel burden on Nigeria. This could be seen in a statement attributed to Obasanjo through Sule Lamido, his Foreign Affairs Minister, let me state clearly that Nigeria has had difficulty sustaining the advantages of its bold leadership enterprise in Liberia and Sierra Leone because the country lacks the industrial and capital assets required to reinforce its significant contribution towards the establishment of peace and security in this arena.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, Obasanjo threatened to pull Nigeria's troops out of Sierra Leone unless the UN took over the sponsorship of the peace-keeping force. The fundamental explanation is the underdevelopment of the economies of the ECOWAS member countries, while the will and purpose were in place, the means on the other hand were grossly inadequate.<sup>13</sup>

The need to resolve the crisis and relieve Nigeria of its burden is perhaps among the major reasons why diplomatic moves were taken to ensure that Lome Peace Accords was signed on 2 July 1999 between the government of Tejan Kabbah and the RUF rebel led by Feday Sankoh. A deal facilitated by ECOWAS and witnessed by Olusegun Obasanjo and some other West African leaders<sup>14</sup>. And as expected, Nigeria announced its programme to withdraw about, 12,000 of its troops over a six month period, 2000 troops monthly, leaving only 1,000 troops for the planned disarmament programme. It was in the wake of this far reaching shift in the foreign relations of Nigeria that the UN woke up to the responsibility of facilitating the implementation of the peace agreement.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, on 22 October 1999, the UN Security Council authorized the establishment of United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) via Security Council Resolution 1270. It was established to have a maximum of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers to assist the government and parties in carrying out provisions of the Lome Peace agreement.<sup>16</sup> The UN Security Council kept on increasing the number of military personnel as the RUF began its systematic violation of the Lome Peace Accords by abducting and holding hostage about 34 people, among them were members of the UNAMSIL, Nigerian soldiers, British Military Personnel and Journalists.<sup>17</sup> The Security Council finally increased the numerical strength of UNAMSIL to 17,500 on 30 March 2001.<sup>18</sup> However, under the arrangement, the ECOMOG force remained the hub of the UN operation, but the UN was responsible for the funding of the entire operation. Nigeria, leader of ECOMOG also served as chairman of the UN peace committee for Sierra Leone.<sup>19</sup> Sule Lamido, then foreign Affairs Minister to Nigeria seemed to have foreseen the end of the war shortly after the establishment of UNAMSIL, mission in Sierra Leone, he said

I assure you that UNAMSIL is more than equipped, I assure you that the desire for peace is very, very paramount to both the rebels and the government of Paul Koromah. Once they see a structure which enables internal reconciliation and forgiveness, they will accept.<sup>20</sup>

The Nigerian government under Obasanjo displayed serious commitment in the resolution of crisis in Sierra Leone. Even with the virtual collapse of the Accord in June, 2000, the Obasanjo administration continued as a facilitator of peace by volunteering a deployment of Nigerian troops to Sierra Leone to prevent the catastrophic collapse of the Accord and the resulting slide, once again, into the anarchy of a civil war; provided the UN was prepared to bear financial responsibility for the deployment and maintenance of those troops.<sup>21</sup> This decision taken by Obasanjo was a contradiction to his earlier decision of withdrawing Nigerian troops from Sierra Leone, which actually started on 1 September 1999 with the initial withdrawal of 2,000 troops as promised.<sup>22</sup> It is an indication that the only reason for withdrawal of Nigerian troops from Sierra Leone was the financial burden and not the safety of the troops.

It is hoped that a valuable lesson, has been learned, that Nigeria may be more cautious in its effort at regional peace-keeping and conflict management. Secondly, Africans must come to terms with the antics of a global community that has scant interest in dealing with Africa's internal problems.<sup>23</sup> Nigeria should also consider the well-being of her citizens first before any diplomatic step is taken. Obasanjo tried in his citizen diplomacy in the course of peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone, but his best was not good enough.

### *3.2. Nigeria's Diplomatic Moves in Handling the Second Phase of the Liberian Crisis*

During the first phase of Liberian crisis from 1989 to 1997, Nigeria recorded impressive performance of its acclaimed leadership status in Africa. The need for some kind of peacekeeping mechanism was necessitated by the political stalemate resulting from misrule of Samuel Doe and an insurgent revolt against it by Charles Taylor and other claimants to the leadership of Liberia.<sup>24</sup> Despite Doe's death, the situation had by the mid-1990s crystallized into a stalemate between the remnant of Doe's troops and the two factions of the rebels: Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Yormic Johnson's Independent Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL).<sup>25</sup> Johnson was initially part of the NPFL before he formed guerrilla force. It should be recalled that it was Yormic Johnson's rebel faction that killed Samuel Doe on 9 September 1990.<sup>26</sup> Taylor's NPFL also had special forces who were sent on loan to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) that caused the civil war in Sierra Leone in the Same 1990s.<sup>27</sup> The conflict in Sierra Leone was even to a large extent an extension of the Liberian crisis.<sup>28</sup>

By August 1990, the civil war in Liberia had claimed about 5000 lives and turned an additional 1 million Liberians, almost one-half of the country's population into refugees. Consequently, the machinery for (establishment of ECOMOG was put in motion at the instance of Nigeria at the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Authority of Heads of state and Government which met in Banjul, Gambia in May 1990.<sup>29</sup> According to Michelle Pitts Nigeria claimed that the country's ECOMOG costs in Liberia exceeded \$4 billion. Also, Nigeria supplied the bulk of the troops and equipment. Many of the members of ECOWAS did not have substantial military resources to commit, and Nigeria, with the largest military in the region was able to contribute the needed military resources. From the onset of the mission in 1990, the Nigerian troops accounted for at least 70 percent of the ECOMOG force.<sup>30</sup> of the initial 3,000 ECOMOG troops that landed in Monrovia, about 1,375 were Nigerians.<sup>31</sup> Again when the numerical strength of ECOMOG troops was raised to 8,430 in 1995, Nigeria contributed 4,908, Ghana-1,027 Guinea-690, Sierra Leone-359, Mall-10 and Gambia - 10;<sup>32</sup> the remaining number of troops came from outside West Africa (Tanzania and Uganda)<sup>33</sup> October 1999 saw the final withdrawal from Liberia of the ECOMOG peacekeeping force. Although ECOMOG peacekeeping, role ended in February 1998 but a contingent of 5000 remained deployed for a 'capacity building' role, helping to train the new Liberian security force and maintain order. Withdrawals of the remaining troops commenced in January 1999 after disputes between ECOMOG and Taylor who was elected as Liberian president in 1997. The dispute was as a result of the way the ECOMOG soldiers were treated by Liberian forces.<sup>34</sup> Shortly after the withdrawal, the second phase of the Liberian war broke out in full scale.

The second phase of the Liberian civil war began in 1999 when a rebel group backed by the government of neighbouring Guinea, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), emerged in northern Liberia. In early 2003, the movement for Democracy in Liberia emerged in the south, and by June/July 2003, Charles Taylor's government controlled only a third of the country; Monrovia appeared to be in danger of being occupied and devastated. Therefore, Taylor resigned on 11 August 2003 and was flown into exile in Nigeria. The argument and misunderstanding between Taylor and Nigerian regimes of Babangida and Abacha that controlled ECOMOG changed during Obasanjo's reign. Before Taylor's resignation, the partnership between Monrovia and Abuja became stronger, buttressed by Taylor's frequent visits to consult 'Big Brother' (his flattering reference to Obasanjo) while he subjected his immediate neighbours to horrors.<sup>35</sup>

ECOWAS started a second peacekeeping operation in Liberia from 9 September 2003, ECOMIL was formed for the operation which started with the deployment of 3,563 troops from Nigeria, Benin, Gambia, Togo, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Senegal under force commander, Brigadier General Festus Okonkwo. ECOMIL was policing Liberian cities of Monrovia and Buchanan, while the rural areas remained uncontrolled.<sup>36</sup> The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established by Security Council on 19 September 2003 to support humanitarian and human rights activities as well as assist in national security reform.<sup>37</sup> The UNMIL took over peacekeeping operations from the ECOWAS vanguard force, ECOWAS mission in Liberia (ECOMIL), on 1 October 2003.<sup>38</sup> In November 2005, Liberia held a successful democratic election under the auspices of the UN. The following January, Ellen Johnson - Sir leaf assumed the presidency of Liberia as Africa's first woman head of state and she quickly called for Taylor's arrest and handover to the special court.<sup>39</sup> Currently, UNMIL military units are carrying out all Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) activities in Liberia. The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon has recommended the reduction of 4,200 military personnel by July 2015 as part of the UNMIL transition plane.<sup>40</sup>

The granting of Asylum to Charles Taylor by Olusegun Obasanjo from 2003 to 2006 generated a lot of controversies within and outside Nigeria. It was pointed out that two Nigerian journalists, Christopher Imodibe of the Guardian and Tayo Awotusin of the Champion Newspaper were starved to death by the Charles Taylor's led NPFL in January 1991. Taylor blamed the murders on a 'rebel within the NPFL'.<sup>41</sup> According to the reaction from Ogbeni Lanre Banjo,

I am proud that even though the administration of Obasanjo is deservedly wicked to Nigerians, it is able to intervene with the view to stop the fratricidal killings, pogroms and genocide in Liberia. However, the spirit of those innocent Nigerians, especially the journalists ordered to be tortured and killed by Charles Taylor would never pray for anyone giving him a red welcome.<sup>42</sup>

It is ironic that Charles Taylor who had killed humiliated and taken Nigerian civilians and soldiers hostage flew into Nigeria for safety.<sup>43</sup> The pathetic report about the two journalists who lost their lives in the hands of NPFL rebels indicates that the journalists were tortured and flogged twice a day, morning and evening and were denied food, water and open air until they died.<sup>44</sup> However, Taylor denied the killing of the two Nigerian journalists in Liberia, saying he didn't order the killings and his government sent emissary to the families of the journalists to condole with them and that he also ensured that their killer, in the person of colonel Putu Major was executed.<sup>45</sup> In Taylors words *"Two Nigerian journalists were killed by a colonel of a then NPFL, by the name of 'Putu Major'. Putu Major was arrested, he was court Marshalled, tried and executed for the killing of these two journalists."*<sup>46</sup> As the founder and leader of NPFL, Taylor's strategy of exonerating

himself is hard to believe. Many Nigerians and members of the international community wanted the extradition of Charles Taylor so that he could go and face the charges against him at the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). And as stated earlier, Nigerian government under Obasanjo contributed the sum of \$100,000 for the take-off of that Special Court project. Balarabe Musa asserts that it was conspiracy between Nigeria and America to bring Taylor to Nigeria.<sup>47</sup> But the so-called conspiracy seemed not to be properly played out when the US congress demanded that Nigeria should hand over Taylor for trial by a war crimes tribunal.

Olusegun Obasanjo made it clear that the international community played a critical role in the decision taken by Nigerian government to grant asylum to Taylor. In his reaction to calls from US congress for the extradition of Taylor, Obasanjo noted that the US Secretary of State General Collin Powel Played a key role in achieving the international understanding under which Taylor came to Nigeria. In Obasanjo's word, Collin and I worked together to prevent a bloodbath in Liberia ... in coming to the decision to ease him out, we were mindful of our duty and responsibility to humanity, the people of Liberia and West Africa.<sup>48</sup>

And Powel made a remark that Nigeria should not be harassed because he was aware that the international community asked Nigeria to grant asylum to Taylor in order to save Liberia from further bloodshed. While trying to explain to some observers and commentators who felt that Nigeria should not have given asylum to Taylor, Bolaji Akinyemi said leaders within the international community who negotiated that Taylor should be given asylum are not fools, "There must have been a reason. My speculation is that it may have to do with the attempt by the Special Court in Sierra Leone to arrest Taylor".<sup>49</sup> African leaders were trying to avoid setting a precedent that a sitting president can be arrested in Africa<sup>50</sup>. Therefore, they joined forces with Western World especially US to mount pressure on Taylor to resign and leave Liberia; and because of the military strength of Nigeria in Africa, the conspirators considered the country to be the best place where Taylor could be arrested for prosecution after the 'arranged' asylum.

President Obasanjo had earlier stated that he would deliver Taylor to Liberia at the request of the president of Liberia. On 17 March 2006, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the newly elected president of Liberia, submitted an official request to Nigeria for Taylor's extradition. Obasanjo responded to the request on 25 March 2006 when he announced the decision of Nigerian government to release Charles Taylor, he said Liberian government was free to take Taylor away. Then the former Liberian president suddenly disappeared from where he was staying in Calabar.<sup>51</sup> This happened when Obasanjo was on his way to the US. It was reported that Obasanjo declared him wanted. Then, equally suddenly, the Nigerian government announced that Taylor was arrested for trying to escape. He was captured in northern Nigeria on the border with Cameroon, allegedly with huge sacks of cash<sup>52</sup>. Meanwhile, Taylor called Obasanjo a liar for saying that the former made attempt to escape. According to Taylor,

He lied to the world when he said I was escaping, and he knew nothing about it; Obasanjo knew that I was travelling; where I was going to, and when. He had invited me at the airport in Abuja; he informed me that he was on his way to the US to meet with George Bush ... He had said to me that I could go to where I wanted to go and when he gets back, he would inform me and I could return.<sup>53</sup>

Objectively, one would say that the decision of Obasanjo to announce the release of Taylor shortly before travelling to the United States and the subsequent case of Taylor's 'escape' and recapture could be as a result of pressure from the United states and other members of the international community. And Taylor would not have return to Nigeria if he had succeeded in Crossing Nigerian border.

The government of Nigeria's decision to grant asylum to Charles Taylor was one of the most controversial issues of contemporary politics.<sup>54</sup> However, from the way it was played out, Obasanjo's diplomatic strategies greatly helped in the restoration of peace in Liberia. The Nigerian senate president during that period, Senator Adolphus Wabara applauded the diplomatic effort of Obasanjo over the asylum, "it projects us as a benign kind of regional power. It frames us a power not desperate to dominate its region, but one keen on peace stability, democracy, and development at home and abroad."<sup>55</sup> In appreciation of Obasanjo's effort in the restoration of peace in West Africa, especially Liberia and Sierra Leone, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says

We (including president Ernest Koroma of Sierra Leone who was in attendance) are here on behalf of West African leadership to honour him for the leadership he has exhibited ... we honour him for the peace that reigns in our countries; his courage and commitment where there was no one else there.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.3. Nigeria's Diplomatic Steps towards Resolving Conflict in Sao Tome and Principe

In July 2003, President Fradique de Menezes of Sao Tome and Principe was in Nigeria when coup d'etat was plotted against him. Shortly after the coup, the coup leader, Major Fernando Pereira told Portuguese radio that he would hold early elections and did not want to remain in power. The rebels said they acted to end poverty, although analysts say it is no coincidence that the country is expecting a financial windfall from offshore oil fields<sup>57</sup>. The coup took place on Wednesday 16 July when gunshots, exploding rockets and grenades were heard in the capital, Sao Tome. The rebels took control of government buildings, state TV radio, the central bank and the airport. They also seized key officials of the government including Prime Minister, Maria das Neves and Natural Resources Minister Rafael Branco.<sup>58</sup>

Mozambique's President Joaquim Chissano who was equally the Chairman of African Union quickly ran to President Obasanjo for talks on possible military intervention to restore the ousted government. The increasing regional and international importance of the Sao Tome as a new oil producing country and the need to maintain peace and promote democracy in Africa Made Obasanjo to swing into action with immediate effect.<sup>59</sup> As parties of the Joint Development Zone Treaty signed on 21 February 2001 between Nigeria and Sao Tome, both countries are to share the huge offshore oil reserves at their maritime border. The agreement states that 60% of the resources belongs to Nigeria while 40% belongs to Sao Tome

and Principe.<sup>60</sup> That is, the revenue derived from the exploration of oil at the Maritime border is where that share should come from.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, Obasanjo's intervention over the coup d'état in Sao Tome was not a purposeless adventure.

The coup plotters made a costly mistake by carrying out their action when President de Menezes was in Nigeria. It was obviously a slight on Nigeria's big brother image in Africa for them to have carried out the coup when President de Menezes was a guest of Obasanjo at the sixth Leon Sullivan Summit taking place in Abuja.<sup>62</sup> Within hours of staging the coup d'état, Obasanjo swiftly sent an unambiguous message to the plotters: "*relinquish power or be overpowered militarily in the spirit of African union.*"<sup>63</sup> It was the following day that the President of Mozambique flew to Abuja to also communicate his support for military action when necessary.<sup>64</sup> The coup plotters settled for a dialogue which finally led to the return of Menezes to his country as President. Delegations from AU, regional power-Nigeria, the community of Portuguese speaking countries, and the Economic Community of Central African States participated in the dialogue.<sup>65</sup>

On 23 July, Menezes returned to the Island after the coup leaders gave in to the demand of Obasanjo and other international mediators. Menezes was flown to Sao Tome in a Nigerian air craft that was said to carry Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo, accompanying him.<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile, the coup leader described the coup as a 'wake up call' for the 'criminal government'.<sup>67</sup> Bolaji Akinyemi posits thus;

I don't particularly see the restoration of the president as a license to any Head of State to behave in whatever way he feels like because if anything happens to him, his colleagues will rally round him to restore him.<sup>68</sup>

However, Akinyemi admits that the restoration of De Menezes as President of Sao Tome is another success story of Obasanjo's regime.<sup>69</sup> Unlike the case of Nigeria's diplomatic moves for the restoration of peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone which cost the country huge amount of money, Nigeria achieved success in restoring peace and democracy in Sao Tome without much costs financially and militarily.

At this juncture, it is important to point that in addition to the already analyzed diplomatic moves of Obasanjo in Africa, especially on the aspect of peace and conflict resolution, his administration was involved in the resolution of crises in Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Sudan and some other countries. In Cote d'Ivoire, the military take-over of government led to bloody clashes which became very dangerous from December 1999. Post-election violence which resulted after Laurent Gbagbo was declared as president became worse. Therefore, Obasanjo stood tall under the umbrella of ECOWAS and made a laudable attribution. He was also among the ten Head of State of the OAU Committee of Ten, who visited Cote d'Ivoire on 25 September 2000 on account of conflict resolution and restoration of peace.<sup>70</sup> In Togo, Obasanjo being the Chairman of AU and a strong decision maker within ECOWAS region played a leading role in the resolution of 2005 political crisis which claimed many lives. He told Faure Eyadema who took over the government of Togo after the death of his father (Gnassingbe Eyadema) to step down and obey the country's constitution by allowing the speaker of the parliament to take over and conduct election with sixty days. Faure Eyadema yielded to the pressure from Nigeria and other members of the international community by stepping down. He contested the election and won. This brought an end to the 2005 maiming and arson in Togo. And Sudan was not left out. Nigerian soldiers were among the troops of African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) sent to Darfur around June 2005. Nigeria sent about 150 soldiers.

The Nigerian government under the administration of Obasanjo kept contributing to the peacekeeping operation even when series of Nigerian soldiers were dying in the process.<sup>71</sup> Most of the fallen Nigerian soldiers were enduring the harsh conditions in Janjaweed terrain in Sudan.<sup>72</sup> Nigerian government really spent money and endangered the lives of her citizens in the course of the operations.<sup>73</sup> However, despite all the achievements of Obasanjo in the course of his diplomatic moves in Africa, his administration seemed not to have set the country's priority right in the area of peacekeeping. In the spirit of African brotherhood, we do a lot of things to the detriment of our nation. Both civilians and military personnel in most of the countries where Nigeria performed peacekeeping operations paid the price. The peace-keeping operation could be seen as a futile exercise as far as the economy of Nigeria is concerned.<sup>74</sup> Those countries benefitted to the detriment of Nigeria. Some Nigerian citizens were amputated in Sierra Leone and Liberia while some died.

However, the excessive spending on peacekeeping was reduced during Obasanjo administration, but the foreign policy did not fully consider the safety of Nigerian citizens. There is still apparent disconnect between national interest and Nigeria-African relations. The nation seemed to have contributed so much towards the development of many African nations without corresponding positive outcome that can be beneficial to the nation. Our generosity abroad and penury at home before and after Obasanjo second era demonstrates that all is not well with the country's foreign policy. Since 1999 when Nigeria transitioned to democracy, it seems that the country is yet to enjoy democratic peace as poverty and underdevelopment abound.<sup>75</sup> Available records show that the poverty level in the country since 1999 has risen to about 90 million Nigerians of the over 140 million Nigerians.<sup>76</sup> Nigeria's deep involvement in African affairs which has cost the country huge financial and human resources is part of what contributed to the case of poverty in the country. Even the loss of Bakassi to Cameroon was as a result of the so-called big brother role that Nigeria played in Africa during Obasanjo civilian administration. Hence, Nigeria's foreign policy can properly become part of the instruments that can improve the citizens' standard of living if the nation's foreign policy is centred on citizens. Nigeria should be able to protect the constitutional interests of her citizens both at home and abroad. And on the other hand, Nigerians should protect the nation's integrity both within and outside the country. This among other things can help to project the good image of the country in the comity of nations.

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#### 4. The Judgment of International Court on Bakassi in 2002

The historical context of Bakassi crisis which can be traced to the colonial era and the poor handling of the case at the international court which led to the ceding of Bakassi to Cameroon were discussed in this chapter. The controversial decision which was taken by Obasanjo to cede Bakassi to Cameroon in compliance with the ICJ verdict is also part of the issues addressed in this chapter. Data drawn from oral interviews indicates that most Nigerians see Obasanjo's decision with regards to the ceding of Bakassi as hasty. After the judgment of the international court in 2002, Obasanjo should have allowed Nigeria to continue with diplomatic strategies on how best to react to the judgment since Nigeria was given the timeframe of ten years within which the nation could react to the judgment. His hasty decision demonstrates the extent to which he neglected the core national interest which is protection of citizens and territorial boundaries. It has also been argued in this work that some historians should have been part of Nigerian Defence team in order to help the team present facts about the disputed territory.

##### 4.1. The Historical Context of Bakassi Crisis and the Poor Handling of the Case at the ICJ

The Bakassi crisis is related, but not limited, to the outcome of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 in which some of the European Powers carved out the region in a Zigzag fashion with little or no concern for the ethnic complexity of the societies.<sup>1</sup> It all started when the Obong of Calabar signed a "Treaty of Protection", with Britain on September 10, 1884; Britain agreed to "extend its protection" to the Obong and his Chiefs. Hence, the Obong of Calabar was deceived to sign away his kingdom just the same way many other African kings signed away their territories to some European powers who came to them with deceit.<sup>2</sup> In 1913, Britain (for the colonies of "Southern" and "Northern" Nigeria) and Germany (for "Kamerun") reached an agreement on their border from Yola to the Sea. The first agreement was signed in London on 11 March 1913 titled: '(1) The settlement of the frontier between Nigeria and Cameroons, from Yola to the Sea (2) the Regulation of Navigation on the Cross River". The second was signed at Obokum on 12 April 1913 by Hans Detzner, representing Germany, and W.V Nugent, representing Britain.<sup>3</sup> in the "memorandum of agreement between the government of Great Britain and Germany for the separation and definition of distinct sphere of action in Africa", the two imperial powers agreed that the boundary between the British Spheres of influence and that of Germany in the Nigeria-Cameroon area was the Rio-del-Rey. That is, their international boundary was the line running through the right bank of River Rio-del-Rey.<sup>4</sup> The boundary case became more complex following the treaty of Versailles in 1919 through which the German territory of kamerun was divided between French and Britain. It was in line with the league of Nation's mandate. The British mandate comprised Northern and Southern Cameroon and were ruled directly from Nigeria though they were not legally and politically speaking, territorial part of Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> But even the treaty of 1919 like the Cession Treaty of Lagos of 1861 is illegal in every material particular. The native whose landed property were seized or confiscated were not involved in the 'negotiations'.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the earlier agreement between Great Britain and Germany in 1913 is not legal because the kings and chiefs of Old Calabar were not consulted;<sup>7</sup> secondly, the Anglo-German treaty of 1913 was neither ratified by an Act of parliament as provided for by the British system nor was it assented to by the German Houses of Parliament as it was the practice. Worst still the 1913 treaty lapsed when Germany lost the first World War.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the France British Declaration of 10 July 1919 by Viscount Muner, the British Secretary of State for the colonies, and Henry Simon, the French Minister for the colonies<sup>9</sup> was not on a solid foundation.

After the second World War in which Native Nigerians also fought for Britain, the British and French league of Nations mandates over the Southern and Northern Cameroons and Cameroon were replaced by trusteeship agreements under the new United Nations-approved by the General Assembly on 13 December 1946. Just like before that time, Maps of Nigeria still put Bakassi peninsula in the British Cameroons. Britain divided the British Cameroons into "Northern Cameroons" and "Southern Cameroons" on 2 August 1946, the two regions were administered from colonial Nigeria-but not part of it. However, in March 1959, the UN asked Britain to clarify the wishes of the people living in Northern and Southern Cameroons trusteeship territories in the run up to the 'Independence' of Nigeria and Cameroon.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, on 11 and 12 February 1961, the United Nations Conducted a plebiscite in British administered trust territory of Southern Cameroon to enable the people of the area through democratic norms to decide whether they wanted to remain within

independent Nigeria or join the French administered east Cameroon.<sup>11</sup> Nowa Omoigui posits that during the plebiscite of 1961, 21 polling stations were physically located in the Bakassi peninsula. UN records clearly show that approximately 73% of the people living there at that time voted not to be administered under independent Nigeria.<sup>12</sup> That is, a preponderant population of the Cameroonians residing there voted to join Cameroon. Thus, from the Tafawa Balewa administration through General Aguiyi Ironsi to the end of the Nigerian Civil War, Bakassi was administered as part of Cameroon. But the colonial masters did not clarify the maritime boundaries and the navigable portion of the Calabar estuary.<sup>13</sup>

By the year 1970, there were moves and thoughts to clarify and define the maritime border which was vaguely defined by the 1913 Anglo-German Treaty. Yet, Bakassi peninsula was still in Cameroon; but the offshore boundary was not clear. And this was due to the absence of a detailed demarcation of the “navigable portion” of the approach channel to the Calabar Estuary.<sup>14</sup> And it should be noted that from 12-14 August 1970, there was a Nigerian – Cameroon Joint Boundary Commission put in place to clarify the boundary issue. It accepts the Anglo-German Agreement as its reference point. The Head of State of Nigeria then consulted the Attorney-General of the Federation then, in the person of Teslim Elias. He therefore advised the Gowon led government that

Nigeria had no legal basis for contesting the Bakassi peninsula but that work to delimit the offshore boundary and vague sections of the land boundary should proceed at full speed in accordance with the original Anglo-German treaty of 1913.<sup>15</sup>

It would have been better for the Attorney-General to question the legal status of the so-called Anglo-German Treaty of 1913 when he was given the opportunity to advise the government.

During the meeting of the Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Commission, which was opened by the Nigerian Ambassador as well as the Cameroon Foreign minister, it was agreed that the boundary issues should be handled by experts from the surveys, fisheries, navy, justice, external affairs, cabinet office and other related departments of both countries. Olufemi George was part of the members of the Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Commission who were directly involved in handling Bakassi issues.<sup>16</sup> The most senior Nigerian civil servant present who thus led the delegation was Chief R. Oluwole Coker, Director of Federal Surveys.<sup>17</sup> Hence, Chief Oluwole Coker along with Mr. Ngo of Cameroon, decided the offshore line in 1971 as boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon.<sup>18</sup> It is popularly called Coker – Ngo line. The issue was however tough before the parties finally reached conclusion. For instance, the October 1970 joint meetings of the Committee of experts from Nigeria and Cameroon was so tough that it ended with no agreement on how to define the ‘navigable channel’ of the Akpa Yafe River up to where it joins the Calabar estuary.<sup>19</sup> However, there was a summit meeting of General Gowon of Nigeria and Alhaji Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon in Yaounde. It was at this meeting that Gowon and Ahidjo agreed to define the navigable channel of the Akpa Yafe River up to point 12. Nowa Omoigui posits that when Ahidjo asked his Cameroonian survey expert to stop arguing and told Gowon to draw the line when he wanted it, Gowon turned to his own technical expert for guidance. The expert marked a point on the map and Gowon drew the line towards that point. Unfortunately, the line Gowon drew (on direct advice from the Director of Federal Surveys) was not the true navigable channel of the Akpa Yafe River. The line criss-crossed the navigable channels of the Calabar and Cross Rivers which the British had intended (with German agreement) to be completely on the Nigerian side, west of the Akpa Yafe Channel.<sup>20</sup> This perhaps explain the reason why it has been widely argued that Gowon contributed to the loss of Nigerian territory in Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon.

On 1 June 1975, Gowon and Ahidjo signed the Maroua Declaration for the extension of the 1971 maritime boundary. However, when Muritala Mohammed overthrew Gowon on 29 July 1975, he discredited Gowon’s Foreign policy by accusing him of giving out Bakassi cheaply to Cameroon<sup>21</sup>. It has been argued that Gowon reached an agreement with President Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon requesting the latter to close the maritime borders where the Biafran soldiers obtained their supplies; and in exchange, a portion of Nigerian maritime territory was not only ceded to Cameroon, Bakassi Peninsula was also officially recognized by Nigerian government as part of Cameroonian territory by virtue of the Yaounde Declaration of 4 April 1971 and Maroua Declaration of 1 June 1975<sup>22</sup>. This generated tension between Nigeria and Cameroon. However, successive administration in Nigeria did not muster up the political will to resolve the crisis until it snowballed into a conflict that has attracted world attention.<sup>23</sup> In 1981, both countries were at the brink of war over the Peninsula and the areas around Lake Chad.<sup>24</sup>

Due to the lingering crisis, Cameroon asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1994 to settle the dispute over its boundary with Nigeria, especially the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula, and over Islands in Lake Chad.<sup>25</sup> The case lasted for about eight (8) years. In 2002, judgment was given in favour of Cameroon due to some reason including the poor handling of the case by Nigerian government.





Figure 1: Map of Bakassi Peninsula

Source: Nowa Omoigui, "The Bakassi Story-Part 2:1950-75," accessed 28 October 2013

<http://www.dawodu.com/bakassi3.htm>

#### 4.2. Nigeria's Reactions after the ICJ Judgment in 2002

On 22 March 1994, Cameroon filed an Application instituting proceedings against Nigeria concerning a dispute described as relating essentially to the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula.<sup>26</sup> the case continued with additional application filed by Cameroon in June 1994; in its judgment of 11 June 1998 on the eight (8) preliminary objectives raised by Nigeria (one of which states that the court has no jurisdiction to entertain Cameroon's application), it rejected seven of the objections raised by Nigeria, including the objection that challenged the jurisdiction of the court to entertain Cameroon's application. However, the summary of the case on 10 October 2002 goes thus; the court observes that prior to Nigerian independence, Bakassi was comprised within British Cameroon. Equally, the court observes that it has seen no evidence that Nigeria thought that upon independence it was acquiring Bakassi; Nigeria raised no query as to the extent of its territory in Bakassi region upon attaining independence. The court further observes that Nigeria voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 1608 (xv) which both terminated the trusteeship and approved the results of the 1961 plebiscite. This common understanding of where the title lay in Bakassi continued until in the 1970s when the parties were engaging in discussions on their maritime frontier. The court finds that it is clear from the ensuing discussions and agreements that the parties took it as a given that Bakassi belonged to Cameroon.<sup>27</sup> the court further takes account of certain formal requests until 1980s submitted by the Nigerian Embassy in Yaounde, or by the Nigerian consular authorities, before going to visit the country's nationals residing in Bakassi. For all these reasons, the court finds that the Anglo-German Agreement of 11 March 1913 was valid applicable in its entirety. The court accordingly concludes that the boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria in Bakassi is delimited by the Articles XVIII to XX of the Anglo-German Agreement of 11 March 1913, and that sovereignty over the peninsular lies with Cameroon.<sup>28</sup> But it is worrisome that Cameroon did not protest against Nigeria's control over Bakassi Peninsula which had a large population of Nigerians despite the so called Anglo-German agreement of 1913 that ceded the area to them.

Walter Ofonagoro posits that Nigerian defence team did not even try to defend her sovereignty over Bakassi at the ICJ; even while insisting that the Maroua Agreement of 1975 was illegal, explained that Nigeria and Cameroon had been drilling oil on both sides of the 1975, Ngo/Coker boundary line.<sup>29</sup> And by implication, the defence team was acknowledging the Anglo-German treaty of 1913, the Thomson-Marchard Declaration of 1931, and the 1961 plebiscite. Ofonagoro further posits that Nigeria's defence was the most embarrassing display of monumental ignorance, probably traceable to the glaring absence of any professional historians on the Nigeria defence team, even as resource persons. Those who ignore the lessons of history, inevitably end up reliving them.<sup>30</sup> Professional historians would have helped to properly present facts that would have aided the legal practitioners in the Nigerian defence team.

On the part of the government, M. Z Banji asserts that the careless attitude of Nigerian leaders in handling sensitive issues at the appropriate time led to the loss of Bakassi.<sup>31</sup> In a similar vein, G.B Ogunojemite argues that the government took a very wrong step from the beginning by failing to raise the issue of the ownership of Bakassi when the motion for independence was moved.<sup>32</sup> Nowa Omoigui also posits that Nigeria had no serious administrative or military presence in the peninsula; even the much-touted Bakassi Local Government was only created in 1997, a full three years after the case at the ICJ had begun.<sup>33</sup> All these contributed to the loss of the case at the ICJ. If Nigeria had totally rejected the judgment and retraced her steps to make provision for more experienced legal practitioners as part of the defence team, the country would have had more facts to present at the international court before the expiration of the ten years timeframe.

In a telephone interview with Okon Basse Williams, a lawyer who hails from Cross-River state made his point known that the failure of the government to appeal against the 10 October 2002 Judgment of the ICJ within the 10 years stipulated time-frame also displays the negligence of the government on the matter.<sup>34</sup> Nigerian government put forward a lackluster defence to protect our sovereignty in Bakassi at the international court of justice and refused or became unwilling to challenge what could be considered as a contravention of Nigeria's sovereignty by the international community. During the presentation of a book titled *Olusegun Obasanjo: The presidential legacy*, Donald Duke, the book reviewer stated that the loss of Bakassi was on account of international conspiracy notably by Britain and France who deceived Nigeria.<sup>35</sup> He also stated further during the 60th birthday ceremony of Charles Archibong which took place about six months later that France threatened to level Nigeria if the country had gone to war with Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula.<sup>36</sup> He said attempt to ignore the ICJ judgment would have been disastrous for Nigeria. In his word:

France would have wiped us out. Cameroon is still a protectorate of France and has a defence pact with France. And France is duty bound to honour that pact, even though it has a lot of investment in Nigeria... The French president made it clear to us that it has put on alert its military and showed us the entire position of our military and exactly where we were and our daily movements..."We tried to liaise with the Chinese and the Russians, but America made it point blank that where the British stands that is where they stand. We were ready to table it before the Security Council, but they were not ready to take it.<sup>37</sup>

It may not be out of place to commend the effort of Obasanjo concerning the case of Bakassi peninsula; however, it is appalling to discover that most of the diplomatic moves took place after the judgment was delivered. And the leadership of the country seemed to have quickly yielded to the threat from France by deciding not to appeal against the judgment.

Bakassi seemed to be part of the opportunity cost for Obasanjo's quest for international statesmanship and acceptance. There was no proper consideration of the pain and agony of the inhabitants of Bakassi. Donald Duke, the governor of Cross River as at that time appeared not to have protected the interest of the people when working with Obasanjo on Bakassi issue. This was revealed in his recent statement:

What is Bakassi? Bakassi peninsula was like a fishing port to all sorts of people. People come as far as Ondo to fish in the area. And not until 1994 that Nigeria moved in there to start establishing its authority... So, it is always difficult to identify those who are true indigenes or native of the place. It appears to me those who claim indigeneship of the place are mostly politicians.<sup>38</sup>

It is disgusting to discover that even while the displaced people of Bakassi are still weeping and looking for solution to the numerous challenges they are facing, their ex-governor is busy making inflammatory statements concerning Bakassi at different birthday ceremonies of his folks. Okon Edet, the Paramount ruler of Bakassi as well as the Chairman of Cross River State Council of Chiefs opines that the ex-governor of Cross River and Olusegun Obasanjo with some members of international community played politics with the lives of the people of Bakassi.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the ex-Chairman of the Calabar branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Mba Ukwani points out that Government ceded their territory to Cameroon on a tea cup without minding the value of the territory and the feelings of the citizens who are residents in the territory.<sup>40</sup> The issue of the Bakassi was centered on oil and its resources and not on the people. This is part of the poor citizen diplomacy of the Obasanjo administration. N. Godson posits that Obasanjo and other African leaders annoyingly allow the West to exact undue influence that is almost always disadvantageous to their people. A judge of Nigerian origin, justice Bola Ajibola even based his argument in defence of the Cameroonians solely on the coerced 1884 and 1913 treaties. On the contrary, no justice of US origin would proffer or support the handover of any part of the US to a foreign and hostile country.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, another noticeable error which could be seen as international politics that Nigeria accepted is the inclusion of French jurists among the jurist that gave the final judgment at the ICJ.<sup>42</sup> They were placed there to represent the interest of Cameroon. The ICJ judgment is a reflection of the fact that the powerful capitalist nations are yet to get rid of their old bestial colonialist tendencies, despite wearing the toga of modernism. The nature of international justice system is appalling. For instance, there has been records of many violations of international treaties and judgment by major imperial nations like US, Britain, etc.<sup>43</sup> US Waged war against Iraq contrary to the international law; and Nigeria embraced the erroneous judgment delivered by the ICJ without even calling for its review all in the name of proving that the Nigeria is a respecter of international law.

In his book titled 'Fraud at the Hague: Why Nigeria's Bakassi was ceded to Cameroon,' Adebayo Adeolu posits that fears by Europe that the United States of America might establish a military base in Bakassi peninsula to the strategic and socio-political disadvantage of Europe contributed to Nigeria's loss of Bakassi to Cameroon.<sup>44</sup> The fear was worsened by the then closeness of Nigeria's president Olusegun Obasanjo to his USA counterpart, president George Bush. Thus, 'Keeping Nigeria out of Bakassi is securing the area against the American military base under the AFRICOM initiative.<sup>45</sup> Adebayo also opines that the 10 October 2002 judgment was predetermined and fraudulent; insisting that geographically historically, linguistically, and politically, Bakassi had always been part of Nigeria. The 1884 Anglo-Efik Treaty (which supersedes other treats) is binding agreement between Britain on one hand and the Obong, chiefs and people of Calabar on the other hand; anything done by either party in breach of the terms of that treaty violates Articles 26 of the Vienna Convention on the law of treaties and the fundamental customary international law principle of Pacta Sunt Servanda.<sup>46</sup>

According to Adebayo, it was the French government that prompted Cameroon into taking the matter to the Hague, where British, French and German judges decided the case.<sup>47</sup> The leading member of the Nigeria's Legal Team and a former Nigerian Attorney - General and Minister of Justice, Chief Richard Akinjide condemned the judgment: "This judgment is a complete fraud, 50% international law and 50% international politics, blatantly biased, unfair and a total disaster.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, Olusegun Obasanjo quickly yielded to the international politics. Later Gani Fawehinmi asked Obasanjo at a certain time; "If Bakassi was in Ogun State where you come from, would you have ceded it to a foreign country?"<sup>49</sup> Was it not the same International Court of Justice that ruled the case between Israel and Palestine over East Jerusalem and Gaza? Are the Israelis still not occupying Palestinian territory with Britain, France and USA as their staunch supporters? How about the judgment between Britain and Argentina over Falkland Island? Are the British people still not occupying the Falkland Island? How about the judgment between USA and Cuba over Guantanamo Bay by the same ICJ? Is the USA still not occupying the Cuban territory? Why did Nigeria rush and cede Bakassi away to Cameroon just like that? Or is it that the implementation of the ICJ judgment in the case of Bakassi became different because we are a third world country?<sup>50</sup> The world powers listed above are occupying territories that are not theirs but Nigerian government gave out Bakassi that is meant to be part of Nigeria. What an irony!

Obasanjo's unilateral decision to agree that Bakassi Peninsula should be ceded to Cameroon without due process shows his insensitivity to the well-being of Nigerian citizens. It also shows his lack of respect for human rights. The

decision was too hasty.<sup>51</sup> He has made it more difficult for Nigerian government to redeem Bakassi peninsula due to the Green Tree Agreement he signed with Cameroon which was witnessed by the so-called world powers. The signatories to the agreement which was carried out at Green Tree, New York, on 12 June 2006 are: Paul Biya for the Republic of Cameroon, Olusegun Obasanjo for the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Kofi Annan for the United Nations, Gunter Pleuger for the Federal Republic of Germany, Fakie Sanders for the United States of America, Michel Duclos for the French Republic and Koren Pierce for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.<sup>52</sup> Summary of the agreement is as follows: Article 1: Nigeria recognizes the sovereignty of Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula in accordance with the judgment of the ICJ of 10 October 2002...

Article 2: Nigeria agrees to withdraw all its Armed Forces from the Bakassi Peninsula within sixty days of the date of the signing of the agreement...

Article 3: (1) Cameroon, after the transfer of authority to it by Nigeria, guarantees to Nigerian nationals living in the Bakassi Peninsula the exercise of the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights law and in other relevant provisions of law.

(2) In particular, Cameroon shall:

(a) Not force Nigerian nationals living in the Bakassi Peninsula to leave the zone or change their nationality;

(b) Respect their culture, language and beliefs.

(c) Respect their right to continue their agricultural and fishing activities;

(d) Protect their property and their customary land rights

(e) Not levy in any discriminatory manner any taxes and other dues on Nigerian nationals living in the zone; and

(f) Take every necessary measure to protect Nigerian nationals living in the zone from any harassment or harm.

Article 4: ... No part of this agreement shall be interpreted as a renunciation by Cameroon of its sovereignty.

Article 5: This agreement shall be implemented in good faith by the parties...

Article 6: (1) A follow-up committee to monitor the implementation of this agreement is hereby established. It shall be composed of representatives of Cameroon, Nigeria, the United Nations and the witness states...

(2) The follow-up committee shall settle any dispute regarding the interpretation and implementation of this agreement.

(3) The activities of the follow-up committee shall cease at the end of the period of the special transitional regime provided for in paragraph 4 of annex 1 to this agreement...<sup>53</sup>

In 2006, shortly after the signing of the Green Tree Agreement in New York, United States of American, some Bakassi indigenes, who foresaw the implications of the ceding protested and consequently challenged it at the Federal High Court Abuja. The plaintiffs were Chief Tony Ene Asuquo, Chief Orok Eneyo-Umo Nakanda, Chief Emmanuel Effiong Etene, Ndabu Eyo-Umo Nakanda, Emmanuel Okikon Asuquo, Ita Okon Nyong and Richard Ekenyong. They won the case but Federal Government refused to recognize the judgment.<sup>54</sup> When the Nigerian government blatantly refused to honour the court injunction stopping the ceding, out of annoyance and frustration, chief Tony-Ene decided to form a militant group, known then as Bakassi Movement for Self-Determination. But Ene died in the struggle.<sup>55</sup> it remains a fact despite all entreaties to convince the country's leadership to change its mind, Nigerian authorities on 14 August 2008 at the Peregrino Government Lodge in Calabar, finally transferred the territory to Cameroon without considering the tears and groans of the people of Bakassi.<sup>56</sup> The late intervention from the National Assembly over the illegality of the Green Tree Agreement could not stop the final transfer of Bakassi territory to Cameroon. Despite the fact that section 12 (1) of the Nigerian constitutions state that:

No treaty between the federal and any other country shall have the force of law to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly; Obasanjo single handedly signed the agreement without ratification from the National Assembly<sup>57</sup>

The Paramount Ruler of the Bakassi people, Etim Okon Edet laments over the unserious attitude of the National Assembly members concerning the issue

... I am very surprised that after their long vocation, the Bakassi issue which they have condemned over a period of time is not seen as a serious issue to deserve their attention... You will know a leader in times of crisis...<sup>58</sup>

The Chairman, House of Representative Committee on International Agreement and Conventions, Hon. Ekundayo Bush – Alebiosu posits

We all know whose responsibility it is to bring the issue to the National Assembly for deliberation. Let us have it in mind that 1999 constitution still recognize Bakassi as part of Nigeria. This means some people in power are not doing their jobs property.<sup>59</sup>

However, Ekundayo should also have it in mind that the National Assembly members are to represent the people by ensuring that people in power are doing their jobs properly. Nigerian leaders have to go beyond the level of trading blames and proffer solution to the challenges of the Bakassi people.

The Nigerian government had promised to resettle the Bakassi people but many of the refugees lamented that little or nothing was put in place for them. The resettlement area set aside for the Bakassi by the government lacks basis facilities such as housing, water and health care facilities.<sup>60</sup> Baba Adam asserts that there were some funds allocated for their relocation to Akpabuyo LGA of Cross River State in 2006, and it is a well-known story that the funds are already embezzled. The people are treated like animals without any amenities provided for them.<sup>61</sup> It is therefore unethical for the government to continue in wasteful spending which benefits some politicians and bureaucrats at the expense of the displaced people of Bakassi without probing and prosecuting the profiteers involved. According to Etim Okon,

From the coastal or riverine area where I come from, the only people that are benefitting from government policies and programmes on Bakassi are about eight or ten including myself, five councilors, and the council's vice chairman ... the rest – are scattered in various council area.<sup>62</sup>

The Paramount Ruler admits that he is part of the few people benefiting from the social amenities while a large percentage of his subjects are wallowing in hardship, sickness and untimely death. In Mid-March 2013, over 2000 of these Bakassi people who accepted their faith and changed their nationality in obedience to the ceding of their land to Cameroon were attacked and ejected, causing them to return, to some council areas in Cross River without receiving proper attention.<sup>63</sup> The attack on Efut Obot Ikof village and adjoining settlements, which left five people dead and 17 others missing and 1,900 displaced, according to Chief Etim Asuquo, came in the wake of a misunderstanding between the people and the Cameroonian authorities over fishing rights and tax payments.<sup>64</sup> According to Florence Ita Giwa who visited the refugees:

I cannot believe what the Gendarmes did to our people many of the women cannot find their husband, many children cannot find their mother; we have counted 17 people who are still missing.<sup>65</sup>

From Gustavo Placido's report, five people were killed and 1,800 were displaced.<sup>66</sup> The report is in line with Mudiaga's report which states that no fewer than five natives were killed and 1,800 persons fled their homes. The report was confirmed by the chairman of Bakassi Local Government Area Council, Dr. Ekpo Bassey.<sup>67</sup> It should also be recalled that on 16 October 2009, Cameroonian gendarmes killed six Nigerian fishermen in Bakassi territorial waters.<sup>68</sup> They seem to be forever uprooted from their root, their ancestral homes, means of livelihood, history and tradition.<sup>69</sup> These fellow Nigerians now stay in the dilapidated St. Mark's Primary School building that has been their temporary camp since 7 March 2013. Their health condition is extremely poor as they are left to live in a long school hall without good windows.<sup>70</sup> Their men, women and children 'manage live' on the floor with six-spring mattresses, while some others simply spread their wrappers on the cold floor to get an occasional 'good' sleep.<sup>71</sup> Joshua Sunday, 12, unlike his peers at Government Primary School in Efut Iwang, do not go to school anymore. He says he is not happy with this situation, *"I want the government to come and help us. I want to go back to school-again like other children."* Patience Udo-David, 30 says *"I am a nursing mother of twins. I delivered these children here few days after our arrival; and as you can see, they are not well, they have no food and too much heat is disturbing them..."*<sup>72</sup> Regina Ene Etim, 50 narrates her ordeal

We ran to this place and the clan head assisted us to stay here. We are very many here. We stay 10 to 15 in a room. Government should help give us food, water and mattresses. People are sick; food is not enough for us and mosquitoes attack us anyhow.<sup>73</sup>

It is disgusting for the leadership of a country that is so blessed with both human and material resources to operate without protecting the interest of some citizens in the crisis that was even caused by the government. Indeed, Article 3 of the Green Tree Agreement states that Nigerians wishing to remain in their native land, which was handed over to Cameroon, should be protected and allowed to practice their traditional occupation which is farming and fishing without molestation but the Nigerian Liaison Officer to Cameroon, Aston Joseph reveals that regularly, the Cameroonian Gendarmes undermine the livelihood of the Nigerians by destroying or confiscating their fishing boats and nets on the high seas claiming they have over exploited the fish stock beyond the lines allocated to them. Over thirty fishing boats belonging to our people have been confiscated or destroyed by the Cameroonian authorities on the pretext that they have fished beyond the demarcated point.<sup>74</sup>

Meanwhile the Green Tree Accord did not specify any limits to which the Nigerians in Cameroon should confine themselves to fishing since the international maritime boundary between the two nations are yet to be officially demarcated. And it should recall that Paul Biya made his point clear at the signing ceremony by expressing his desire that the agreement should be scrupulously implemented.<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately it is still the government of Paul Biya that is violating the agreement. Considering the non-ratification of the agreement by the Nigerian law makers, it is even Nigeria that should find it difficult to honour the agreement and not Cameroon.

The foreign policy of Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007 has many records of achievements but for the case of Bakassi Peninsula where Nigeria seems to have been bogged down. Obasanjo as chairman of the AU made a vow to avoid conflict with Cameroons by all means, but the path he took to solve the conflict is still causing untold hardships for the Bakassi people who managed to survive the attack from Cameroon. Obasanjo easily yielded to the international politics that was played out with threat. Unfortunately, some scholars still classify the case of Bakassi as part of the strength of Obasanjo's foreign policy. For instance, Akinbobola and Adebawale in the article opine the commitment of Nigeria to the promotion of unity and good neighbourliness with other African states became more pronounced with the peaceful handing over of Bakassi territory to Cameroon in 2006 following the International Court of Justice ruling of October 2002.<sup>76</sup> Without any iota doubt, if Akinbobola and Adebawale were to be indigenes of Bakassi, their opinion would have been different. The loss of Bakassi land affects both the Bakassi people and the Nigerian economy. The large deposit of crude oil in the Bakassi Peninsula has now become the property of Cameroon by virtue of the Nigeria's acceptance of the judgment of the ICJ. Obasanjo's decision to go ahead with the ceding of Bakassi to Cameroon despite the available opportunity given to Nigeria to react to the judgment demonstrates that Obasanjo seemed to be insensitive to the course of his foreign policy operations. The action he took was hasty. According to Femi Fani-Kayode:

If President Olusegun had displayed just half the courage, firm resolve and strong determination over Bakassi matter as President Vladimir Putin did over the Crimean crisis and Prime Minister Thatcher did over the Falkland Islands dispute, the Bakassi Peninsula and all its people would still have been part and parcel of Nigeria today.<sup>77</sup>

Obasanjo seemed to have got it wrong in the case of Bakassi. He decided to please members of the international community at the expense of Nigerian citizens especially those who were residing in Bakassi Peninsula

- <sup>1</sup>Udogu. E. Ike, "Historicizing and Contextualizing the Discourse on African International Law and a Concise Overview of the Pacific Settlement of the Cameroon–Nigeria Bakassi Peninsula Dispute," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol, 7, Number 1, (2008) 77-99.
- <sup>2</sup>Nowa Omoigui, "The Bakassi Story Part1" Last modified 20 September 2002, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/09/thstory-of-bakassi-peninsula/>
- <sup>3</sup>Nowa Omoigui, "The Bakassi Story Part1 . . .
- <sup>4</sup>Edem Okon Edem, "The Truth About Ownership of Bakassi Peninsular." Accessed 30 October 2013. [http://www.abgremo.8m/com/whats\\_new.html](http://www.abgremo.8m/com/whats_new.html).
- <sup>5</sup>Femi Falana, "Bakassi Peninsula: Legal Dimensions of Self Determination Threat" Last modified 19 September 2012. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/09/bakassi-peninsula-legaldimension-of-selfdetermination-threat/>
- <sup>6</sup>Femi Falana, "Bakassi Peninsula: Legal Dimensions of Self Determination Threat . . .
- <sup>7</sup>Judge Bola Ajibola, "Dissenting Opinion on Cameroon-Nigeria Land/Maritime Boundary (3)" Last modified 26 September 2012. <http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/nvnews/99079/50/dissenting-opinion-on-cameroon-nigeria-landmaritime.html>.
- <sup>8</sup>Edem Okon Edem, "The Truth About Ownership of Bakassi Peninsular . . .
- <sup>9</sup>Nowa Omoigui, "The Bakassi Story Part 1" Last modified 20 September 2002, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/09/thstory-of-bakassi-peninsula/>
- <sup>10</sup>Nowa Omoigui, "The Bakassi Story Part 1 . . .
- <sup>11</sup>Edem Okon Edem, "The Truth About Ownership of Bakassi Peninsular . . .
- <sup>12</sup>Femi Falana, "Bakassi Peninsula: Legal Dimensions of Self Determination Threat . . .
- <sup>13</sup>Idumange John, "The Bakassi Crisis in a Historical Context" Last modified 22 February 2010 <http://www.pointblanknews.com/artopn2377.html>.
- <sup>14</sup>Idumange John, "The Bakassi Crisis in a Historical Context" . . .
- <sup>15</sup>Enoch Anuoluwapo Ojotisa: "Nigeria vs Cameroon\_(Bakassi Peninsula)." Last modified 22 June 2011 <http://www.poetotjotis.blogspot.com/2011/06/nigeria-vs-cameroonbakassi-penninsula.html?m=1>.
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## 5. Nigeria's Diplomatic Drive for Debt Relief and Investment: 2004-2007

The diplomatic steps taken by President Olusegun Obasanjo before the actualization of debt relief, repatriation of some of the funds looted by Abacha, and the increase in foreign direct investments were examined in this chapter. His campaign for debt relief started shortly after he was inaugurated as president in 1999. And in 2005, the G8 finance ministers reached an agreement to relieve Nigeria of the debt she owed the Paris Club. Some of the looted funds which also contributed to the huge debt were repatriated. He also worked towards increasing foreign direct investment while campaigning for debt relief and the recovery of Abacha loot. However, this chapter examined the extent to which debt relief, fight against financial crimes, repatriated funds and the foreign direct investments contributed to national life.

### 5.1. Debt Relief

While delivering a speech titled "*African Now: Challenges and perspectives for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*" on 14 May 2000 in CANADA, Obasanjo pointed out that external debt burden and large unsustainable debt service obligations of African countries (especially Nigeria) constitute a major impediment to their quest for social and economic development. Noting that "*Debt undermine the capacity of our countries to make positive adjustments*"<sup>1</sup> And it should be recalled that during the October 1999 Press Conference in USA when Obasanjo visited Bill Clinton, the issue of debt relief for Nigeria was on the agenda.<sup>2</sup> The concerted efforts of president Obasanjo, the ministry of finance, national assembly, Debt Management Office, the Economic Management Team, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders, and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEED) Started yielding results as the creditors and multilateral financial institutions began to position and consider Nigeria for debt relief.<sup>3</sup> Osita Agbu posits that as at December 2003, Nigeria's Debt profile rose to N4.4 billion (\$32.9b).<sup>4</sup> Details of the money needed for the servicing of the debt from 2003 reveal that in 2003 it would be \$2.91 billion; 2.76b in 2004, \$2.83b in 2005, \$2.79b in 2006, \$2.32b in 2007 and \$2.41b in 2008, \$2.36b in 2009 and 2.01b in 2010.<sup>5</sup> Nigeria's debt service obligations impacted negatively on the economy. Hence, Obasanjo's call for debt relief was welcomed by many Nigerians and some of the country's foreign partners. But not all scholars see it as a welcome development. To some it is like a popular saying that 'what goes around comes around'. The

quest for debt relief and its fulfillment increased Obasanjo's loyalty to the western leaders. It demonstrates one of the reasons why Obasanjo hastily yielded to the international politics behind the ceding of Bakassi to Cameroon. Indeed, the issue of debt relief reflects a popular saying that a borrower is servant to the lender.

Abdullahi Ashafa argues that much as debt relief for Nigeria is crucial, it is indeed not a charity.<sup>6</sup> Obasanjo was accused of turning the campaign for debt relief to the country with an important foreign policy issue. However, Ashafa admits that Nigeria is an important and strategic country in Africa such that granting debt relief to the country could even be of immense benefits to other African countries. From another perspective, Ehiedu Iweriebor of Hunter College, New York sees the so-called Nigeria's debt relief as no more than the payment for national servility and disempowerment.<sup>7</sup> He argues further that in the first place, the question of how much Nigeria has actually repaid over the past 20 years from 1985 as the debt accumulated needs to be answered. As the debt has ballooned over this time, it would not be surprising to realize that Nigeria has paid the total amount of the debt relief at least once over.<sup>8</sup> What seems to be the right answer to his question is that between 1965 and 2003, Nigeria borrowed a total of \$13.5 billion from the Paris club, by December 2003, the country paid \$42 billion as debt service, yet at the end of December 2003, the country still owed the Paris club about 25 billion.<sup>9</sup>

According to Obasanjo, *"Nigeria's debt stock had been paid twice over if the penalty for not paying the penalty is included"*. He finds this ridiculous, and concludes that the debt being held against the country is unplayable and unsustainable and that this does not augur well for an equitable world.<sup>10</sup> As at year 2000, interest and penalties constituted nearly \$10 billion of the \$24 billion rescheduled by the Paris club.<sup>11</sup> As at then, the Paris club only agreed for a re-scheduling of the debt, and not a write-off<sup>12</sup>. And it should be noted that before June 2005 when Nigeria's major creditors, the Paris Club, offered to cancel 75% of Nigeria's external debt, Nigeria owed about \$32.91 billion. In terms of breakdown the country owed Paris Club \$27.446 billion, N3.042 billion multilateral debts, \$1.44 billion London club debt, \$911.39million primary notes debt, and the \$51.63 debt incurred from Non-Paris Club bilateral creditors.<sup>13</sup> The debt kept increasing for instance between 2001 and 2005, the debt Nigeria owed Paris Club increased by \$5 billion not because Nigeria continued to borrow but because of foreign exchange movements.<sup>14</sup> An argument could actually be put that Nigeria's creditors were reluctant to grant Nigeria debt cancellation, because the debts served as an instrument of blackmail to control the country and its rich mineral resources, notably, oil and gas.<sup>15</sup> Even when Nigeria finally got the support from all the G8 Finance Ministries; just before the finance ministers were to meet in London in June 2005 to discuss on the issue of debt relief, non G- 8 creditors began to object to the steps toward the debt relief.<sup>16</sup> in spite of the condemnations of the nature of the debts owed, some of the creditors countries were still reluctant to forgive these debts.<sup>17</sup> But what seems to be the breakthrough of the debt relief campaign of Obasanjo finally came in June 2005 when the Paris Club decided to write off a larger percentage of debt owed by Nigeria.

On 11 June 2005, the UK's Chancellor, Gordon Brown, announced that G8 Finance Ministers had agreed of a massive and unprecedented debt deal for Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> later in the year, at the Paris club in October 2005, creditors finally cleared a large percentage of the debt Nigeria owned foreign creditors the deal will save Nigeria almost \$47billion in debt service payments for 15 years.<sup>19</sup> large number of Nigerians received the information with Joy. According to Obasanjo, *"It has been a tough and rough struggle but we thank Almighty God that today we can look back and feel proud that we did not get discouraged, diverted, intimidated, or forced to lose sight of our goals."*<sup>20</sup> The speaker of the house of representative as at then Aminu Bello Masari could not also hold his own feelings, *"... I am sure we should be elated at seeing the gains of some of our past and recent effort already bearing fruits. The most recent is the decision of some of Nigerian creditors under the Paris Club to write off over \$ 18 billion of our foreign debt, amounting to 60% percent with a further promise to increase the stake to 67%"*.<sup>21</sup> In Yakubu Gowon's opinion, he was concerned about the prospect of Nigeria after the debt cancellation. According to him, *"let's hope that no government will ever again commit the future generation to such heavy burden of debt"*.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the country's external debts that reduced from \$35.9 billion to \$3.5 billion in August 2006,<sup>23</sup> has outrageously increased again. Hence it is not enough to celebrate the debt relief as a foreign policy achievement. Transparency and accountability should not be kept aside. It is even worrisome that after the \$18billion debt relief since 2005 and the subsequent payment of \$12billion to upset the remaining debt, there has not been any evidence of growth and development that can improve the well-being of the people.

It seems that the most celebrated foreign policy achievement of Obasanjo by his government is the debt relief. All the arms of the government (the executive, the legislative and the judiciary) and some NGOs worked together to achieve it. Therefore, they celebrated it. Notable among those of who represented Nigeria during the negotiation process are: Faruk Lawal and Udo Udoma (National Assembly Members) jubilee 2000 team, Ngozi Okonjo - Iweala (a graduate of Harvard University, ex vice President of World Bank and Nigeria's Finance Minister), Mansur Muntar (a graduate of Harvard University and the Director General of the Debt Management Office) and Dr. (Mrs.) Obi Ezekwezili who was put in charge of formalizing procedures for government contracts.<sup>24</sup> One of the major challenges of their effort was noted by the senate president of that period, Ken Nnamani. *"While we delight at the tremendous goodwill of important global leaders towards our aspiration for an earlier exit from severe indebtedness, we are not unmindful of some persons who, for their own personal or group strategic interests, would want Nigeria to continue to lumber under the dead - weight of debts."*<sup>25</sup> It is without, doubt that the debt relief is a foreign policy achievement but its impact on Nigerians that are not privileged to be among the ruling class is below expectation.

## 5.2. Recovery of Abacha Loot: The Fight against Economic and Financial Crimes

In his inaugural address on 29 May 1999, Obasanjo declared his readiness to restore confidence in government, deal with the growing economic crisis, and tackle corruption.<sup>26</sup> And through the internal and external support that

Obasanjo enjoyed, some of the looted funds were recovered and his administration helped to reduce corruption; though Obasanjo had his own inadequacies in the process. According to Bola Akinterinwa, *"Without doubt, president Obasanjo has his own inadequacies like all others. But when a choice has to be made between and among a given set of inadequacies, the better inadequacies, must be chosen."*<sup>27</sup> Hence, Obasanjo's effort to recover the looted funds yielded positive results to some extent due to the support he got from both within and outside the country. Mobolaji Aluko posits that During the Gulf crisis of the early 90s, about \$12 billion of Nigeria' oil windfall went missing. In five years alone (1993-1998) General Abacha salted away as much as 5 billion dollars in Swiss, German, UK and American banks, among several other countries.<sup>28</sup>

It is estimated that over the years about \$98.8 billion is stashed away by Nigerians in foreign banks; illegally acquired money by its leaders; family members and cronies.<sup>29</sup> In the attempts to recover these funds, President Bill Clinton promised Obasanjo at the White House Press Conference on 28 October 1999 that he would assist Nigerian government not just to recover the looted revenue but to also fight crime and narcotic trafficking and to support the efforts to lift the burden of debt.<sup>30</sup>

However, not all the loot was acquired by Nigerians alone. Some of the schemes ostensibly used to reduce the debt, particularly the debt-buy-back schemes, were in fact avenues for loot acquisition both by Western Individuals and banks in the West. In this respect, in year 2000, the Nigerian Democratic Movement (NDM) led by Mobolaji Aluko passed onto the US States Department and the Internal Revenue Service a thick document of dubious-looking schemes from 1988 to reputable banks involving as much as \$6 billion dollars bought-back-debt-in promissory notes, government debts and multilateral debts. This is detailed in the so-called "Fashanu Report" after a UK – based Nigerian ex-soccer star named John Fashanu who took it upon himself to expose some of the suspected funny financial criminality and international sharp practices, and who was also in touch with British and Swiss government officials with the same document.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, jubilee 2000 UK, a non-governmental organization assisted Obasanjo administration in the recovery process. In year 2000, Jubilee 2000 UK, arrived Aso Rook, Abuja to inform President Olusegun Obasanjo that \$55 billion of the country's stolen assets were stashed in overseas bank accounts by corrupt Nigerian elites.<sup>32</sup> Obasanjo at that time raised a strong economic reform team and intensified his diplomatic effort in the recovery process.<sup>33</sup> However, some of the international independent experts involved in Nigerian's efforts to recover looted funds stashed away by corrupt leaders expressed concern that Nigeria embarked on a selective recovery effort which ensured that about 80% of what is recoverable was ignored.<sup>34</sup> It was discovered that certain civil laws which could have been used to sue the professionals like bankers, accountants and lawyers who aided the looting process on behalf of corrupt leaders were untapped.<sup>35</sup> Specifically and most significantly, investigations has now revealed that the Obasanjo administration refused offer by the experts, including those from UN sources, to trace monies looted from Nigeria during the Babangida regime, but encouraged the pursuit of Abacha stolen funds.<sup>36</sup> The selective nature of the struggle reduced the success of the recovery process.

The Obasanjo civilian regime in continuation of the efforts of Abdulsalami Abukakar administration reported recovery or freezing of some of the loot (as much as \$2 billion as at year 2000) especially from and in Swiss banks, some directly from Nigerian crooks and the partners.<sup>37</sup> Swiss officials said that about 120 accounts in Zurich and Geneva have been frozen. In early April 2000, Swiss officials charged a businessman for falsifying documents to open a bank account in Geneva for the Abacha family.<sup>38</sup> According to the New York Times, the unidentified businessman is Dharam Vir of New Delhi, India.<sup>39</sup> In mid-May, 2000, Obasanjo announced that his government has recovered \$200 million public funds looted by former Nigerian dictator-Abacha and his associates. In July, Nigerian authorities announced that Swiss officials have transferred \$64.36 million of the looted money to the Central Bank of Nigeria.<sup>40</sup> In 2005, Nigeria recovered \$500 million from Switzerland. According to Okonjo-Iweala, *"Switzerland has actually been quite good. They returned \$500 million. But there is still money lying in other parts of Europe"*,<sup>41</sup> David U Enweremadu posits that by the time Obasanjo left office in May 2007, he had secured the recovery of approximately 2 billion USD in assets and triggered some vital international initiatives against money laundering.<sup>42</sup> According to Obasanjo:

When I was president, I called the World Bank. I said, please give me the list of the amounts that have been stolen, where they are kept and who the beneficiaries are .... I never got anything from the World Bank thereafter. We have on our own investigated and recovered some ... from Abacha's family alone, we recovered millions of dollars. I got 1.2 billion Dollars and the lawyer in Switzerland who was doing it for us when I was leaving, said that if we work harder, there was still at least one billion dollars that we can get from that family alone ... If President Jonathan works harder, Nigeria can still get at least one billion dollars from the late Abacha's family.<sup>43</sup>

However, Danladi Mohammed asserts that corruption under Abacha was a child's play compared to the billions of dollars lost to public office holder under the civilian administration of Obasanjo and it is still spreading like hurricane, 15 years after the death of Abacha.<sup>44</sup> And there is no proper accountability and transparency in the way government has been spending the recovered Abacha loot. Recently, a statement issued from the ministry of foreign affairs indicates that Nigeria will soon recover more money from Abacha loot. According to Paul Nwabukwu, the special adviser to the minister of finance:

We can confirm that Nigeria will on 25 June 2014 receive the sum of euros 167m (\$227m) from the government of the principality of Liechtenstein, part of the looted funds recovered from the Abacha family...<sup>45</sup>

Nigeria has planned to invest the money in a Sovereign Wealth Fund for the benefit of future generations. Paul Nwabukwu added that *"the President has directed that part of the funds be saved in the Future Generations Fund- one of the funds managed by the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA)"*<sup>46</sup> However, it is quite unfortunate that Nigerian



government is planning to safe money in Future Generations Fund without considering the high rate of unemployment and mass poverty in Nigeria.

The fight against economic and financial crimes under Obasanjo Administration which was mainly handled by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) lacked transparency. It would have produced a better result if it had been carried out without guilt and sentiment on the part of the government in charge of the struggle. According to Prince Tunji Adeyemo, the Economics and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was only used to witch hunt Obasanjo's political opponents towards the end of his administration.<sup>47</sup> Billion after billions continue to be stolen in Nigeria since 1999 and kept abroad.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, an effective fight against economic financial crimes would have helped to improve the citizens' standard of living. Sonala Olumhense posits that Obasanjo was his own minister of Petroleum Resources with accountability, and it was during that time that the dirty practices now being unveiled by various probe panels started.<sup>49</sup> He spent between \$10 and \$16 billion under the ruse of an electricity scheme; some of those he paid allegedly did not even clear a patch of land.<sup>50</sup> In the famous case of Works Minister Tony Anenih, Obasanjo complained that he had budgeted N300 billion for roads during his first term, but he never asked 'Mr. Fix-it' about the money.<sup>51</sup> He saw nothing wrong with establishing Transcorp and using it to enrich himself.<sup>52</sup>

Obasanjo ensured that the Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL) and Nicon Noga Hilton Hotel were sold to Transcorp.<sup>53</sup> Also, he says nothing about the Halliburton Scandal, for which various reports have indicted him, or about his so-called "anti-corruption" agencies which only targeted his enemies.<sup>54</sup> He was wielding his weapons in front of the University Ibadan recently, he cited as very 'bad boys' such people as Atiku Abubakar, Salisu Buhari, a certificate-forging former speaker of the House of Representatives recently appointed by president Goodluck Jonathan into the Governing Council of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; and former governors Bola Tinubu, Deprieye Alamiyeseigha, James Ibori and Lucky Iginiedion but conveniently forgets that in 2006, he ignored a report he had commissioned and refused to prosecute fifteen (15) indicted governors.<sup>55</sup> He similarly forgets that his domestic aide, Andy Uba, used the presidential jet to lauder hundreds of thousands of dollars, for which he was convicted in the United states.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, it is very obvious that Obasanjo civilian era had various cases of economic and financial crimes which were not properly addressed due to his own personal interests that would have been adversely affected in the course of addressing those issues.

In the first four years of the Obasanjo administration, the former Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mr. Jackson Gaus-Obasai maintained 2 permanent presidential suites over N240 million (costing N150,000 per day). And Obaseki claims to be the cheapest Managing Director of NNPC since inception.<sup>57</sup> The government did not view it as anti-economic development act. In 2000, corruption presumably reached intolerable level. The Nigeria occupied the first position of the most corrupt polity on earth.<sup>58</sup> And in 2001, corruption reached its peak when the country was rated as the third most corrupt country in the world.<sup>59</sup> Nigeria would have been one of the most developed countries in the if her leaders had been sincere in the fight against economic and financial crimes. It seems that only those who stepped on the toes of Obasanjo and his cohorts were indicted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) A highly respected opinion writer in Nigeria, Sonala Olumhense posits that as Obsasanjo made the choice of Jonathan as the presidential running mate of Yar'Adua, he had in his hands the report of his 2006 Joint Task Force (JTF) on corruption, which, just months earlier, had indicted Mr. Jonathan and many other serving and former governors for breaching the Code of conduct Bureau Act.<sup>60</sup> No wonder president Jonathan publicly stated recently that he disagrees with those who say that corruption is the major problem Nigeria is facing; he claimed that corruption in the country is still at a tolerable stage<sup>61</sup> In his words, "corruption is not Nigeria's number one problem", adding that "corruption is as old as human race".<sup>62</sup> Two Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN), Itse Sagay and Ladi Rotimi-Williams, have both faulted the claim.<sup>63</sup>

However, the indicted list from the report of 2006 Joint Task Force (JTF) on corruption sacked some serving governors as corrupt. But the exercise was selective.<sup>64</sup> For instance, Deprieye Alamiyeseigha was impeached in 2006 over charges of money laundering; but the main reason is because he was squarely in the camp of Abubakar Atiku.<sup>65</sup> Nuhu Ribadu continued the selective process of indicting corrupt politicians even after his boss left office James Ibori and some others were indicted over cases of money laundering.<sup>66</sup> The fear of being indicted hindered and still hinders Nigerian leaders from indicting some politicians who have stolen billions of dollars that would have been used to change the fortunes of the large population of the poor people in Nigeria. Sentiment also contributes to the selective fight against corruption which has led to increase in the rate of poverty in Nigeria. This perhaps is one of the reasons why the family of Late Abacha was the main focus of Obasanjo who refused to probe Ibrahim Babangida that allegedly looted billions of dollars. However, one of the main factors that can help to improve the citizens' standard of living is total fight against corruption which can only be achieved through a transparent and accountable government.

It is important to note that part of the \$1.2billion dollars Obasanjo recovered from foreign accounts of Late Abacha and his cohorts could not be properly accounted for. In response to the petition from Social Economic Right and Accountability Project (SERAP) in 2007, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission launched an investigation into the allegation that the N38 billion recovered from the funds looted by Late Abacha. In its petition, SERAP stated that N38 billion of the N65 billion (\$500 million) recovered public funds stashed away in Swiss banks by the late Abacha could not be traced or might have been misused.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala states thus:

We had the World Bank work with us with our own NGOs in Nigeria with Swiss to monitor the use of this money. We put the money into specific projects that were beneficial to Nigerians in rural areas like rural roads, health clinics and all of them were specified and monitored and today that has set the track record for the way these returned monies can be used.<sup>68</sup>

Proper accountability of the use of the recovered looted funds is very necessary because it becomes a double tragedy if the recovered looted funds are looted again. According to Okonjo Iweala, "there is a unit here in the World Bank which I set up

during my time called *Stolen Assets Recovery Unit*, and they do this kind of things with countries. They can help you monitor the use of returned assets ...”<sup>69</sup> the establishment of Stolen Assets Recovery Unit by Okonjo Iweala when she was with the World Bank is quite commendable. However, the effort could only be beneficial to Nigeria at this time if the corrupt cabals would completely give way for the recovered funds to be completely channeled into developmental projects.

### 5.3. *The Diplomatic Strategies of Encouraging and Promoting Foreign Direct Investment in Nigeria*

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a key element in international economic integration. It encourages the transfer of technology and the know-how between countries. It can be defined as the purchase or establishment of income – generating assets in a foreign country that entails the control of the operation or organization.<sup>70</sup> In a bid to encourage and promote the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country, Nigeria signed bilateral agreements with several countries in the areas of trade, technological cooperation, ICT, education, culture/tourism, etc.<sup>71</sup> The signing of some of these agreements and the promotion of further Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) took place during presidential foreign trips. However, some analysts condemned the multiple foreign trips embarked upon by Obasanjo. Some argue that the frequent visits of the president to different countries were more inimical to Nigeria beyond the economic realm.<sup>72</sup>

According to Akindele on Obasanjo’s search for foreign investment, he argues that while many were not against the search for foreign investment, most kicked seriously against the style being used. “More than anything else, his present one-week trip to Jamaica, Barbados and Senegal is in bad taste and very insensitive. At a time, when the country is bleeding from all its pores, when the economy is in a tailspin and the polity is overheating, we expect the president to roll up his sleeves jump into the trenches and lead the sprinted struggle to tease a realistic way out of the muddle ... our president jumped on another flight of fancy. All we can be reminded of is the fiddling while Rome burns.”<sup>73</sup> Despite the criticism, Obasanjo believes that his approach is the best thus he argues: “I have devoted much time and energy to journey virtually all corners of the globe in my personal efforts to positively re-integrate our country into the international community and attract investments. We are happy to report that results from these trips have been encouraging enough to confirm my personal belief and above all marketing experts namely that personal contact is the best way to market your product.”<sup>74</sup> Hence, the series of foreign trips embarked upon by Obasanjo which experts in international relations refer to as ‘Shuttle Diplomacy’ could be seen as part of the ways he encouraged and wooed foreign investors into the country. But the question that comes to mind is to know the extent to which those foreign trips that were geared toward promoting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) improved the well-being of Nigerians. Or to know the kind of product he was marketing.

During Obasanjo administration Nigerian government signed several agreements with different nations of the world as means of promoting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). For instance, an agreement on the establishment of Nigeria Trade Office in China and the China Investment Development and Trade Promotion Centre in Nigeria was signed on 22 May 2002.<sup>75</sup> The relations between Nigeria and China comes under the category of the type where one party operates at the general international relations level while the other combines both the bread sweep with specific foreign policy pursuits.<sup>76</sup> Unfortunately, the party that operates only at the general level is Nigeria. China acknowledged at a particular time during Obasanjo administration that up to 90 Chinese companies are involved in Nigeria in various sections covering trade, investment and constructions.<sup>77</sup>

According to a business registration document obtained from the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), as of 2012, there were 208 registered Chinese companies doing business in Nigeria. These companies include State Enterprises Organizations (SEOs) and private investment organizations, with investments concentrated in the oil industry, manufacturing, construction and telecommunication.<sup>78</sup> Some like the Chinese Haier Company are co-investors with other enterprises. In one instance, Haier is involved with PZ in the production of air-conditioners, electronics, and refrigerators. Others like the China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) and the China National Petroleum and Chemicals Corporation (CNPCC) are involved in the vital core of the Nigerian economy. The CNPC is engaged in construction in association with Shell Petroleum (the largest foreign oil company in Nigeria) while CNPCC is involved the development of marginal fields.<sup>79</sup> And Nigeria gets nothing substantial from these foreign companies. What Nigeria gets from them is abundance of exploitation.

The Niger Delta in Nigeria harbours vast oil and gas deposit to the tune of 33 billion barrels and 160 trillion cu. ft, respectively.<sup>80</sup> And the foreign companies in charge of the exploration of the vast oil and gas deposit in the Niger Delta keep making life unbearable for the inhabitants even while exploiting their resources. The cumulative effects of oil spills and gas flaring have been devastating. Meanwhile, the foreign oil companies are busy making profits in millions of dollars which they take back to their various home countries for re-investment. It seems that most people in the ruling class are not concerned about what the masses are passing through so long as they still see funds to embezzle. This has been on before, during and even after Obasanjo administration. If Nigerian masses really benefited from the FDI that Obasanjo encouraged and promoted, the health indices in Nigeria which show that life expectancy fell from 56 percent in 1980 to 43 percent in 2004<sup>81</sup> would have been different. The Human Development Index of the World Bank reported in 2006 that Nigeria ranked 159<sup>th</sup> of 177 countries in terms of provision of good health services.<sup>82</sup> In 1993, Nigeria ranked 136<sup>th</sup>, while in 2000 it ranked 159<sup>th</sup>.<sup>83</sup> In 2003, Nigeria ranked 158<sup>th</sup>, worse than the occupied territory of Palestine that ranked 102<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>84</sup> Only 1.8 million Nigerians have access to health care through the National Health Insurances Scheme (NHIS)<sup>85</sup> Nigeria is said to have invested close to \$40 billion on electricity during Obasanjo administration, yet nothing to show for it.<sup>86</sup>

In 2006, Nigeria and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the establishment of a strategic partnership.<sup>87</sup> The partnership formed part of the FDI drive of the Obasanjo administration to encourage Chinese investors to do business in Nigeria. However, it is important to note that in 2007 there was a deal known as oil-for-infrastructure deal between Nigeria and China. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), an SEO, was allocated an oil

processing license in return to invest \$2 billion to rehabilitate the Kaduna oil refinery but the deal fell through in 2007.<sup>88</sup> Gregory Mthembu-Salter states that

The suspension by the Yar'Adua administration of the massive oil for infrastructure agreements of the Obasanjo era was a setback for the Chinese government's Nigeria policy, requiring significant re-evaluation by China of how best to do business with Nigeria.<sup>89</sup>

Factors that stalled China's infrastructure for resources deal in Nigeria are: one of the reasons is that the policy failed because of the interest of some government cabals who felt implementing the deal would cut them off profit from crude oil sales on the international market.<sup>90</sup> It is also significant to note that China's offer when deploying its infrastructure for resources falls below the prevailing market prices. According to Adeola Yusuf, "*Many people at the corridor of power in Nigeria perceived the concept as modern slavery.*"<sup>91</sup> It has already been made known that when late Yar'Adua and some members of his cabinet travelled to China, they discovered that the deal the previous administration signed with China was not concluded. For instance, the figure being quoted here in Nigeria did not match with the figures that Chinese authorities have in China.<sup>92</sup> This clearly indicates that there was a foul play in the process. The Chinese government was so desperate to ensure the success of the deal because they knew the great benefit they would have achieved at the expense of Nigeria, Kudos to those that scrutinize the process. Despite the failure of securing the 2007 infrastructure for resources deal, the oil and gas sector receives larger percentage of China's FDI in Nigeria. The economic relations between the two countries under Obasanjo administration did not actually lead to improvement in the well-being of Nigerians. For instance, a number of Nigerians have voiced objections to the 'slave-like' labour conditions in Chinese operated factories across Nigeria. Attention was first brought to these conditions when 37 Nigerian workers died after being trapped inside a locked Chinese - owned factory that caught fire in 2002.<sup>93</sup> Nigeria's trade unions have similarly complained that the ramp up in Chinese imports have eliminated more than 350,000 manufacturing jobs, primarily in the textile Sector.<sup>94</sup> The benefits accrued to the FDI in Nigeria from the Chinese has been largely favourable to the former at the expense of the latter.

USA was another major target of Obasanjo toward the fulfillment of his FDI goal in Nigeria. The Governments of the USA and Nigeria convened the inaugural session of the Joint Economic partnership Committee (JEPC) in Washington Dc - between 4 and 5 November 1999.<sup>95</sup> Nigeria also signed Investment Incentive Agreement with Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a U.S government agency that assists businesses looking to invest abroad.<sup>96</sup> U.S goods export to Nigeria in 2006 were \$2.2 billion, up 38% from the previous year. Their imports from Nigeria were \$27.9 billion in 2006, up from 15% from 2005.<sup>97</sup> Nigeria is currently the 50<sup>th</sup> - largest export markets for U.S. goods. The stock of U.S FDI in Nigeria in 2005 was \$874 million, down from 2.0 billion in 2004.<sup>98</sup> This clearly shows the calculative tendency of these foreign Direct Investors, the amount for investment is always reduced if there is no opportunity for exploitations, Nigeria is the largest U.S. trading partner in Sub-Sahara Africa, based mainly on the high level of petroleum imports from Nigeria.<sup>99</sup> The total two-way imports from Nigeria valued at \$30.8 billion in 2006, a 19% increase over 2005. The United States was the largest foreign investor in Nigeria.<sup>100</sup> But presently there is strong competition between them and China over who becomes the highest foreign investor in Nigeria. And this should be one of the major reasons why Nigeria should focus on developing the field of science and technology so that our nation will not continue to be the field of harvest for technologically competent nations who do the harvest, go with it and leave the chaff for us.

Nigeria has also been part of the principal destinations of FDI from South Africa. Research by Standard Bank shows that 20% of South Africa's total private investment stock on the continent was held in Nigeria, and about 30 of South Africa's most prominent firms have a physical presence in Nigeria's marketable environment.<sup>101</sup> A good example of this is MTN, a giant telecommunication company in Nigeria. Most of these companies started operating in Nigeria as a result of the strategic partnership between the two countries which was reactivated when Obasanjo became president of Nigeria in 1999. The strategic partnership led to the October 1999 inauguration of Nigeria/South Africa Bi-National Commission in Abuja.<sup>102</sup> In April 2000, the second session of the Bi-National Commission took place in Pretoria, South-African - Part of the agreements signed include: agreement on the reciprocal promotion and protection of investments; agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital gain; agreement on cooperation in the fields of mining, geology, exploration and beneficiation of minerals and energy.<sup>103</sup> In March 2001, the third session of the Bi- National Commission was held in Abuja, New agreements were signed at the third session of the Bi-National Commission. The Agreements covered such areas as police operation, defence cooperation, institutional cooperation in agriculture scientific and technological cooperation, as well as cooperation in the arts and culture.<sup>104</sup>

South African oil imports accounts for 83% of trade with Nigeria. Their investment profile in Nigeria is across a variety of industries. About 25% of businesses were engaged in wholesale and retail trade, including Shoprite, Massmart and Pep; 22% in financial and business support services through the likes of Standard Bank and the first Rand group; 16% in manufacturing, including Nampack and AEI; 13% in telecommunications, 13% in travel and leisure through companies such as Protea Hotels and Sun International, and 10% in construction through Group Five and Basil Read.<sup>105</sup> According to data provided by Wesgro, Outward Investment into Nigeria has also come from retail companies such as Woolworths and the Foschini Group, both of which have invested just under R350 million into Nigeria, as well as educational software firm learning curve, which invested R63 million.<sup>106</sup> On the part of Nigeria; Dianna Games, the honorary Chief executive of the South Africa-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce argues that the largest Nigeria investment into South Africa so far remains the investment of the Dangote Group. It invested more than R1-billion into Sefhaku Cement.<sup>107</sup> However, only his own investment is more than the total investment of many of the South African companies in Nigeria. Philip Ode posits among

many similar views that the visible beneficial foreign policy of Obasanjo on Foreign Direct Investment is the introduction of mobile telecommunication.<sup>108</sup>

Among the South African Companies that engaged in FDI in Nigeria during Obasanjo administration is Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN). It commenced operation in August 2001. That a lot of Nigerians received the coming of MTN with unspeakable joy at the initial time of its establishment is without doubt. In a similar view, Esther Ose opines that before the introduction of mobile telecommunication, only the bourgeoisie and the middle class were able to use fax and telephone.<sup>109</sup> Hence, the introduction of mobile telecommunication by Obasanjo as a result of Foreign Direct Investment he encouraged is part of the strength of his foreign policy. The inadequacies of NITEL made it necessary to celebrate the establishment of MTN even when SIM card alone was more than N20,000.<sup>110</sup> Under normal circumstance, telecommunication companies are to provide SIM card to subscribers free of charge. MTN started with outrageous per minute billing until competition came when Globacom introduced per second billing. The MTN Company has been involved in different business strategies geared toward exploiting their subscribers without serious response from people elected to represent Nigerians. At a time in Nigeria, it was widely spread that the telecommunication firms bribe the legislators by providing them with recharge cards weekly to influence their oversight function over them. This act is actually perpetrated in the name of public relations by these companies. This may explain why nobody has called them to order over the shoddy services they are rendering in Nigeria and the high tariffs they charge customers.

There was also an allegation by a German telecommunication company, Siemens that they gave a certain amount of money to three Nigerian former ministers of communications and a senator of Nigeria.<sup>111</sup> This is not far from double exploitation. That is, from foreign investors and the government representatives of Nigerian citizens. Obviously, the quest for FDI by the international capitalist class and their local counterparts in political office has also exacerbated corruption. In another instance, former president Olusegun Obasanjo's daughter, Iyabo Obasanjo – Bello was similarly accused of receiving a Toyota land cruiser jeep and about N11 million from an Austrian firm, M. Schneider GMBH & CO to help them secure a contract from the power sector.<sup>112</sup> It is even worrisome that most times, Nigeria tends to dance to the whims and caprices of the Western world as if that is the main solution to the woeful state of our economy. Obasanjo did that through pro-Western policies like the issue of privatization. China and Switzerland did not get involved in privatization yet their economies are growing very well with visible development<sup>113</sup> Perhaps, Obasanjo embarked on privatization for personal gains rather than using it to improve the lots of the people

It has been argued that for Nigeria to attract meaningful FDI, it must work towards having a strong indigenous technological base as FDI is increasingly geared toward technologically intensive activities. The country must be able to also provide the requisite inputs for modern production systems; these include, skilled and disciplined workforce, and good technical and physical infrastructure like roads, railways, ports, telecommunication facilities etc.<sup>114</sup> Absence of conducive manufacturing environment and basic infrastructure would continue to discourage foreign investors from investing in Nigeria except something urgent is done to reverse the situation. Some companies including Dunlop Nigeria Plc and Michelin have relocated to Ghana where they feel the environment is more conducive for investment. One of the factors that made Ghana to become a better option to some foreign investors is the uninterrupted power supply. Nigeria has all it takes to have a steady power supply, good road network and constant water supply that can encourage foreign investment. Government should rise up to the challenge and make the country a better place.

In terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Nigeria is a small player in the global economy. With GDP at \$100 billion, the country accounted for 0.28 percent of world's GDP in 2005.<sup>115</sup> The GDP of South Africa is more than twice that of Nigeria, the economy of the latter ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the world, up from 55<sup>th</sup> in 2000.<sup>116</sup> UNCTAD (2005) indicates that Nigeria's FDI inflows performance ranking improved from 82 in 1999-2001 to 44 in 2002-2004 – ahead of all its peers, including China, which ranked 45.<sup>117</sup> However, it is important to note that the improvement in the inflow of FDI and the growth of GDP that failed to improve the well-being of Nigerian citizens should not be seen as development of our economy. It is without doubt that the foreign policy of Obasanjo administration helped to make the Nigerian economy better than how it was before the democratic transition, but the result was far below the expectation of many Nigerians.

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<sup>9</sup>Osita Agbu, "Nigerian Civil Society and the Debt Relief and Nigeria Diplomacy . . . 222

<sup>10</sup>Osita Agbu "Nigerian Civil Society and the Debt Relief and Nigeria Diplomacy . . . 224

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<sup>14</sup>Ann Pettifor, "New Debt –Free Start . . .

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<sup>17</sup>Osita Agbu "Nigerian Civil Society and the Debt Relief and Nigeria Diplomacy . . . 224.

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## 6. Conclusion

This study has been carried out with the aid of relevant materials and persons whose ideas on the Obasanjo's foreign policy were thoroughly scrutinized. The work has created another opportunity to improve the existing works available on Nigerian's foreign policy under Obasanjo civilian administration. It has been observed that Obasanjo brought Nigeria to global limelight again after years of isolation. The personality of Obasanjo as a leader known in the international arena helped to facilitate the return of Nigeria from international isolation to become part of the major players in the comity of nations. Immediately after his inauguration in 1999, he embarked on regular international trips in order to build the image of Nigeria which was damaged during the era of military dictatorship. The various sanctions placed on Nigeria by some countries and international organizations were removed. However, it was argued in this work that Obasanjo should have done more to uphold human rights and maintain the integrity of Nigeria.

It has also been observed that Obasanjo continued with the traditional role of Nigeria as a country that takes the lead in peace keeping operation and conflict resolution in Africa. He continued with the peace keeping operation in Sierra Leone. Nigerian troops were among the troops of soldiers sent to Sierra Leone under ECOMOG some years before Obasanjo became president in 1999; he promised during his presidential campaign that he would withdraw Nigerian troops from Sierra Leone if elected as president. It is important to note that the killing of some Nigerian soldiers and civilians who were the major targets of the rebels and the billions of dollars the country was spending on the peacekeeping operation led to the call for withdrawal. But after the commencement of the batch by batch withdrawal of troops in 1999, he still indicated in year 2000 that if the United Nations could take care of the financial burden of Nigerian peacekeeping operation, he would still send more troops to the place. This means, he was only concerned about the financial burden of the peace-keeping without due consideration of the killing and maiming of some Nigerian soldiers and civilians by the rebels. Nigeria has really paid the ultimate sacrifice for peace keeping operation in Africa and other parts of the world with little or no economic benefits. The country spent about \$8 billion dollars on peacekeeping operation in Liberia and Sierra Leone alone. Nigeria also donated a sum of \$100,000 for the construction of special court in Sierra Leone. Also, Obasanjo

was involved in the resolution of conflict in Sudan where many Nigerian soldiers died. In addition, he was at the fore front of the peaceful resolution of the political crisis in Togo in 2005.

This study has also proved that the ceding of Bakassi to Cameroon was a major setback of Obasanjo's foreign policy. It is accepted that negligence on the part of Nigerian leaders before and after independence and the agreement between Yakubu Gowon and Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon in 1970s complicated the case for Obasanjo government, but his decision to accept the judgment of the international court by signing the Green Tree Agreement was the beginning of another phase of serious trouble for Nigerian citizens in the Bakassi region. The government had a time frame of ten years appeal against the judgment but Obasanjo did not wait to allow Nigerian government to look for a solution within the ten years. In less than five years that the judgment was delivered, he decided to bow in agreement to the international politics of ceding Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon. It is important to ponder on these two questions: If Bakassi is Obasanjo's Local Government Area, wouldn't he have allowed Nigerian government to still wait and look for solution to the problem within the time frame given by the ICJ? How many of those so-called big nations that connived to take away Bakassi from Nigeria are really obeying the judgments of the international court of Justice? Citizens of Nigeria who were residing in Bakassi fled from their home when Cameroonian soldiers recently attacked them. Many of them died in the course of the attack and most of those survived it are now homeless.

On the aspect of the foreign policy as it affects Nigerian economy, steps were taken toward the repatriation of billions of dollars stashed in foreign account by late Sani Abacha and his cohorts. Millions of dollars were repatriated in batches before Obasanjo left office. More can still be repatriated if Nigerian government can still put in more effort towards the recovery. However, the billions of dollars stolen under Obasanjo administration must have been ignored by Nigerian government. The only few cases treated are in the category of those who stepped on the toes of Obasanjo and his cabals. The administration also took diplomatic steps to improve the Nigerian economy by encouraging foreign Direct Investment. This he achieved through his series of international trips. It has been argued in this work that most of the foreign investors wooed into the country always end up in exploiting the people of Nigeria. Still on the economic impact of Obasanjo's foreign policy, he carried out a serious campaign toward Debt relief for Nigeria. This work has examined the impact of debt relief on Nigerian citizens.

The purpose of this research will be fully achieved if Nigeria leaders especially the foreign policy actors can always work with the consciousness of the fact that protection of lives of the citizens, the territorial boundary and the economic interests are among the core objectives of the foreign policy of every ideal nation all over the world. It therefore becomes odd if Nigeria or any nation fails to design and implement a foreign policy that is capable of guiding the national interest. Nigeria should avoid unnecessary donations to other countries and be calculative in her peace keeping operations. The advanced nations of the world hardly spend their resources or money in other countries without calculating the benefits they can derive from it. When there is need for withdrawal of peace-keeping troops sent to troubled region especially when they become the main target of rebels, the withdrawal should be done without hesitation.

It is also important to note that too much focus should not be on Africa in our external relations. It is without doubt that the advanced nations always strike a balance in their external relations; their focus is not on one continent. Nigeria should rigorously work towards empowering her citizens in the area of science and technology by increasing the number of people sent to advanced nations on scholarship because a nation whose citizens lack the technical know-how in the field of science and technology cannot get the best in economic relations with advanced nations.

It is also necessary for competent people to be chosen as foreign policy actors for Nigeria. Rather than political maneuvering, competence should be the mode of appointing ministers, ambassadors, and other actors of external relations. And the elected representatives of the people who are to give necessary advice to our external relations representatives should operate within the confines of the law. The need for this caution is as a result of the country's experience in 2002 when nine-member Joint Committee of the House on Foreign and Inter Parliamentary Affairs went beyond their area of jurisdiction by going to Islamabad, Pakistan on a mediation mission on the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan. The Foreign Affairs Minister of that period, Sule Lamido sent a letter to the senate president stating that he was concerned that such initiative was undertaken without the input of the ministry charged with the responsibility of conducting and managing foreign relations. Then on the part of citizens, patriotism should be the watch word. Anything capable of tarnishing the image of Nigeria should be avoided. Bribery and the diverse criminal acts that Nigeria is now known for cannot take the country to the level that advanced nations have attained. Building an enviable foreign policy in Nigeria requires the concerted effort of both the leaders and the followers. But the leaders should always be aware that to whom much is given much is required.

Olusegun Obasanjo never sought to balance the pursuit of international renewal and prominence for Nigeria with domestic matters. The President who seriously condemned Faure Eyadema for coming to power through unconstitutional means was busy with unconstitutional practices in Nigeria. An example is how he unconstitutionally removed Governor Ayo Fayose of Ekiti State and Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State as part of his fight against corruption which seemed to be selective. He was busy encouraging countries of the world to come and invest in Nigeria without considering the need for Nigerian government to heavily invest both within and outside the country. It would probably have been more effective as a development strategy than overwhelming reliance on seeking debt relief, important as that task was. Hence, there is need for the leadership of Nigeria to use both human and material resources for the pursuit of national priorities in a way that can enhance development in all sectors of national life.

At this juncture, the extent to which this work contributes to knowledge should be noted. The historical analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy between 1999 and 2007, has unveiled some hidden issues concerning foreign policy formulation and implementation. Many Nigerians with limited knowledge of what transpired between the colonialists and the

traditional rulers who were in charge of the Bakassi region during the colonial era and the events that took place concerning Bakassi peninsula shortly before and after independence can have additional knowledge through this research. Another contribution to knowledge is that many Nigerians who are boastful of Nigerian peace keeping operations in Africa and the increase in Foreign Direct Investment during Obasanjo civilian administration without considering their impact on the country would have a re-think.

The perception of some Nigerians that Nigeria should continue to lift the burden of Africa as part of the leadership responsibility given to her by providence could also be changed through this research.

Name	Age	Occupation	Mode of Interview	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Adeyemo Tunji	55	Auditor, PDP National Secretariat	Oral	Abuja	16 May 2014
Agbu Osita	51	Lecturer	Oral	Lagos	5 August 2013
Asadu Fidelis	75	Civil Servant	Oral	Nsukka	6 June 2013
Atser Terhemba	44	Administrative Officer, NOA	Oral	Makurdi	16 May 2014
Banji Mayowa Z.	70	Physicist	Oral	Online	7 June 2013
Fatunla Obasola Samuel	69	Diplomat	Oral	Abuja	19 May 2014
George Olufemi	65	Retired Ambassador	Oral	Abuja	19 May 2014
Ioryan Thaddaus	60	Civil Servant	Oral	Nsukka	5 June 2013
Kadiri Audu	69	Diplomat	Oral	Abuja	19 May 2014
Kayode Garrick	63	Ambassador	Oral	Abuja	19 May 2014
Lagoke Taiwo	56	Director, Library, Ministry Foreign Affairs	Oral	Abuja	20 May 2014uy
Mohammed Usman	52	Civil servant	Oral	Nsukka	5 June 2013
Musa Audu	61	PDP National Personnel Director	Oral	Abuja	20 May 2014
Nwachukwu Johnson U	51	Lecturer	Oral	Online	3 June 2013
Nwoba Benjamin	65	Civil servant	Oral	Nsukka	5 June 2013
Ode Philip	45	Civil Servant	Oral	Makurdi	16 May 2014
Oguche Joseph H.	48	Civil Servant	Oral	Nsukka	5 June 2013
Ogunejemite Jide G. B	67	Lecturer	Oral	Online	6 June 2013
Okon Basey Williams	53	Lawyer	Oral	Online	6 June 2013
Olowomeye Samuel	51	Ex Lawmaker	Oral	Abuja	20 May 2014
Onafowokan Seyi	51	Ambassador	Oral	Abuja	19 May 2014
Onalo John	75	Retired Military Officer	Oral	Ejule	1 January 2013
Onoja Benjamin	54	Politician	Oral	Abuja	19 May 2014
Onuoha Jonah	57	Lecturer	Oral	Nsukka	5 March 2014
Ose Esther	49	Journalist	Oral	Makurdi	16 May 2014
Torduaga Samuel	54	Principal Accountant,NOA	Oral	Makurdi	16 May 2014
Udoh Akpabio	52	Civil servant	Oral	Online	6 June 2013
Yerima Hassaini	65	Politician	Oral	Abuja	19 May 2014



Table 1

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