Nigeria's 'Megaphone Diplomacy' and South Africa's 'Quiet Diplomacy': A Tale of Two Eras

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Abstract: Nigeria, under Murtala/Obasanjo regime was widely acknowledged to have adopted an overtly active foreign policy toward the rest of Africa, and particularly, South Africa's apartheid regime, which was in tandem with her Afro-centric posturing at the time. This multilateral cum bilateral diplomatic relations earned Nigeria the status of a 'frontline state' and wider recognition at other multilateral levels, but much animosity from the West. South Africa, under Mbeki regime was acknowledged to have adopted an overtly active foreign policy relation toward the rest of Africa, but covert diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe, which was in tandem with her African-renaissance posturing at the time. This multilateral cum bilateral diplomatic relations earned South Africa the status of a 'backline state' and further diminution at the global stage. Nigeria and South Africa are arguably perceived as regional hegemons in Africa, whose national interest vacillate between cooperation and conflict. The fate of contemporary Africa, however, rest on the convergence of these ambivalence of interests. The work adopts the realist framework of analysis to interrogate the permutations of Nigeria and South Africa diplomatic trajectories at the periods under investigation. Furthermore, comparative analysis is applied to the discourse with a view to placing the analysis within theoretical context. The understanding of the diplomatic calculations that governed these two eras and their implications for contemporary Nigeria/South Africa relations vis-a-vis African politics is instrumental. Ultimately, the fact that these diplomatic permutations played out within the context of the international economic capitalism makes the analysis more interesting.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Megaphone Diplomacy, Quiet Diplomacy, Foreign Direct Investment

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria and South Africa are two potential giants and powerful African states. Both are uniquely located within Africa to respond to the global challenges that are unfolding for the continent in the new century. The tremendous phenomenal changes that started evolving in the global system since the beginning of the 1990s, including the democratization process that commenced in the South African racist enclave, have had a significant bearing on relations between the two countries and constitute a watershed for bilateral relations between them. This consciousness is jointly shared by the two countries and has continually defined and redefined their relationships within the global politics (Onimode, 1999).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a critical conversational method which involves literature review, histo-empirical analysis, critical conceptual clarification and analysis. As a way of exhausting the content of this research topic, the literature review affords us the opportunity of laying bare the concepts of Megaphone diplomacy and Quiet diplomacy of the two countries within the purview of our intellectual interrogation. The histo-empirical analysis affords us the opportunity of grounding this discourse on the empirical facts surrounding the foreign policies of these two countries rather than mere abstract pontifications. Critical conceptual clarification and analysis is necessary in ensuring that we do not escape into the world intellectual irresponsibility by disengaging those that are not familiar with issues in Political Science and International Relations. Thus, there will be clear clarifications of the concepts that formed the bases of our discourse. In other words, this research adopts a qualitative method relying mainly on secondary data.

NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE

Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has been in the forefront of African and global politics. Although, the country initially tried to maintain an independent identity, it did not pursue an independent course. Rather, it was actively pursuing a pro-Western policy especially during the First Republic (1960-1966). All that changed, during consequent events in global politics that demanded a more assertive role for Nigeria, in liberating other African countries from the clutches of colonialism and white supremacist regimes. This redefinition of roles by Nigeria in African politics was clearly marked by the posturing and perceptions of the successive military regimes which had wrested power from the more conservative regimes of the immediate post-independent era. Thus, Nigeria's perception as the 'giant' of Africa and its almost altruistic commitment to the growth, development, peace and security of

the African States conferred on her a leadership position in Africa (Ogwu, 1999).

In essence, among the military regimes which held power at the period of decolonisation, the most active was the Murtala-Obasanjo regime of the 1966-1970. In driving the course of decolonization, the Murtala-Obasanjo regime did not involve in rhetoric, but actually deployed all military and diplomatic arsenal at the disposal of the state to thwart the anti-decolonisation policies of the west and secure independence for Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Namibia, while placing the issue of South Africa's apartheid on the international agenda. According to Joseph Garba, the primacy of apartheid on the foreign policy agenda under Murtala/Obasanjo could not be overemphasized. He argued thus:

> No other foreign policy issue has pre-occupied Nigerian governments more since our independence in 1960. Nigeria has made friends with countries with whom she has nothing in common; she has conversely made enemies of erstwhile friends- all on account of their attitude towards the South African question. We have formulated economic policies that have sometimes been detrimental to our own development because of our commitment to

the eradication of apartheid (Garba, 1987:101).

The commitment to the course of the liberation of South Africa, earned Nigeria the status of a front-line state, even though she shares no geographical proximity with the South African region (Ogunsanwo, 1986; Akinboye, 2013) and consequently, commendations at multilateral stages. Paradoxically, the gains in the decolonisation process engendered by Nigeria through her active Afro-centrism earned her much hatred from the west leading to strains in her foreign policy relations with the latter.

The extent of South Africa's influence and involvement in Africa and global politics is comparatively less than that of Nigeria. This is understandable. For several years, South Africa was a pariah state due to its apartheid system. The obnoxious policy had been in place for over four decades. It remained in existence until the early 1990s when a process of democratisation was initiated by the last apartheid President, Fredrick de Klerk, and the country began to parley with other states in the global system (Akinboye, 2005). However, since the dismantlement of apartheid and entrenchment of a democratic setting in 1994, South Africa has been fully engaged in African and global affairs. The successive regimes in South Africa have been instrumental in the more robust activities of the African Union (A.U),

Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations (U.N). The post apartheid South Africa has continually asserted their hegemonic influence within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), participating actively in peace keeping efforts, especially in Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Alao, 1998; Pfister, 2000; Habib, 2008).

The active and influential personality of Thabo Mbeki, who succeeded Nelson Mandela as the second president of the post-apartheid South Africa best exemplifies the tempo characteristic of the post-apartheid foreign policy of South Africa. Some scholars have recognised the unique challenges facing the immediate post-apartheid South Africa such as democratic consolidation, socio-economic disparity, rampaging effects of HIV/AIDS, land-based issues, gender-based divisions, and deep racial cleavages; which understandably occupied the attention of the Nelson Mandela administration and which also informed the defensive foreign policy of his regime (Ala, 2003; Landsberg, 2005; Mazrui, 2006).

But following Thabo Mbeki's coming in 1999 as the successor to Nelson Mandela; he chose instead to actively and dominantly stamp South Africa's foreign policy on a regional and global stage. With deft diplomatic collaboration with Obasanjo's Nigeria and Wade's Senegal, Mbeki was able to initiate the birth of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which consequently led to the transformation of Organisation of Africa's Unity (OAU) to AU in 2002. In view of these bilateral cum multilateral moves, Mbeki left no one in doubt about his government's determination to jettison the conservative and defensive diplomatic approach of his predecessor (Adebajo and Landsberg, 2003).

It therefore, came as a surprise to the international community to notice the conservative approach with which South Africa treated her bilateral relations with Zimbabwe on the heels of the legitimacy question in the latter. A number of conjectures have been postulated by theorists and analysts to explain the bilateral trajectories of South Africa's Mbeki and Zimbabwe's Mugabe, which incidentally are not within the confines of this paper. But it is important to observe that the continual defiance of the international outcry against the leadership crisis in Zimbabwe on the heels of the post-election crisis earned South Africa massive condemnation in the international community, leaving Mbeki with credibility questions, copiously painted by the west. As earlier mentioned in the abstract, the patronising approach of Mbeki to the Zimbabwe question may not be un-connected to his African-renaissance philosophy which dotted every line in his foreign policy agenda

(Landsberg, 2003, Chikane, 2012; Chikane, 2013).

It is against this background that this paper interrogates the issues involved in the two eras under investigation and their implications for Africa's development. The issues are placed within the context of the international capitalist environment within which the regimes operated. After the introductory part of this paper, the second section conceptualises realism as a theoretical approach in diplomacy. Following in the third section, the Murtala-Obasanjo regime is highlighted with special emphasis on the activism that informed the mega-phone diplomacy of the era. The fourth section interrogates the conservatism that characterised the quiet diplomacy of Mbeki in Zimbabwe. An attempt will be made consequently to bridge the gaps in analysis by a systematic and comparative approach in the fifth section. Finally, the concluding section wraps up the discourse.

REALISM AND DIPLOMACY: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The field of international relations is laden with concepts which are best described as contentious and worst as vague depending on the view point of the scholar. This problematic usually comes to play in an attempt to conceptualise terms in the cause of scientific investigations. Therefore, defining diplomacy and realism will not substantially defer from this difficulty in the discipline.

Martin Griffiths, in his attempt to deconstruct the concept of realism from the traditional polarisation of the term, usually when being compared to idealism, voiced this growing concern in a rather poignant way. According to him, one of the difficulties of treating realism as clear-cut school of thought is that its representatives differ vastly in the way they use the assumptions which are said to define the school in the first place. For this and other reasons, he argued, there is not even a derivative consensus on how to define realism beyond a few broad assumptions about the importance of states as actors, the institutionally anarchic environment within which states co-exist, and hence the importance of power as the master variable to explain broad patterns of states' interactions. He concludes that at this level of generality, realism is simply a set of assumptions about the world rather than a particular theory, let alone anything so pretentious as a scientific paradigm (Griffiths, 1992).

Ultimately, how one understands and evaluates realism in international relations depends a great deal on whether one views it as a philosophical disposition, a scientific paradigm, a mere framework of analysis, a testable explanatory theory of international politics, or an ideology of great power conservatism (op.cit, 1992). Off course, there are many other attempts to define realism more rigorously and narrowly so that it may be

compared to and evaluated against competing schools of thought. The works of Hans Morgenthau exemplified the best traditions of realism. The core of Morgenthau's thesis is that realism is based on interest defined in terms of power. Based on this, he posits that foreign policy built on any other thing but national interest is bound to fail (Morgenthau, 1951).

Realism maintains that universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in abstraction, but that they must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and space. It believes that the world, as imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces which are inherent in human nature. To improve the world, one must work with these forces, not against them. This being inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflict among them, moral principles can never be fully realised but at best approximated through the ever-temporary balancing of interests and the ever-precarious settlement of conflicts. It aims at achievement of a lesser evil rather than of the absolute good (Johari, 2009; 186).

Diplomacy on the other hand has an intricate conceptual link with the concept of realism. This is not far-fetched because the traditional representatives of countries who are diplomats have a primary objective, among others which is to protect, preserve and project the national interest of their countries. Viewed

from this stand-point, one may, at the risk of reaching premature conclusion, tie the concept of diplomacy to realism in a technical sense. In its simplistic analytical understanding therefore, diplomacy is the planning and management of relations between nations by the representatives of a country abroad; it also means at a lower level, skill or art of dealing with people or situation (Nwolise, 1998). In international affairs, diplomacy entails the combination of political skills and method, particularly negotiation, give and take strategy, and subtle threats, for the conduct and management of bilateral relations between two states and multilateral relations among three or more states (Akindele, 2007).

At a higher intellectual level however, diplomacy can be viewed within the context of institutional mechanisms for fostering international relations through the instrumentality of the diversity of international actors, having the state as the primary actor. According to Amstutz, diplomacy can be seen as the process by which states and other international actors pursue official international relations, reconciling competing and conflicting interests through negotiations (Amstutz, 1995). Following this conceptualisation, it becomes important to note at this juncture that, with the wave of globalisation which has implications for state and non-state relations within the larger dynamics of the international

environment, the field of diplomacy cannot be restricted to state actors alone, but involves other non-state actors, some of which have constituted great threats to, indeed, subverted the sovereignty of states. In essence, the steadily escalating tempo of globalisation has dramatically and welcomingly added value to, as well as increased the prominence of, multilateralism as a channel for the conduct of modern diplomacy, without ignoring fundamentally, the historically preeminent position of bilateralism as an approach to the conduct of foreign policy and management of the inter-state relations (Akindele, 2007).

According to Rafiu Akindele, any attempt to dichotomize the concepts of multilateralism and bilateralism, either as competing approaches to or as parallel steams in the conduct of external relations, quite obviously ignores or, at least, trivialises the essential linkages and mutual interdependence between them. He argued that just as the processes of multilateral diplomacy that are neither prefaced by, nor anchored to, a simultaneous series of bilateral contacts and consultation among nation-states drain themselves of creative wisdom and professional sagacity essential for diplomatic success, the management of bilateral diplomatic relations that does not take cognisance of the interpenetration of multilateralism and bilateralism in the conduct of foreign policy begins the journey in

the diplomatic arena with an opaque vision, a false start and on the wrong foot (Akindele, 2007). This position essentially explains why the approach in this essay avoids the strict bifurcation of these two elements of diplomacy in comparing the 'mega-phone diplomacy' of the Murtala-Obasanjo regime in Nigeria and the 'quiet diplomacy' of the Mbeki administration, but rather is geared toward the combination of their intricacies to make for a more robust analytical framework.

Hans Morgenthau, in what appears to be a welding of the bridge that might otherwise divide the concepts of diplomacy and realism, perceives diplomacy as the act of bringing different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in international situation which concern the national interest most directly. In bringing the relevance of diplomacy to bear on the management of a country's foreign policy through the projection of her national interest, Morgenthau asserted that 'it is the brain of national power, as national morale is it soul; if its vision is blurred, its judgment defective, and its determination feeble, all the advantages of geographical location, of self-sufficiency in food, raw materials, and industrial production, of military preparedness, of size and quality of population will in the long run avail a nation little' (Morgenthau, 1966).

In this context, diplomacy could be viewed as the instrument that harmonises or synchronises all the other components of national power of every nation to make it produce maximally in her foreign policy relations, hence it is safe to technically merge the concepts of diplomacy and realism within a reasonable intellectual limit. By and large, if time and history are important shapers of diplomatic relations, human actors, particularly leaders, are the key instrumentalities and vehicles through which the contours of diplomatic landscape are designed, dug and cultivated, or truncated (Akindele, 2007).

It is indeed true, that national resource endowment for the conduct of foreign policy is a key national asset. But arguably as important, if not more so, is the use to which national resource capacity is put and managed by leaders who control the affairs of the state at any particular time. This poignantly situates the context of our analyses to leadership styles in the two eras under investigation. Put another way, the vision and mission of the leadership styles of Murtala-Obasanjo of Nigeria (1976-1979) and Mbeki of South Africa (1999-2008) within the organic processes of history best explains the policies adopted by these leaders and or the outcome of such policies. We now turn our attention to the regimes under investigation.

MURTALA-OBASANJO AND NIGERIA'S MEGAPHONE DIPLOMACY

The Murtala/Obasanjo era was basically a military regime which reflected in the nature and character of decision making, especially as it related to foreign policy making. The style of the administration in decision making was that of command structure. There was no element of bargaining and persuasion usually associated with democracy. Besides, the policies of Obasanjo who succeeded Murtala Muhammed was of incremental nature, which explains why the period under review is generally referred to in many literatures as Murtala/Obasanjo era (Ajala, 1986; Garba, 1987). Nevertheless, the Murtala-Obasanjo era in the conduct of Nigeria's multilateral diplomacy has been widely acknowledged as the golden era of Nigeria's foreign policy (Fafowora, 1984; Ajala, 1992; Garba, 1987; Saliu, 2006,). It is common knowledge that Nigeria's component of national power with careful and skillful combination of leadership vision connived to bring Nigeria's diplomacy of this era into international limelight.

The Murtala Muhammed brief but exciting government (1975-1976) that succeeded the more cautious Gowon administration was, right from the outset, prepared to take radical measures in both the domestic and foreign affairs. The goal of the administration was the total liberation of the continent of

Africa from every vestige of colonialism, imperialism and racism which informed her Afro-centric foreign policy. Indeed, Murtala sought to move the country's foreign policy towards a more genuinely non-aligned position. The immediate demonstration of her determination at eradication of all forms of discrimination against Africans was the authorisation for the opening of offices for the freedom fighters in Africa in the capital, Lagos, which was hitherto an impossible task by the preceding administration of Gowon. Owing to this, massive military, material and money supports were granted to the freedom fighters in an unprecedented dimension (Ajala, 1986).

In any case, the most widely acknowledged diplomatic effort of this administration was the open support and recognition granted to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government in Angola against the joint coalition of National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FLNA) and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in view of the latter's alliance with the racist regime of South Africa and other western powers to mount a military operation against the former, irrespective of the effort in the offing by Nigeria and other African states under the instrumentality of the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to form a government of National Unity in Angola. No doubt, this action was hailed in Nigeria as

singularly the most daring and responsible foreign policy decision taken by the Nigerian government since independence (Ajala, 1986; Ajala, 1993; Akinboye, 2013).

The Obasanjo regime (1976-1979) which succeeded the Murtala administration following the assassination of General Murtala in an abortive coup attempt, not only continued with the laudable policies begun by the Murtala administration but also adopted an open-door policy for African exiles from Southern Africa. It also embarked on various man-power training programmes in Nigeria for people from Southern Africa. One of the most laudable attempts at institutionalising the struggle against apartheid in South Africa adopted by the Obasanjo regime was the introduction of the Southern African Relief Fund (SARF) which was officially launched in December, 1976 (Garba, 1987).

Among other objectives, the primary aim of the SARF was to generate resources to assist the victims of the Southern African oppressive policies through education, healthcare and nutrition, and ultimately to put more funds in the hands of the freedom fighters to hasten the quick exit of the racist regimes in Southern Africa. In line with this policy, the Obasanjo administration, in a bid to continue with the massive decolonisation agenda of his predecessor, moved swiftly to take advantage of the post-election dilemma in Rhodesia (now

Zimbabwe), to secure independence for the latter. The Obasanjo administration, through the deployment of appropriate tools of diplomacy, by way of nationalisation of the British Petroleum share of Shell BP in which the British government had an interest, prompted the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference that worked out the constitution for an independent Zimbabwe. Nigeria provided both Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) with substantial sum of money in order to fight the pre-independence elections successfully (Ajala, 1986).

However, the most remarkable credit to the administration of Obasanjo in the fight against racism, and by implication, the singular most relevant event that stamped the issue of racism on the international agenda is the initiation of and consequent hosting of a World Conference for Action Against Apartheid in 1977, under the pioneering influence of the country's long-term chairmanship of the UN's Special Committee against Apartheid. The conference was not only a galvanisation, for the first time of people at the grassroots from United States, Europe and Australia, but had in attendance the most vocal dignitary-fighters against racism as well as the opinion shapers in the Nigerian domestic environment (Garba, 1987).

Among other immediate and long-term outcomes of the conference, two very significant ones deserve attention at this point: one was the recommendation to set up the World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa, which helped tremendously to curb the military and nuclear excesses of the then racist regime in South Africa with their international military-industrial accomplices; and second, was the November, 1977 Security Council Resolution 418, imposing a mandatory embargo on the export of arms to South Africa, invoking for the first time in this context Chapter V11, designating the racial situation in South Africa a threat to international peace and security (Garba, 1987).

Indeed, the basic feature characteristic of the Murtala-Obasanjo regime as enunciated above is the dominant trace of activism in their bilateral and multilateral diplomacy through their policy of Afro-centrism, without any form of contradictions. What became evident as well was the antagonism and unpopularity attracted by this approach especially against the western powers, whose interest in the African politics was never disguised. The struggle was for the soul of the African state, even though the human elements were at the centre of the issues, and the stake was the economic determinism of the western capitalist ideology prevalent in the international economic system.

MBEKI AND THE QUIET DIPLOMACY IN ZIMBABWE

At the centre of international criticism of South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe during the administration of Mbeki is its 'quite diplomacy'. Quite diplomacy is defined as a combination of measures that includes behind the scene engagements, secret negotiations, and subtle coaxing; it also comprises the protection of the target state from external criticism and the provision of a life-line in terms of international economic relations. This involves, above all, personal or direct diplomacy between the heads of state or senior officials and persistent negotiations, yet also leaves the appearance of limited action or even inaction (Prys, 2007; Chikane, 2012).

In the case of Zimbabwe this manifested itself by keeping in regular contact with President Mugabe and by actively assisting the Zimbabwean government through facilitation of communication between the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the government particularly after the failed referendum in 2000, and both presidential and parliamentary elections. Also, links with international financial institutions were encouraged, and Zimbabwean acceptance of certain proposal of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on land reform was generally regarded to be the indirect result of South Africa's diplomatic initiatives (Prys, 2007).

Quiet diplomacy epitomises the principle of constructive engagement which embodies the foreign policy relations between nations that share common interest as demonstrated in South Africa and Zimbabwe case under a common sub-regional platform of Southern African Development Community (SADC). According to Jo-Ansie Van Wyk, quiet diplomacy is itemised as non-coercive diplomatic measures and non-violent strategies such as international appeals (moral persuasion to conflicting parties), fact finding missions, observer teams, bilateral negotiations, third party informal diplomatic consultations, track two diplomacy (by non-official, non-governmental parties), third party mediation, conciliatory gestures and economic assistance (Wyk, 2002).

In furtherance to the above, South Africa also followed development and governance approaches such as policies to promote national economic and social development via continued economic trade and Zimbabwe's economic integration in the region as well as recommending economic reforms and standards. Added to the list is that South Africa upheld all bilateral cooperative agreements and programmes between them and attempted to promulgate and enforce human rights, democratic and other standards via its participation in monitoring most of Zimbabwe's elections (Wyk, 2002).

The Zimbabwean crisis has its root in the agrarian policy or the land reform policy of the Robert Mugabe's administration against the western interest in Zimbabwe, but in reality the crisis has economic origin which dates back to the 1980s. During the emerging crisis, Zimbabwe nevertheless intervened into the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with 3,000 troops behind President Laurent Kabila with further devastating consequences for the state budget. This intervention was largely interpreted to mean an attempt by President Mugabe to gain influence over DRC's wealth of natural resources to assist in revamping her ailing and moribund economy. All these eventually set the pace for the grave consequences that accompanied the aftermath of the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2002 and 2005 respectively, the rise of the MDC, led by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai as a formidable opposition to the government-led political party, Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and the emergence of political stalemate that became a protracted feature of the Zimbabwean political landscape until after the slippery political compromise that restored a semblance of order in the polity (Chikane, 2013).

Many literatures have attempted to advance the reasons why South Africa under Mbeki chose quiet diplomacy over other diplomatic options in dealing with the Zimbabwe situation in which case her core values were threatened and she risked the loss of reputation at the international level. In Miriam Pry's exposition, she elaborated on the reasons behind South Africa's constructive tie with Zimbabwe using three more specific, both competing and complementary role conceptions or themes of the former, which she identified as; first misunderstood regional power, which contains an element of exceptionalism, second, as African anti-imperialist state, and third as the responsible actor facilitating in both Zimbabwe's domestic struggles as well as its global interaction as guarantor against the west (Prys, 2007).

What this translates to is that South Africa's role perception in Southern Africa and by implication in Zimbabwe emphasise the need that Zimbabwe is a sovereign country and therefore its domestic problems need to be solved by Zimbabwean themselves; that South Africa, especially some powerful elements in the African National Congress (ANC) sense that there is an indication of strong perception of racism and neo-imperialism by western states in the Zimbabwe crisis; and finally, that South Africa has the responsibility to assist Zimbabwe reconcile her conflicting groups within the parameters granted her by the latter. The underpinnings of the above postulation point very

poignantly at the principles of partnership, sovereignty and African solidarity as characteristic of the South Africa constructive engagement with Zimbabwe.

According to Linda Freeman, the policy inconsistencies that characterised the quiet diplomacy of Mbeki were more deeply rooted in factors order than the above sentiments of African solidarity and African partnership. Freeman argued that the Southern African government's approach to Zimbabwe is rooted in continental ambitions, regional interests and national imperatives. He argued that one must therefore, look beyond an analysis which focuses primarily on the internal factors which have shaped policy to include the Mbeki government's vision of South Africa in Africa and within the changing global order (Freeman, 2005).

Continental ambition here connotes South Africa's increasing inter-penetration of the African continent with her capitalist ambition, re-enforced by her hegemonic and dominant status within the continent. The contradiction that has continually informed the policies of the post-apartheid state of South Africa is how to reconcile her towering economic status with the fears of dominance it is likely to engender in her relations with the rest of Africa (Alden and Soko, 2005; Hudson, 2007; Alden and Pere, 2009). Hence, in an address to the South African parliament in

2003, Thabo Mbeki stated that he wished "to assure our neighbours and the peoples of the rest of Africa that the government we lead has no great power pretentions. We claim no right to impose our will on any independent country. We will not force anything on anybody" (cited in Freeman, 2005:13).

The issues of hegemony and dominance at the continental levels have been posed even more sharply at the regional level. There is no question that, as the giant among a set of significantly smaller states in the Southern Africa, South Africa's pre-eminence continues to be the central structural reality in the region. Most of the SADC member states are dependent on the economic structure already built by the defunct apartheid South Africa for their national economic survival. To this end, the reality of their economic tie to South Africa will remain a significant part of the factor that will continue to shape their relationship with the country.

Closely allied to these is the national imperative of the Mbeki administration to remain committed to the cause of stabilising the polity by tactful prevention of a likely influx of her domestic environment by any possibility of an implosion in the neighbouring Zimbabwe. This explains why the Mbeki administration steadfastly resisted the option of armed invasion or forceful removal of the incumbent regime in Zimbabwe, but rather

continually sought other was of peaceful transition of power (Freeman, 2005)

The reaction of the opposition forces within Zimbabwe, led by MDC differ fundamentally from the view-points expressed above believed to be the force behind Mbeki's constructive engagement with Zimbabwe. For the domestic opposition, it is precisely such questions of human rights, democracy and the rule of law which are central to the crisis in which Zimbabwe is foundering. In their view, the land reform on which the government had embarked was less an attempt to right historical wrongs than an opportunistic attempt to regain popular favour in face of the most serious challenge to its power since independence. Support for Mugabe, according to this school of thought, represents a betrayal of mass public opinion and backing for a regime riddled with venality and corruption (Freeman, 2005). To the domestic opposition, therefore, to jettison the possibility of armed invasion in Zimbabwe by South African-led force is to tow the path of un-patriotism and to postpone the evil days ahead.

The reaction of the Western powers, if anything to go by, was antagonistic to the constructive engagement policy of the South African government in Zimbabwe. The recourse to neo-imperialistic agenda by the Mbeki and Mugabe governments as the forces behind the crisis in Zimbabwe was the greatest source of frustration to the west. The expectation of the western powers was that South Africa would assume a more robust leadership role in the region where it wields enormous political and economic powers. In their view, South Africa's quiet diplomacy is generally considered to be a failure. In their reasoning, South Africa had made no direct use of its potentially hegemonic leverage, had applied no sanctions or economic screws to enforce rule of law, free and fair elections and a commitment of human rights in Zimbabwe. To the western powers, what quiet diplomacy, which they describe as hypocritical has achieved is simply to buy time for the embattled regime of Mugabe to continually plunder the people of Zimbabwe and jeopardise western interest in the country (Chikane, 2013).

The Mbeki government's position never wavered in the heat and pressure of both domestic and external attacks. There is no better way to represent the Mbeki government's position than in a statement released by Aziz Pahad, a government official, in the cause of Presidential Debate on South Africa's Policy in Zimbabwe at the South African National Assembly. He argued thus;

> Once again we have been subjected to hysterical concerns about our so called failure to tackle the Zimbabwe issue. We remain

convinced that the collapse of Zimbabwe will have serious implications for the whole region and especially South Africa. Why would we want this to happen? Our quiet diplomacy is criticised without any credible suggestions on what we should do more than we are doing. Our critics fail to explain what 'megaphone diplomacy' has achieved. They fail or refuse to acknowledge that since the politic and economic crisis started we have been tirelessly engaged in efforts to help the Zimbabweans to deal with their crisis (Pahad, 2003:8)

RESEARCH RESULT
Nigeria's Megaphone Diplomacy and South Africa's Quiet Diplomacy: Building Conceptual Synergy

The 'megaphone diplomacy' of the Murtala/Obasanjo era in Nigeria's international politics came in the wake of the African decolonisation spearheaded by the Nigerian government. This was made possible by the structure of the Nigerian state which was military in orientation. Two fundamental forces however, coincided to aid the diplomatic approach of the Nigerian state during the Murtala/Obasanjo era. First was the Cold War politics which was characterised by unbridled struggle for power and influence in Africa by the antagonistic blocks of the West and the East. The international

environment was very tense at the time as both the East and the West were engaged in vile and hostile propaganda against each other. Both North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and defunct Warsaw military blocs of the West and East respectively had been solidified with bases in their respective spheres of influence; each bloc had imposed restrictions on trade between it and its friends on the one hand and its opponents on the other. Each bloc had embarked on the development of nuclear weapons as well as indulged extensively in spying against the other (Ajala, 1993).

The second factor that aided Nigeria's 'megaphone diplomacy' during Murtala/Obasanjo era was the oil politics that yielded enormous resources to the Nigeria state. At the time, the clamour and drive for alternative sources of energy had not assumed an urgent dimension, and oil remained the commodity that dictated the dynamics of the international politics. Indeed, oil politics was instrumental to the decision by the British government under Margaret Thatcher to yield to the pressure by the Nigerian state to nationalise the former's share of the British Petroleum (BP) in Nigeria and a ten percent cut in oil supply to that company in the event of the struggle for the independence of former Rhodesia (Now Zimbabwe) in 1979 (Gambari, 2008; Whiteman, 2008).

No doubt, the double-edged forces of cold war politics which permitted and tolerated dictatorial tendencies, imposed constraints on the limits of power in the international system, down-played the primacy and supremacy of human rights matters, and sustained the politics of compromise and contention for dominant spheres of influence by the two ideological blocs on the one hand; and oil politics which enjoyed international mercantilist monopoly of the market forces placed Nigerian government in a privileged position in international politics and gave her the required leverage to dictate international political outcomes to a large extent.

The 'quiet diplomacy' of the Mbeki administration came in the wake of African-renaissance- reawakening of the African consciousness in the international economic environment, spearheaded by the South African government. The South African government, with her commanding heights of economic dominance in the African economic mainstream had sought through the platform of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to reposition Africa in the 'New World Order' for sustainable economic development and favourable competitive edge among other comity of nations. This became necessary in view of the mounting debt profile of most of the African states and the donor-fatigue that had set-in in the area of attracting Foreign Direct investment, partly owing to the attention of the international financiers which had shifted to the emerging economies of Asia. For that to be attained, the philosophy of African solidarity, partnership and respect for sovereignty of countries in Africa had to be implemented (Benneh, 2001; Adebajo and Landsberg, 2003).

We can also identify two fundamental forces or factors that appear to have influenced the constructive engagement policy of Mbeki's administration in the 20th century politics. The first is the post-cold war politics which redefined the scope of international relations and set new standards for international businesses, whether state or private sector and the second is the globalisation politics, a corollary to the first, which has both widened the opportunities and risks for international engagements.

The collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe, marked most graphically by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the seeming ascendancy of Western-style liberal democracy and free-market economic systems, led to a widespread clamour for more open political systems and free enterprise. During this period, the continuing realities of intra-state conflicts, increasing poverty, and social disintegration ravaging the continent of Africa led scholars to suggest that the world was headed towards a new world disorder. Since this period

technically coincided with South Africa's demolition of apartheid and re-institution of her first popular democratic transition, she assumed a natural leadership position to seek for new ways of re-aligning African continent to the new international realities for maximum benefit. Although the first democratic government in South Africa, under the conservative leadership of Nelson Mandela played down on the reality of the new international environment and the place of South Africa in African politics, his successor, Mbeki made no pretentions about his un-wavering willingness to position South Africa to assume her rightful place in history (Freeman, 2005).

The second factor that dramatically influenced South Africa's 'quiet diplomacy' under Mbeki's administration is a corollary to the above factor, which is the globalisation politics. Globalisation is widely believed to be associated with faster economic growth, higher standards of living and expanded opportunities for technological development and cultural advancement for the participating countries. Therefore, there is thus this belief that, in the present international scenario, there is little alternative to globalisation (Chishti, 2002).

But there is a sense in which globalisation throws up a host of contradictions. According to Kunle Amuwo, globalization is a complex process and phenomenon of antinomies and dialectics: integrating and fragmenting world; uniformity and localization; increased material prosperity and deepening misery; homogenization and hegemonization. Globalization is nothing but a mixed grill. On the one hand, it has the potentiality of eroding national sovereignty of the weakest and poorest states, whilst widening the technological divide amongst states; on the other, it tends to provide an enabling environment for greater respects for human rights and gender equality. It is an economic orthodoxy that is failing the people, but enriching investors and big corporations. When Africa's political leaders rein into it, it is problematic; and when nation-states propose or seek to implement alternatives, they are pundits (Amuwo, 2004).

In view of the two forces identified above, South Africa, under Mbeki fashioned her foreign policy to reflect aspects of the post-cold war politics and globalisation politics. Being aware of the increasing wave of pressure being exerted on nation-states by the rampaging effects of these twin-factors, the onus rested on South Africa to protect the fledgling economies of most African states. And to do that successfully, she had to rely on the components of African solidarity and partnership in other to win the support and cooperation of African states. Whether the motivation for South Africa's foreign policy of constructive engagement

rests in her mercantilist tendency in Africa remains an issue for continual assessment by scholars of African development studies. But what is not in doubt remains the widening gulf of inequality fostered by the current international capitalist environment and the negative implications of this on the weak economies of smaller competitors like African states.

CONCLUSION

The thrust of this essay is the juxtaposition of the historical antecedents of the megaphone diplomatic foreign policy of Murtala-Obasanjo era in the 1970s and the quiet diplomatic foreign policy approach of the Mbeki administration in the 2000s. The argument advanced here is that the combination of domestic factors and external forces dramatically influenced the choice of these approaches. Added is that the political and economic structures of the states involved and the personal philosophy of key actors connived to bring about the varying outcomes. More significantly, the reactions of the international community are repeatedly shaped by the

international economic structure under which they operate. The implications of all of these issues for contemporary African states are not in doubt. The struggle for the soul of Africa is still un-ending and the gladiators are still un-changing.

RECOMMENADTION

Despite the differences in foreign policies of different African countries, we recommend that the post-colonial African states should endeavour to evolve foreign policies that will enhance the unity and the development of members of the African Union. Africa as a continent should transcend the stage of underdevelopment to becoming a leading continent with less internal conflicts and wars resulting to perennial appeal for Aid from the Western world. African states' foreign policies should not only develop the members of African Union (AU), it should be such that will solidify African relevance in world social eco-political systems; and not just as a means of developing the developed nations but asserting itself as a global player in international politics.

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