

# **Nigeria and Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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## **Abstract**

The study critically appraises the redeemer posture of Nigeria in Africa's plethora of dire straits in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Like the United States once regarded it a manifest destiny to protect and exercise influence over its "backyard" in the Western Hemisphere, so does Nigeria assume a role of salvaging Africa and repositioning it, which has manifested in its Afrocentric or Africa-centered policy. The continent's problems include a debilitating economic strangulation, civil wars, religious conflict, poverty, bad government, HIV-AIDS, underdevelopment, which continually plague the continent. Hence, a supposed promise land encounters dashed hopes because it is lost in multifaceted crises. However, Nigeria's competence to be the "Giant" redeemer of Africa that it claims to be, is drastically impaired or eroded by a number of forces within the internal context. The paper, considers the social, political, international, and historical forces in the coloring and shaping of Nigeria's foreign policy that make it imperative to assume a forerunner in African situation; and also seeks reasons for the "Giant's" wasted opportunities to redeem Africa, and finds answers to these.

## **Introduction: The Political-Economy of Nigeria and Africa: A Retrospect**

*Our country [Nigeria] is the largest single unit in Africa... we are not going to abdicate the position in which God Almighty has placed us...The whole black continent is looking up to this country to liberate it from thralldom.<sup>1</sup>*

An outlook into the historical background of the political-economy of Nigeria on one hand and then, the African context on the other shall serve as a platform to systematically

understand the political-economic variables that mitigate or facilitate the efforts of Nigeria, to help Africa find its way out of myriads of quagmire. Like a virus-infected patient, Africa already suffers a syndrome of political-economic deficiencies to which no African state is immune from. The geographical proximity among African states makes this 'virus' very contagious, thereby, providing little hope of revitalisation from within. Even, Nigeria, the African giant is not spared. Nigeria, over the years has had its share of debilitating challenges that even, threatened to collapse its volatile political-economic system.

From independence in 1960, Africa has been the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. This could not have been otherwise, given the sheer size of Nigeria's population, which rose from about 40 million at independence, to the current level of 140 million. This makes Nigeria Africa's largest country. Africa is therefore a natural preoccupation of Nigeria's foreign policy and international relations. Successive Nigerian Governments, whether military or civilian democracy, had devoted enormous human and material resources to the prosecution of this cardinal foreign policy objective.

With the end of the Cold War and the liberation of the African continent from colonial domination and apartheid in the late 1980's to the early 1990's, Nigeria and indeed, the other African countries had to respond to new challenges. These challenges centred on the quest for rapid economic development, poverty eradication, good governance, conflict prevention, management and resolution. The nexus between economic development, peace and security was recognized. Consequently, if the African continent was to attain appreciable levels of economic development and growth, it was recognized that appropriate solutions must be found to the series of conflicts on the continent, which had hobbled Africa's progress over the years.

Beginning from its immediate neighbours, Nigeria pursued and continues to pursue, a policy of good neighbourliness without bullying. It has always been willing to care and share the benefits of its relative prosperity with its less endowed neighbours. Having concerted with other countries in the West African sub-region in establishing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, Nigeria pushed for the prevention and resolution of devastating conflicts that engulfed Liberia in 1992, which spilled over into Sierra Leone and other countries in the MANO River region. Nigeria spearheaded the creation of ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), as a regional peace-enforcement mechanism, which facilitated the resolution of the civil wars and the restoration of democracy to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Many observers agree that the sterling performance of ECOMOG is, indeed, unparalleled in the history of regional

organizations the world over. This has now become a veritable model to emulate, not just in its operational efficiency but also in giving local or regional actors the pride of place in the resolution of regional conflicts. Nigeria exerted similar efforts to ensure that democratic governments were restored to Guinea-Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire and Sao Tome et Principe, after the military take-overs in those countries. It is on record that Nigeria expended over US\$10 billion in these peace campaigns, not to mention the large number of men and women of the Nigerian Armed Forces who paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of peace in the region.

Aside from Nigeria's decisive role in situations such as the recent events in Togo, Nigeria's role in peace-making, conflict prevention and resolution, covering both intra-state and inter-state conflicts, is not limited to the West African sub-region alone. This is exemplified by its previous engagements in Chad, Burundi, the DRC, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia-Eritrea, to mention but a few.

The Afrocentric policy of Nigeria draws inspiration historically from the 'Balewa Doctrine' which has been the foundation of the foreign policy objectives and principles of Nigeria. This encompasses the need to promote unity as well as, the total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Nigeria and Africa at large. Also for Nigeria, the most definitive national outlook turned out to be a sense of endowment in size and power that entitled it to play a leadership role in Africa. Thus another basis can be drawn given the sheer size of Nigeria's population, which increased from about 40 million at independence, to the current level of over 150 million. This doubtless makes Nigeria, Africa's largest country. Africa thus occupies a central position, thereby becoming a natural preoccupation of Nigeria's foreign policy and international relations. The Nigerian foreign policy process has had to take into account the changing realities in the international system and focused on the identification and pursuit of these options that would ensure the effective maximisation of Nigeria's interest as a confident and self-reliant nation.

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These challenges encompass the quest for rapid economic development, poverty eradication, good governance, conflict prevention, management and resolution. This draws further credence from the words of former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and is quoted thus:

*Without good governance, without the rule of law, predictable administration, legitimate power, and responsive regulation, no amount of funding, no amount of charity will set us on the path of prosperity.*<sup>3</sup>

This accentuates the fact the political substructure of the African context is faulty, thus, making the numerous attempts to establish the economic superstructure amount to a ‘white-elephant project’. Indeed, the global view of Africa especially as projected by western media and practitioners is one of a political ‘dungeon’: and expression of chaos, anarchy, genocide, and wars. The defaced political image projected is that of corruption and misappropriation. The stereotype constructed is that of a region that works through a reverse logic of political disorder and irrationality, where politics is about bare-faced stealing and a game of the belly<sup>4</sup>, where political motion is of oscillation and retreat, rather than constitutionalism. *The Economist*, an international news-magazine raps it up when it aptly qualifies Africa as the “hopeless continent”<sup>5</sup>

Though, it is a truism that, there have been apparent political setbacks in Africa facilitated by a complex integration of local and global forces, the last two decades have witnessed intricate internal political dynamics and struggles to engender a culture of politics, constitutional order and governance in Africa. To this effect is the Nigerian context vital to the pursuit of refurbishing the damaged political image of Africa, coupled with collectively engineered attempt to kick-off sustainable economic growth.

Despite persistent shifts in both sub- and super-structure since independence, one characteristic of Nigeria’s international position has been taken as a constant by almost all analysts: its greatness. While the basis of this greatness has been seen to change, its presence has been commonly accepted or assumed by Nigerian and non-scholars (and decision-makers) alike. This awareness of power (actual and potential) is a reflection of

widespread perception held by national leaders about their country's external position, notably Nigeria's role in continental affairs.<sup>6</sup> Hence, irrespective of time-period or the regime in power, whether at independence, or in the post-cold war era, there appears to be a synergy of thoughts amongst Nigerian leaders and scholars that their country is destined 'to lead Africa'.

### **The Role and Nigeria's Redeemer Stature**

The role theory explains Nigeria's redeemer stature in Africa. Holsti has provided an example by his explanation of how to use the role theory to discuss inter-state politics and a nation's foreign policy. The concept of role has helped integrate knowledge relevant to three levels of abstraction: culture, social structure, and personality. Current research and theory at each of these levels suggests some interesting analogues, possibly useful for an understanding of international relations. Holsti illustrates how the concept of role can be of use in explaining regularities in the relations between governments which constitute the basic analytical units of international system. The role Nigeria assumes in Africa, which is effectively carried out by successive governments is that of a vanguard of peace and greatness, a guardian of sovereignty, and a tribune of good governance and social justice. The role is more effectively played by leadership styles. The dynamic style of Murtala-Obasanjo up to 1979, and Obasanjo's current roles have made Nigeria's vanguardist role both firm and focused. Cowan contends that Nigeria believes it has been expected to assume a decisive role in African politics.<sup>7</sup> To buttress this point, Akinyemi predicts the possibility of a continental '*Pax Nigeriana*'<sup>8</sup> in his first book on Nigeria in world politics, while Aluko concludes that, 'Nigeria cannot readily give up the bid to play the leading role in the OAU.'<sup>9</sup>

It must however be recalled that the high stakes and committal of resources to Africa has the ultimate objective of being incontrovertibly accepted as the only or major credible voice on the continent and the regional superpower. This study observes that the role theory best explains both Nigeria's Afrocentric policy and Obasanjo's leadership style in Africa. While merely continuing Nigeria's destined role in Africa, Obasanjo's personal

passion for Africa and fatherly role in the continent make him fit perfectly into the prism for analysis.

The psychological bases for Nigeria's conception of its national role as Africa's great power; as well as the assumptions by analysts about its self-image have varied over time. Initially they were usually indicative of its geographical size (territory and population) and political pluralism (parliamentary and federal government). Occasionally, Nigeria's stature was taken to be the outcome of its relatively diverse and developing economy. And for a while, its greatness was seen as an attribute of the national psyche, its conciliatory treatment of defeated parties after the civil war. But with the advent of military rule, political order, and the high price of oil, Nigeria's greatness has been largely conceived as an attribute of its new revenue. Jean Herskovits reflects this consensus about the centrality of oil, an issue to which we return later:

*Oil has invigorated what was once called 'Africa's sleeping giant'. It permitted Nigeria to finance its civil war and thus strengthened the country's international independence. Oil made possible an unparalleled post-war recovery.*<sup>10</sup>

By implication, oil is now seen as a preponderant factor that determines the rate of development and dominance of other African states. Albeit, other factors and attributes of prosperity and power were cited in the work, but are treated as oil derivatives. However, they serve to reinforce Nigeria's claims to leadership in continental affairs. This served as the vital means to pursue the Afro-centric political ends of Nigeria on the African terrain, as in the case of the struggle for decolonisation of Rhodesia, when Nigeria nationalised the Shell British Petroleum.

However, within this purview, what is important is to ascertain whether Nigeria did play the felt leadership role and whether other African states recognised and

acknowledged that claimed status. To this effect, a tripod-approach would suffice to analyse this variable.

Foremost, the additional burden which Nigeria voluntarily accepted over and above what was required of it should be considered. Also, attention should be paid to the extent to which Nigeria exercised discernible influence in the process. And third, the existing state of affairs in Africa after the establishment of organisations and the declarations which have operated for a reasonable period, are worthy of consideration. Nigeria on this platform can therefore be considered as a driving force of Pan-Africanism. It is a movement dedicated to the physical, cultural, emotional and intellectual liberation of the African *Diaspora*. Thus, with Nigeria at the fore-front, Pan-Africanism came to stand for multi-racial unity in Africa with the African continent designated as a common home for all its inhabitants. Eventually, this Pan-African spirit accelerated the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963. To further complement this political unity, symbolised by the OAU, African states also established the African Development Bank (ADB) as a Pan-African economic institution in August 1963. With specific reference to Nigeria, the emphasis is not so much on the commitment to the cause which all African states officially share, but the rather unique national mind-set that, given its size and resource endowments it is destined to play a leadership role in African affairs.

Talking about extra burdens, Nigeria was logically assessed higher than most African states for statutory contributions. And Nigeria accepted that situation as commensurate with its perceived status. Thus, Nigeria has been responsible for between eight and ten percent of the OAU's regular budget. However, according to the OAU Secretary-General, by 1992 the organisation owed unpaid arrears of \$60 million by member states and Nigeria was one of the defaulters with \$2.2 million outstanding. In that year, the OAU's budget was \$27.9 million. By 1995, the cumulative unpaid arrears still remained high at about \$45 million. The non-payment of dues inevitably affected the operations of the OAU in all the areas of its purposes under Article II of its Charter. Illustratively, even

with the frequency of conflicts in Africa, there has been no collective deployment of troops for conflict resolution purposes under the auspices of the OAU since, the peace-keeping operations in Chad in 1981. It is pertinent to note that, the operations of the ADB also entail the assessment of economic size, and Nigeria gets higher regard accordingly. However, within the ADB framework, Nigeria exerted itself further by establishing a Trust Fund (NTF) in 1976 with an initial capital outlay of \$80 million. By December 1990, the NTF had financed 43 development projects in 17 sub-Saharan African states with a total value of \$240.764 million.

Nevertheless, the steady economic decline of African states and operational failures within the ADB allowed the non-regional states to increase their influence. By 1995, the non-regional states have become the major source of capital as African states accumulated loan repayment arrears which stood at \$500 million then. Significantly, Nigeria cleared its own arrears of \$42 million then just in time for it to host the Bank's meeting for that year.

Generally, there is a correlation between the decline of pan-African institutions, and the slow pace of functional cooperation among African states. This is so because the institutions reflect the operational environment cast by their members. Within this setting, Nigeria's ability to exercise good influence has also suffered. Evidently, Africa's need continues to outpace its capacity.

Even to its immediate West African neighbours, Nigeria has been the harbinger of good neighbourliness, peace and development, in terms of being at the fore-front of promoting cooperation in economic, social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its people, while increasing and maintaining economic stability to contribute to the progress and development of the African continent at large. This thereby formed the underlying principles, doctrines and objectives for the formation of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as contained in Article II of its treaty in May 1975. Throughout these processes, Nigeria's conduct and general posture typically reflected the well established national mind-set about its presumed leadership role based

on its size and potentials. In line with this, Nigeria through its immense contributions in the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), financially and militarily has fostered peace-building, peace-keeping and conflict resolutions in Liberia (1990-80), Sierra-Leone (1996-00), Guinea-Bissau (1998-00) and Cotê d'Ivoire (2000-date).

Thus far in retrospect, it is apparent that, the fundamental role of Nigeria in the affairs of Africa cannot be downplayed. To this effect, the essence of this work is to examine if just as in the past, that, Nigeria can still be the 'bearer of the lamp at the end of the tunnel' of economic and political abysmal conditions. This can only be done through an intensive analysis of the present efforts of Nigeria, while drawing crucial insights into the signs of hope and sobering realities of the African context.

It is pertinent to note that Nigeria's colonial experience, size, oil, and power play central roles in its foreign policy. First its affinity to Britain as a colonial lord naturally ties Nigeria to the United Kingdom and its traditional allies, including the United States of America. However, Nigeria's unpalatable experience of ethnic and political divisiveness colonialism has wrought on Africa has led to its commitment to see to the liberation of all African countries from all forms of imperialism. Second, the size of Nigeria as the most populous black nation culminated in the idea of defending black cause all over the world. Third, the abundance of its oil resources has made it indispensable and empowered it economically and financially to pursue an ambitious foreign policy. Oil has also been a source of conflict locally and in international context, with militants in the Niger Delta targeting expatriate workers and oil MNCs in their bid to force them to be more socially responsible and compel government attention to Niger Delta demands for more rewarding revenue allocation. Fourth, the military power of Nigeria has naturally made it a major player in regional and global peacekeeping and collective security missions.

### **Disappointment of a Promise Land and the Burden of African Leadership**

The volatile nature of the African context no doubt, presents Nigeria with burdensome challenges looking at the deplorable political and socio-economic conditions of other African states as well. Nigeria in itself is not immune to these challenges in fact, is an

embodiment of the afflictions that plague the black continent. Corruption, misappropriation of public funds, 'squander-mania', looting and electoral malpractices, just a few to mention; are the cancerous agents that have devastated the political terrain of Nigeria and the African society at large. In spite of concerted efforts through the African Peer Review Mechanism under the auspices of the African Union to checkmate the causes and imminent implications of corruption to the African political system, it is imperative to note that, African leaders have only paid 'lip-service' to its implementation in full essence. With the emergence of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on one hand, and the Independent Commission for Political Crimes and Corrupt Practices (ICPC) in the Nigerian context through the Obasanjo administration, it is hopeful to conclude that, the days of corruption and the misappropriation of public funds are numbered. The apparent reality looking at the trend of events no doubt crucifies this hope. Bare-faced stealing is what happens in the Nigerian political setting. More to it, this crime is without impunity. Most of the looters of government funds, instead of becoming convicts, end up as celebrities. It is a Machiavellian setting in which the 'ends justify the means'. The few rich do anything to be richer, at the expense of making the mass of poor people, increasingly poorer.

It is ironical that in the midst of enormous wealth, poverty in Nigeria is endemic. Political figures like former President General Ibrahim Babangida, former Bayelsa State Governor Chief Diepreye Alamieyesegha, former Inspector-General of the Nigeria Police, Tafa Balogun and a few others not mentioned are yet to be brought to justice. Why? The greatest humanity is not only in violation of life, but violation and infringement on the benefits of living, such as prosperity. Corruption is therefore the invisible bandit that impoverishes the lives of many to enrich the lives of a few. Such corruptive tendencies have only succeeded in concentrating, political, financial and economic wherewithal in the hands of few top government officials, it thus becomes the game of a few 'paying the political piper and dictating the economic tune'. Not only that, this as well, sets a bad precedence for emerging leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Everyone now believes that it is a game of the belly. In just about 100 days, the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mrs. Etteh is presently involved in a financial scandal. Hence, Etteh's

action has not only eroded women empowerment in Nigeria, but further countermands the image Nigeria tries to present in the African and global community as a shining example or potential world leader.

Corruption plagues Nigeria's quest for economic development and regional leadership. This political foundation is indeed very faulty. No amount of foreign assistance in form of foreign direct investment (FDI), technology transfer and other means of capital accumulation can make meaningful impact, when, the economic superstructure is being built on a political 'sinking sand'. Several concerted efforts are being engineered towards the reformation of the banking and financial sectors, through the capitalisation and monetisation policies. The performance of the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE), in July 2007 hit top records among the highest in the global economy. Albeit, Nigeria has been projected to join the 20 largest economies of the world by 2020, if Nigeria, the African giant has a broken political 'shoulder', how then, can the enormous burden of other African nations be borne without collapse? If inequality and economic disparities cannot be tackled at the societal level, how then, can the problems of Africa at a continental level be solved in the long-run? Remember, a house divided against itself, how shall it stand? This challenge is not peculiar to the Nigerian context; it is a political 'epidemic' that wreaks relatively the same level of adverse effects in other African countries.

It is also worthy of note that, such political and economic reforms that berthed the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) in Nigeria, and at continental level; the consolidation of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), were mere political 'gimmicks' to solicit for external assistance, especially in form of enormous debt cancellation from the G8 nations. The continuity of these laudable national and regional policies respectively, has been slaughtered on the altar of 'inconsistency and nonchalance'. This 'fire-brigade' approach to policy formulation and implementation has been the bane of meaningful socio-economic progress and political development. While the G8 Summit was on-going at Gleneagles, Scotland in July, 2006, the Republic of Niger was plagued with famine, and no tangible immediate response

came from neighbouring African states, except Nigeria, until it led to the destruction of over 800,000 lives especially, women and children.

These predicaments in the African context have been worsened by the bouts of internal political crises in various African nations. While, Africa struggles to drag its battered political-economy out of quagmire, internal instability and domestic crises have immensely impeded the Renaissance move. Several domestic conflicts and crises; political, ethnic and religious, within African nations including Nigeria have not only stagnated development, but have also, threatened to truncate the efforts of African leaders. This no doubt presents the picture of a bleak future for the marginalised continent. Since the Rwandan genocide of the early 1990s, the sporadic outburst of low intensity conflicts in Africa nations have been relegated to the background in terms of international response. It thus becomes the responsibility of African leaders to contain violence, build peace and maintain security within the various domestic contexts.

For instance, Nigeria indeed has been a front-liner in this respect, while defending its Afrocentric objectives, thus far, has contributed immensely to the on-going peace process in Darfur, Sudan. In playing a vital mediatory role, Nigeria sought to build peace in Darfur, as it recognises the religious and cultural diversities associated with the vexed issues of regional autonomy and a quasi-Federal structure of government. Under the auspices of the African Union, President Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as the chairman of the African Peace and Security Council; analogous to the United Nations Security Council, seized the initiative of active personal engagement and interest in solving the conflict in the region. As a result of President Obasanjo's personal engagements in Darfur, in his capacity as the Chairman of the African Union, whatever, actions and initiatives that were made; have been launched in the context of the African Union. This includes the appointment of General Abdulsalami Abubakar as his Special Envoy to Sudan and Chad. The Special Envoy of the AU Commission Chairperson, Ambassador Kingibe is also a former Foreign Minister of Nigeria and a respected former career diplomat who had himself, served in the Sudan in his previous postings. These

appointments indicated Nigeria's poise for an active engagement in Sudan, in a manner that was to inject credibility and sound judgement into the peace process.

In spite of the commendable commitment stance of Nigeria to the effect of deploying the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS), the peace process in itself presents new sprout of challenges. Apart from the obvious lack of confidence between the rebel movements and the Government of Sudan, in terms of an appreciation of each other's genuine commitment to peace, with issues of power sharing, devolution of powers to local authorities, and the control of resources especially, oil as bottle-necks; the African Union Mission is grossly under-subscribed. It is poorly funded and ill-equipped. African countries are already over-burdened by enormous domestic challenges of their own that many of them can contribute neither troops nor equipment. Those who have the personnel, lack the means to deliver and maintain them. After much effort, only US\$1.6 million has been realised out of the projected US\$200 million for the African Union (AU) Peace Fund for the period of 2004 to 2007.

However, this does not erase the fact that, Nigeria is plagued with its own fair share of internal crises. Talking about the Niger-Delta crises, the agitations coming from the ethnic minority of the South-South geo-political division is obviously degenerating into a low-intensity conflict. This is particularly exacerbated by the proliferation of light arms and small weapons, which make guerrilla warfare tactics easy for the 'Ijaw boys'. This is not just about the vandalism of pipelines and the bunkering of oil, the threat to lives and properties of even foreigners, portends a sobering reality for a nation whose altruistic tendencies in this respect is indeed worthy of note.

Whence, therefore is the future of political stability and economic development in Africa? Where is the beacon of hope for the achievement of sustainable economic development? How can the fire of hope for the future of African Renaissance be re-ignited? This is the agonising reality of debilitating political conditions and economic quagmire, which way forward?

## **Nigeria and Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Prospects for African Renaissance**

Every foundational problem requires a foundational solution. Africa's challenges are foundational and therefore, it takes a foundational approach to take delivery of practical solutions. How foundational could this possibly be? Recall that, historical forces; both internal and external, have a vital role to play in the drive of Africa into the economic woods. However, this work is not prescribing an isolation of historical forces in deriving a panacea for the syndrome that afflicts the African political-economy. Rather, it seeks to advocate the consideration of the peculiarity of these historical forces to the African context. Very imperative, it should be noted that, Africa has been relegated to the background of international affairs, due to the peculiarity of these historical variables to the African context. Therefore, African problems are calling for African-oriented solutions. The beacon of hope that is much sought after is within. Africa must take stock of its own performance and capacities.<sup>11</sup>

Africa is beyond bemoaning the past for its problems. The task of undoing that last is ours, with the support of those willing to join us in a continental renewal. We have a new generation of leaders who know that we must take responsibility for our own destiny, that we will uplift ourselves only by our own efforts in partnership with those who wish us well.<sup>12</sup>

If African leaders are increasingly determined to proffer African solutions to African problems, then, the political structures and institutions must foremost be reformed to reflect the conditions suitable for the pursuit of sustainable development. Without a formidable political base, the economic super-structure will remain weak and fragile. The political base is crucial, because, the state is the repository of all ramifications and dimensions of power; political, economic, technological and military. And the purpose of the state is to authoritatively allocate these resources.

This goes beyond theory, but, the need to empower the masses to mobilise their local resources and utilise them optimally for the acceleration of development needs to be in

practical terms. There is need to halt the concentration of public funds in the hands of few corrupt and greedy individuals. After all, public funds are meant for the public and to be handled by the public. The machinery of the Nigerian government for instance, should encourage, fairness, equity, accountability and transparency in governance.

Talking about the naira redenomination, it is not the naira that needs re-valuing, rather, the sovereign character and the essence of Nigerian democracy that needs to be re-valued. The essence of democracy, good governance and constitutionalism should not loose its value in Nigeria and Africa at large. This is a restoration mandate to re-ignite the hopes and dignity of the black man.

Africa is no doubt endowed with huge deposit of potentials, human capital, natural and mineral resources, and vast land mass. Nigeria in itself is one of the endowments of Africa. Given the vast potentials and actual resources and endowments that are embedded on the Nigerian soil, it only takes a discovery to get on the track of recovery for African continent.

### **Nigeria-US Similarities and Impact US Foreign Policy on Nigeria's Development**

Nigeria shares some similarities with the United States. First, both were British colonies that believed that British colonial rule was both extremely divisive and exploitative, which made them both to, at independence, become committed to decolonization and total liberation of their continents. This commitment has been the launch pad for regional importance and subsequent hegemony. Secondly, both nations are ambitious to become global power and “police”-the US has risen significantly from regional hegemony to become world power and the only superpower in a unipolar system, while the multifaceted trouble with Nigeria has impaired its rise, but rather reducing it gradually to a sub regional power.

Thirdly, Nigeria and the United States are both multiethnic societies; the US is also multiracial. Fourthly, both countries are also multi religious. The ethnic and religious diversity has been a source of strength for the US; while it has been a sore point in

Nigeria's history. Nigeria can learn from the US experience by converting the diversity nature of its country to opportunity to build its strength with different ideas and contributions from all.

Fourthly, America and Nigeria operate a federal system of government. The federal nature of its political system is informed by its social diversity. However, while America's federal system is integrative, aggregative and developmental, Nigeria's is marred by ethnicity and significantly eroded by previous prolonged military rule. Closely related to this is Nigeria's presidential system fashioned after the US'. However, in the American system, the powers of the president are enormously checked by constitutionally strengthened democratic institutions and the office, as glamorous as it is, is demystified by the personality of the American President. In Nigeria, the presidential system is not as controlled. The office of the President is too glamorous, with too many central powers that gives the President an image of a sovereign monarch who is deified.

### **Impact of Globalization on Nigeria**

There is no doubt that globalization in our age is no longer the Europeanization of the world but the "Americanization" of the international system. American patterns and traditions now line the trends of globalization. Indeed the world system beginning from the demise of the Soviet Union and extinction of the Eastern bloc is primarily American in nature in all respects. Hence the impact of globalization on Nigeria is first and foremost the appreciation of American standards in engineering the political, social, cultural, technological, military and economic life of Nigeria.

The political context can be regarded as a realm of globalization that can be successful only if it obeys the biddings of globalization and rewarded with an authoritarian free government but is subject to external influences which could be difficult to control as the market is flexible as an open society due to the integration process brought about by globalization. Such economies are open to more jobs for citizens, enough capital and rich in opportunities as integration has brought both multinational corporations and transnational corporations to invest in the country. In the early 80s, Nigeria witnessed a

lot of foreign investments due to its viable economy and auspicious civilian rule. The process of globalization also influences the culture of people as it offers exposure to other cultures but on the other hand, it has caused imperialism owing to the dominance of the European and American culture over the African culture.

Due to the eclectic nature of the concept of globalization, it has been viewed as a process that is beneficial and key to the economic development that is inevitable in every country. Some others refer to it as being hostile due to the inequality created within nations, threat to employment and the living standards of the people and social progress. This aspect deals with the political economic aspect of globalization and how it affects Nigeria. It is true that globalization in general offers extensive opportunities for a truly worldwide development but it can be said to be not progressively even. Some countries end up becoming integrated into the global economy more quickly than others.

Globalization in the economic perspective is a historical process, being a human scientific innovation and technological progress which refers to the increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and financial flows. Globalization refers to an extension beyond national borders of the same market forces that have operated for centuries at all levels of human economic activity-village markets, urban industries, or financial centres. It is essential that every country promotes its market through competition and division of labour which is specialization that allows people and economy focus on their best.

The market size as well as the economic growth of a country is an essential determinant of the viability of such country as it also aids investments. The limited size of the national economy of Africa has hindered the interest of private investors. For this reason, Africa seeks regional integration as an alternative for economic imperative. Regional integration being a leeway out would be able to provide a strong framework for African countries to unite and cooperate in developing a common economic infrastructure in all areas concerning transportation, telecommunications, banking and insurance services. This, by

all means would make Nigeria and Africa opportune to participate in the global economy instrumented by the process of globalization, especially in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Conclusion**

Having examined the issues central to this discourse, it is apparent that, Africa indeed has come a long way into the 'woods'. This is not far-fetched from the historical political and economic forces that have determined the workings of the African context even from the colonial days. Furthermore, it can be drawn that, the physical departure of the colonial forces is not tantamount to the elimination of the tendencies for subtle domination through neo-colonialism which has been the bane of African development. It is in this purview that, Nigeria, the giant of Africa selflessly pursued its afro-centric foreign policy objectives, which are foundational to its guiding principles and doctrines by historical precedence. As a part, of colonial impact, Nigeria discovered the oil power that, served as the means to foster its afro-centric ends within the continent. Coupled with, vast human capital and geographical space, it is glaring that, Nigeria has a manifest destiny to lead Africa out of the 'woods'.

Nevertheless, an extensive analysis of the challenges of the leadership role of Nigeria gives us an insight that, though there are several cases of policy failures or just 'bad luck', Nigeria cannot be said to have lacked the political will to champion the course of the African continent towards a recovery. This is an eye-opener to the fact that, the efforts of Nigeria at leading Africa out of the present conundrums are worthy of commendation. The international posture in itself accentuates the credibility of Nigeria as a beacon of hope for the black continent.

From the foregoing, it is thus evident that this paper does not praise Nigeria's leadership in Africa, but rather paints a vivid picture of the commendable aspects and deplorable challenges associated with its leadership role. At both domestic and external levels, Nigeria is encumbered by enormous burdens, from effectively leading Africa to its destiny. Even, its quest for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council seems presently unattainable.

Nigeria no doubt provides leadership for most of Africa. However, the political will to follow is what is lacking. This is why it is crucial for all African leaders to re-value the essence of good governance and democracy. By this, a formidable platform is constructed to proffer and apply Africa-oriented solutions to African challenges. This is not a time for reforms only; there is a dire need for transformation.

## Endnotes

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4. P. Chabal and D. Pascal-Jean, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*.(Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 1999)
5. See, *The Economist*, with the headline caption: “Hopeless Continent”, May, 13-19, 2000
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11. Dragoljub D’Orville and Madarshahi (1997), “Africa on the Verge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Quo Vadis Africa? Marginalisation versus Renaissance”, in African Leadership Forum (ALF), *Africa on the Verge Of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, p.28-40.
12. Nelson Mandela, excerpt from a speech to the World Economic Summit in Davos, Switzerland, 29th January, 1999.