

Impact of President Olusegun Obasanjo's Personality on Nigerian Foreign Policy, 1999-2007

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Abstract: This study examines Nigeria's foreign policy under President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007). It provides a detailed background on the impact of the personality of President Olusegun Obasanjo on Nigeria's foreign policy. It also touches on Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy in re-building Nigeria's image in international politics. The study analyses the domestic policies of the Obasanjo's administration and how it shaped the country's policy of partnership especially with the western powers and the implication of this partnership on Nigeria economic growth between 1999 and 2007. The study established that while President Olusegun Obasanjo had his shortcomings in foreign policy implementation, the nation has achieved significant gains through the regime's shuttle diplomacy. Generally, Nigeria's increasing profile in its foreign relations implies that the nation has regained its role as a leading player in multilateral politics and diplomacy.

Key words: Diplomacy, partnership, regained, multilateral, profile, economic growth

INTRODUCTION

The history of Nigerian foreign policy since 1960 has constantly been changing though, the principles guiding her foreign relations remain the same (Gambari, 1989). Nigerian leaders are largely responsible for these unstable external relations. Since, Nigeria's foreign policy is deeply rooted in Africa with strategic emphasis on political and economic cooperation, peaceful dispute resolution and global non-alignment (Ogunbanjo, 2002) Nigerian leaders also have their attention fixed on the successful implementation of these principles. However, the influence of personality on Nigeria's relations with other countries cannot be totally ignored as different leaders adopt different styles in conducting external relations.

Examining the personality of the leader both at the theoretical and practical levels is therefore important in understanding Nigeria's foreign policy. Again, analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy show that her leaders operate within four concentric circles of national interest. The innermost circle represents Nigeria's own security, independence and prosperity and is centered on its immediate neighbours-Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger; the second circle revolves around Nigeria's relations with its West African neighbors; the third circle focuses on continental African issues of peace, development and democratization and the fourth circle involves Nigeria's relations with organizations, institutions and states outside Africa (Adebajo and Mustapha, 2008) with this in

mind, each Nigerian head of state or president work to ensure that no single part is defected in pursuing the country's foreign policy. Evidences abound on how past Nigerian heads of state or presidents have worked within these four concentric circles.

Relations between Nigeria and other state and non-state actors in international politics from 1999 onward were based on democratic principles with focus on the integrity of the person at the centre of decision making. The tit-for-tat diplomacy of late Gen. Sani Abacha, de facto President of Nigeria from 1993-1998 had greatly damaged the image of Nigeria. The government was accused of human rights abuses and was repeatedly condemned by the US State Department. There were break in relationship with many countries with threats of economic sanctions from others. Apart from this, the government was characterized by an inconsistent foreign policy which made Nigeria a scorn in the comity of nations.

The coming of President Olusegun Obasanjo and the various reforms which he embarked upon actually brought Nigeria out of the messy situation that Gen. Sani Abacha led the country into. For President Olusegun Obasanjo to have achieved such a feat in restoring the image of the country deserves scholarly attention. This study therefore aims to provide a critical appraisal of Obasanjo's foreign policy with emphasis on his use of expatriates in the conduct of external relations; shifting of policy to

accommodate China, India and other rising powers; reintegration of Nigeria into the African Union, the United Nations and other international organizations and the revolution in domestic policies that favoured strategic repositioning of Nigerian economy.

CONCEPT OF FOREIGN POLICY

Scholars of international relations have different definitions for the term foreign policy. Generally, foreign policy consists of strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve its goals in international relations. According to Akinyemi, foreign policy consists of three elements. Firstly, it is one of the overall orientation and policy intentions of a particular country towards another. The second element is the objective that a country seeks to achieve in her relations or dealing with other countries. The third element of foreign policy is the means for achieving that particular goal or objectives (Akinyemi, 2006).

Northedge conceptualizes foreign policy simply as an interplay between the outside and the inside (Northedge, 1968). In the research of T.B. Miller, foreign policy is presumably something less than the sum of all policies which have an attempt upon national governments (Miller, 1969). There are countless definitions of foreign policy. This has made it impossible to have a general acceptable definition of the concept foreign policy. Hence in the words of Olajide Aluko, nobody has really formulated a universally acceptable definition of the concept and probably nobody will never succeed in doing so (Aluko, 1981).

This might have influenced the writings of Joseph Frankel, William Wallace and J.C. Plano who have all defined foreign policy differently. Nigerian diplomats and foreign policy scholars also have their own definitions of the concept. For instance, Akinboye defines foreign policy as a dynamic process involving interaction between the domestic and the external environment (Solomon, 1999). Foreign policy therefore is the general objective that guides the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states. The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behaviour of other states or plan to advance specific geopolitical designs (<http://www.britanica.com/EBChecked/topic/213380/foreign-policy>).

Foreign policy, according to A. Osita is a coordinated strategy with which institutionally designated decision makers seek to manipulate the international environment (Jackson and Sorensen, 2010) in order to achieve certain national objectives. It is the decision that defines goals,

set precedents or lay down courses of actions and the actions taken to implement those decisions. It has also been defined as the actions of a state towards external environment and the conditions usually domestic, under which those decisions are formulated. Stated objectives, variables affecting their choice and some techniques employed to achieve these objectives are closely related to the study of foreign policy. Foreign policy has also been defined as the actions and reaction of countries to the external environment. In pursuit of their goals and national interests, states devise and follow certain courses, principles and standards of action called policies. Foreign policy is to use Christopher Hill's definition, purposive action with the view towards promoting the interests of a single political community or state (Ibid, 1999).

T. Adeniran advanced that foreign policy should be perceived from the connection of the motives and benefits that underpin states relations. He further opines that goals and means are basic ingredients of foreign policy (Adeniran, 1983). Morgenthau ties the goals of a nation's foreign policy to what he calls national interest. He believes that the objectives of a foreign policy must be interpreted in terms of the national interest (Morgenthau, 1978). He therefore, submits that no nation can have a true guide as to what it must do and what it needs to do in foreign policy without accepting national interest as a guide (Ibid, 1999).

EVOLUTION OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Traditionally, Nigeria's foreign policy has revolved primarily around African affairs and emphasizes political and economic cooperation, peaceful dispute resolution and global non-alignment. However, Nigeria's relation with other non-African countries is evident in her foreign policy objectives which include the promotion of international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations (Gambari, 1989). Nigeria's interaction with the rest of the world can be grouped into ten periods (this grouping is not formal or official. The researchers did the grouping for simplicity purpose).

The period covering 1960-1965: Nigeria's foreign policy during this period was geared towards African countries, the common wealth of Nations and Britain. The era laid the foundation for Nigeria's foreign policy.

The period covering 1966-1969: This period shifted the attention of Nigeria away from regional problems to

internal ones that is the Nigerian Civil war. Her foreign policy during this period was to maintain national integrity throughout the world.

The period covering 1970-1975: This period is widely known for Nigeria's sub-regional diplomacy and the creation of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The period covering 1976-1979: Nigeria renewed her commitment to African affairs and this shaped her foreign policy towards African countries. The era gave birth to a confrontational diplomacy and the formal articulation of Africa centredness of Nigeria's foreign policy.

The period covering 1980-1983: Nigeria's foreign policy during this period received some setbacks and over dependence on American government.

The period covering 1984-1985: Nigeria's foreign policy quickly regained the offshoot of the Murtala/Obasanjo regime.

The period covering 1986-1993: This era saw the birth of economic diplomacy in Nigeria's foreign policy. Although, many scholars see the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced by the retired General I.B. Babangida to pursue Nigeria's economic diplomacy as a failure it succeeded in opening up the economy of Nigeria to external influence.

The period covering 1994-1999: The country's foreign policy was structured around the continuation of economic diplomacy. However, Nigeria's foreign policy during this period has been described to be a Bazuka foreign policy. A tit-for-tat diplomacy.

The period covering 1999-2007: Nigeria's foreign policy received a new turn in restoring the image of the country through a global shuttle diplomacy of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The period covering 2008 to date: The foreign policy of Nigeria is facing new challenges of global terrorism, global economic meltdown and political instability within the country (Solomon, 1999).

AN OVERVIEW OF OBASANJO'S FOREIGN POLICY, 1999-2007

President Olusegun Obasanjo assumed office on May 29, 1999 with a consciousness of the perennial

factors of Nigeria's poor image in the international circle with major issues surrounding debt, corruption, political instability and regional crisis in the West African sub-region. He was therefore, determined to rebuild Nigeria by appointing several officers and expatriates to strategic positions to monitor activities and exert necessary influence on major issues.

The 8 years of President Mathew Aremu Olusegun Obasanjo which existed between May 29, 1999 and May 29, 2007 was a transitional administration which adopted a strategic foreign policy of image building. Prior to his resumption as President of the Federation, there had been 16 uninterrupted years of military rule plagued by a considerable period of economic paralysis which was largely due to wholesale corruption and a heavy dose of political suppression at home as well as isolation and boycott abroad. As such, President Obasanjo's foreign policy objectives were easily identifiable. Among them was restoration of Nigeria's image as a key player in the committee of nations. An image of gross irresponsibility, inherited mostly through General Sani Abacha's 5 years in power was to be rebuilt. Most of the country's development partners and very prominent ones at that had to be brought back on board: United States, the European Union, the Commonwealth of Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Ajayi, 2006).

However, President Obasanjo's foreign policy is best understood when one understands the general background of Nigerian image in the international circle before his coming to power. The Sani Abacha Administration (1993-1998) was harsh which made the administration to face oppositions from her membership of international organizations and was criticized for her violation of fundamental human rights. The hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other activists from Ogoniland, despite international outcry and plea for clemency, further eroded what was left of Nigeria's image. With the increase in oppression and flagrant violation of fundamental human rights in the country came the increase in the efforts of members of the international community to isolate Nigeria at major fora and to frustrate the Abacha administration (Akintola, 2007).

On 11th November 1995, the Commonwealth of Nations suspended Nigeria's membership. It was South Africa that moved the motion for Nigeria's suspension. Abacha accused South Africa of meddling in Nigeria's domestic affairs and was labeled stooge of Western powers by Abacha Administration. South Africa and host of others temporarily withdrew their diplomatic

representatives from the country. In response to isolation from the West and its associates, Abacha shifted from the capitalist West to Eastern bloc (Ibid, 1999). Nigeria withdrew from the 1996 African Cup of Nations being hosted by South Africa. Sani Abacha unexpectedly died and General Abdulsalam Abubakar became the Head of State.

Abdulsalam Abubakar (1998-1999) attempted to redeem the Nigeria's bartered image especially at the human rights front. He freed all political prisoners incarcerated by Abacha including General Olusegun Obasanjo. He also invited those who have been forced into exile to return and help to build the country. He had a transitional programme which was indicative of his willingness to hand over to a democratically elected government. In response, European Union and common wealth countries lifted the sanctions imposed on Nigeria. Abdulsalam Abubakar administration gave international observers unrestricted access to monitor the 1999 General Elections.

His government specifically laid out the objectives and principles of Nigeria's foreign policy in Section 19 of 1999 constitution. These foreign policy principles objectives are:

- Promotion and protection of national interest
- Promotion of African integration and support for African Unity
- Promotion of international co-operation for the consolidations of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discriminations in all its manifestation
- Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication
- Promotion of a just world economic order (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 19, 1999)

Thus, the Olusegun Obasanjo administration (1999-2007) inherited this pattern of continuous image building started by the General Abdulsalam Abubakar administration. In fact, the Obasanjo administration major foreign policy drive was the aggressive campaign for debt relief. His administration strengthened and diversified bilateral and multilateral relations with the outside world. he signed. Obasanjo administrations made a shift from concentration of Africa as the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy to globally focused policy. He campaigned

vigorously for poor nations of Africa, South America, the Caribbean and Asia to harmonize their efforts for a fairer deal from industrialized nations (Adeniyi, 2005).

The Obasanjo administration also pursued the affairs of her immediate neighbours and Africa as a whole with vigor and great commitment. He played a crucial role in transforming OAU into a more effective African Union (AU). Nigeria under Olusegun Obasanjo worked tirelessly for the creation of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (24). On conflict resolution and peace initiatives, Nigeria has been involved in an avalanche of peacekeeping missions in Africa in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Sao Tome and Principe and the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) (Adeniyi, 2005).

President Obasanjo employed diplomacy, rather than brute force as the key to finding lasting solutions to many crises on the African continent including Sierra Leone (where Nigerian forces were involved in peacekeeping), Liberia (where Nigerian troops formed the bulk of the original intervention force) as well as in the Ivory Coast, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Darfur (In western Sudan), the Congo D.R., Somalia and Soutome and Principe, among others (Ibid, 1999).

OBASANJO'S SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY

An objective evaluation of President Olusegun Obasanjo's foreign policy can best be carried out when his performances are placed side by side with the promises he made during the election process as well as the goals he sets out to achieve as a democratically elected president within the framework of the Nigerian constitution. This scholarly approach is in sharp contrast to what many journalists and political writers write about President Olusegun Obasanjo. While some have been evaluating only his performance, others have been confusing or combining legacy with evaluation (according to Dr. Emmanuel Odirri Ojameruaye, an assessment of legacy focuses on how an individual will be remembered and/or what he/she is bequeathing to his successor. On the other hand, an evaluation is systematic determination or an informed act of ascertaining or fixing the value or worth of a project or product. When applied to an individual like a President, an evaluation means a systematic or informed determination of the extent to which he met certain performance benchmarks. See also, E.O. Ojameruaye, A Tentative Analytical Evaluation of President Obasanjo's performance (May 1999-May 2007)). Review of most of the assessments made by writers on President Olusegun Obasanjo have been rather subjective

and are not based on the promises President Obasanjo made but on what the assessors expected him to do. Moreso, there are no well-defined benchmarks for the assessments. To be sure, it is difficult to conduct an objective assessment of performance of political office holders in the absence of well-defined and measurable performance indicators and time-bound targets. This study therefore, sets out to evaluate President Olusegun Obasanjo's foreign policy vis-a-vis his promises and objectives set out at the beginning of his administration in 1999.

President Olusegun Obasanjo was renowned for his shuttle diplomacy which was a vital instrument of forging bilateral and multilateral collaborations for sustainable development and peaceful co-existence in the West Africa sub-region as well as with other countries of the world. The Obasanjo government presented the country with a great opportunity to make sociopolitical and economic progress and the opportunity also to foster a more hospitable international environment, it was therefore not surprising that starting in its early phase, the Obasanjo Government eagerly laid solid foundations for political, social and economic transformations and also strove to gain more international friends and allies through his shuttle diplomacy tactic.

The term shuttle diplomacy or mediated communication according to Cambridge dictionary, refers to discussions between two or more countries in which someone travels between the different countries, talking to the governments involved, carrying messages and suggesting ways of dealing with problems (Cambridge University Press, 2005). While The American Heritage dictionary of the English Language, defines shuttle diplomacy as diplomatic negotiations conducted by an official intermediary who travels frequently between the nations involved (The American Heritage Dictionaries, 2000). The notion of shuttle diplomacy is said to have emerged from Henry Kissinger's efforts in the Middle East in the early 1970s.

He flew back and forth between Middle Eastern capitals for months in an effort to bring about peace after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. The central feature of his American Plan was separating the ceasefire from long-range problems and minimizing Russian involvement in the process.

The politics behind shuttle diplomacy is primarily based on the use of a third party to convey information back and forth between the parties, serving as a reliable means of communication less susceptible to the grandstanding of face-to-face or media-based communication. The intermediary serves not only as a

relay for questions and answers but can also provide suggestions for moving the situation toward resolution and does so in private.

By keeping the communication private and indirect, the parties will not feel a need to use the debating tactics they commonly use in public conversations and will be able to build up a level of trust that could not have been developed in those circumstances. Once this trust and a certain level of mutual understanding is developed then face-to-face and even a routine of communications can be started. However, the diplomatic innovation of shuttle diplomacy was made possible by modern communication technologies and air transportation which permits the mediator to travel easily between the negotiating parties.

The Obasanjo led administration embarked on a new round of shuttle diplomacy which took the president to several parts of the world. The objectives of these shuttles include are given.

Re-integration of Nigeria into the comity of nations: In his determination to regain Nigeria's lost glory and re-integrate it to the civilized world, President Obasanjo engaged in shuttle diplomacy across the major capitals of the world. The president during his extensive foreign trips have addressed the United Nations (UN), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Group of 8 (G-8), Group 77 (G-77), the Commonwealth, African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) (Ajayi, 2006).

The nation has achieved significant gains through the regime's shuttle diplomacy. Apart from the psychological relief following its re-integration and accommodations into the world affairs, Nigeria had assumed the leadership of several international organizations notably the ECOWAS, AU and G-77. It had hosted very important international summits thereby attracting foreign players to the Nigerian soil. All these imply that the international system has restored its confidence in Nigeria. Generally, Nigeria's increasing profile in its foreign relations implies that the nation has regained its role as a leading player in multilateral politics and diplomacy (Ibid, 1999).

Attracting foreign investment and fresh financial flows: President Obasanjo adopted the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) in 2003, intended to promote export and woo foreign investors through a variety of reforms, including macroeconomic stability, deregulation, liberalization, privatization and transparency (Zaki, 2011). To achieve this his administration embarked on major domestic reforms. The overall implications of these reforms became evident when foreign investors particularly from China, US, Brazil and even Israel came to the country to do business.

Securing debt relief/forgiveness from the country's creditors: As at 1997, Nigeria's external debt stood at \$27.008 billion which presented Nigeria as the highest indebted country in Africa (CBN, 2002). In order to tackle this financial problem, the Obasanjo led government went on the drive for foreign direct investment, the campaign for cancellation of the nation's debilitating debts and a cutting edge economic diplomacy. President Obasanjo went on foreign trips to woo prospective investors to the country and established high diplomatic contacts with leaders of Nigeria's major trading partners and sought debt relief from the nation's creditors. Nigeria's foreign reserves rose from \$2 billion in 1999 to \$43 billion on leaving office in 2007.

He was able to secure debt pardons from the Paris and London club amounting to some \$18 billion and paid another \$18 Billion to be debt free. Nigeria's former minister of Finance Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala noted that:

Initially, we owed \$35 billion and \$30 m billion of that was owed the Paris club group of creditors of 15 countries, most of them Western countries and Japan. Researchers exited the Parish Club through the debt cancellation. So \$5 billion is left. We don't owe the IMF even one kobo. Of the \$56 billion that is left about \$2.5 billion is owed multilateral Institutions. This includes the World Bank, African Development Bank, among others and these are long term, 30-40 years loan of little or no interest (Afrodad, 2007)

OBASANJO'S PERSONALITY AND SUCCESS OF THE SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY

President Olusegun Obasanjo has a challenger personality. According to Palmer, people of this personality type are essentially unwilling to be controlled either by others or by their circumstances; they fully intend to be masters of their fate. Challenger personality person is strong willed, decisive, practical, tough minded and energetic.

They also tend to be domineering; their unwillingness to be controlled by others frequently manifests in the need to control others instead. When healthy, this tendency is kept under check but the tendency is always there, nevertheless and can assume a central role in the Eight's interpersonal relationships (Palmer, 1991). In the words of Ewald Berkers, the challenger generally:

Have powerful instincts and strong physical appetites which they indulge without feelings of shame or guilt. They want a lot out of life and feel fully prepared to go out and get it. They need to be financially independent and often have a hard time working for anyone. This sometimes necessitates that the Eight opt out of the system entirely, assuming something of an outlaw mentality. Most Eights however, find a way to be financially independent while making their peace with society but they always retain an uneasy association with any hierarchical relationship that sees the Eight in any position other than the top position. Eights are prone to anger. When severely provoked or when the personality is unbalanced, bouts of anger can turn into rages. Unhealthy Eights are frankly aggressive and when pushed can resort to violence. Such Eights enjoy intimidating others whom they see as weak and feel little compunction about walking over anyone who stands in their way. They can be crude, brutal and dangerous (Berkers, 2003)

As a challenger, President Olusegun Obasanjo proved himself to be a tough leader, unafraid to stand up and challenge the existing domestic structures that negatively affect the image of the country. He advanced his foreign policy agenda by making regular trips to western countries despite the criticism he received at home. He ensured that Nigeria's relationship with the great powers was restored. President Obasanjo tried all in his powers to make sure that Nigeria remains in the good books of these countries.

For instance, in <15 months of assuming power in 1999, President Obasanjo moved to restore friendly relations between Nigeria and the US which in the end resulted to the military co-operation agreement signed by both countries in the year 2000. The scheme is known as the Military Professional Resources Initiative (MPRI) under the scheme the US undertook to send its military institutions and help Nigeria to procure military aid. Under the same arrangement the US government also agreed to assist Nigeria in retraining and re-equipping Nigerian soldiers to enable them perform their peacekeeping role on the African continent efficiently and effectively.

On the continental scale, President Obasanjo showed a strong determination toward the success of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). As the chairman of NEPAD implementation committee of head of state president Obasanjo was constantly in touch with the new partners of Africa toward the successful implementation of the scheme. Thus, Nigeria under

Obasanjo despite its lean purse was involved in settling disputes in different parts of Africa. Nigeria's involvement in this regard has been in two dimensions. There is no doubt that President Olusegun Obasanjo during his 8 years administration of the country as a civilian leader (1999-2007) has really succeeded in re-lunching Nigeria into the orbit of international politics from her pariah status of the Abacha years. Probably his personal clout, contact and commitment helped a lot in this regard.

However, it must be pointed out that the introduction of democratic role in Nigeria was a critical success factor which made the world very eager to welcome the country back into fold in order to perform her natural role as a leader in the West African sub-region and indeed Africa.

CHALLENGES FACED BY PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO'S IN FOREIGN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Though, Nigeria's resumption at the centre stage of relevance in global relations through President Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy between 1999 and 2007 had diplomatic gains however, other national issues even drag the country's image in the mud. These include the Niger Delta crisis, corruption, kidnapping and other humanitarian issues. Moreover, since domestic policies determines to a large extent the country's foreign policy, President Obasanjo domestic policies on infrastructural development yielded little result which in turn negatively affected the conduct of foreign relations especially in the area of wooing investors to the country. In the words of Ojameruaye:

The country did not witness a significant improvement in infrastructure during the past 8 years. While many federal roads were rehabilitated and some were constructed, the condition of many federal roads still leaves much to be desired. For instance, a significant section of the Shagamu-Benin road, linking the West and the Niger Delta/East, remains in a state of disrepair. The second River Niger Bridge at Asaba/Onitsha is yet to be constructed after many years on the drawing board. The most pathetic case is electricity supply. Despite the much ado, there has not been any significant improvement in public electric power supply. Power producers during the past 1 year to generate about 6,864 MW. Actual power availability (supply) has not improved and has fluctuated between about 2,000 and 4,000 MW during the past 8 years about the same level before Obasanjo assumed power (Ojameruaye, 2007)

There were quite a number of controversial domestic issues that affected the foreign policy implementation of President Obasanjo. One of the most critical issues was the Third Term Agenda of the president. While the President made a strong effort to fight corruption and ensure good governance, there were criticisms against his third term agenda which nearly soiled his international reputation. The centrality of the Third Term Agenda is based on the controversial attempts by supporters of Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to change the constitution to allow for a third term in office. Though, the idea was rejected by the Nigerian Senate, the third term agenda eventually led to a political media uproar in Nigeria as well as in the international circle. It took the centre state of discussion in Washington DC with many US diplomats kicking against immoral amendment of the constitution (Paden, 2008). The issue was of concern to the United States who issued a statement through its embassy that the United States respects the right of any country to amend its constitution through democratic, transparent and legal means. Jeter, a former US ambassador to Nigeria noted that any extension of President Obasanjo in office could undermine the President's stature in the international scene (Third Term Bid Immoral: Ex-US Envoys, Northern Leaders Move Against Agenda, *The Punch*, November, 21, 2005).

CONCLUSION

This study examines Nigeria's foreign policy under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999-2007. It looks at the influence of Obasanjo's personality on the conduct of Nigerian foreign policy between 1999 and 2007. It further discusses the impact of Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy on Nigeria's domestic economic growth, political stability, regional security and international participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Though one may argue that much of the problems of Nigeria could be solved through international diplomacy by attracting foreign investment, aid, regional economic integration, debt relief and concessional trade terms, it should be noted that Nigeria is yet to come out fully from the problems of debt, corruption, religious crisis, technological backwardness, human development, ethnicity economic underdevelopment and recently terrorism. Therefore, it is recommended that the scope of Nigeria's foreign policy should no longer be limited to continental affairs. It should extend to other continents and geared toward the promotion of the cultural heritage, scientific development, military enhancement, economic and technical cooperation with viable partners.

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