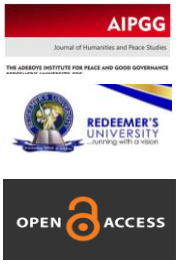
AIPGG Journal of Humanities and Peace Studies Vol. 4. NO 1.2023
ISSN: 2756-5831 (ONLINE)

Withered Hegemon: Perspectives on Nigeria's paradoxical multilateral relations with ECOWAS and TICAD

Williams Ehizuwa Orukpe
Department of History and International Studies
University of Benin
Benin City



Abstract:

This paper examines Nigeria's foreign policy abnormality in her relations with West African states and Japan. It problematised Nigeria as an economic power with withered hegemonial prospect in West Africa. Since 1960, the adoption of Africa as the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy had prevented her from harvesting the low hanging fruits in West Africa. She had confused the pursuit of the immediate national interests in her inter-West African neighbours as her own. This extreme Afrocentric foreign policy posture depicts Nigeria as an enigmatic international person. At independence, Nigeria was endowed with abundant human and natural resources needed to position her as a hegemon of some sorts in West Africa. But lost in the euphoric illusion of Nigeria's manifest destiny, the formulators of the nation's foreign policy of three concentric circles misconceived the interest of West Africa and Africa as Nigeria's primary interests. The fallout of this development was that Nigeria became the 'Big brother' of African states and failed to look for her immediate national interest in the continent. Hence, adopting the comparative research methodology, this paper interrogated Nigeria's relation with ECOWAS and TICAD as a paradox. The study finds that since 1975 and 1993, the anchorage of and conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy had been inconsistent with the universally accepted principle of international relations that there is no permanent friend or foe, but permanent national interest. It concludes that Nigeria's immediate political and economic survival need to be the determinants of her interventionism, alliance building or neutrality in West African diplomacy.

Keywords: Nigeria, ECOWAS, TICAD, Afrocentricism, Foreign Policy

Introduction

Diplomacy is a management tool for adjusting trans-territorial relations deeply rooted in history. Since the start of nation and state building, it has been a fashionable practice among political leadership from earliest times to employ divergent diplomatic tools in managing the relations between their domain and others. And this demonstrates the centrality of diplomacy as a means of achieving and securing the interest of non-political bodies and politically organized societies. The historicity of diplomacy as a means to an end

presupposes that diplomatic relations predates international relations. Hence, it is appropriate for this paper to engage a conceptual clarification of diplomatic relations and international relations in order to demarcate both. While international relations constitute the diverse aspects of interactions among sovereign States; diplomatic relations is the management of these relations as well as suzerain relations[1] through accredited representatives. It is also defined as inter-governmental relations because it involves one political head of state dealing with another across national boundary. Overtime and space, diplomacy has grown from the traditional use of messengers to the emergence of resident diplomacy, congress diplomacy, alliance diplomacy, telephone diplomacy, twitter diplomacy and democratic diplomacy as foreign policy instrument for achieving the national interests of States-economic survival. Joan Speroexplains it this way, diplomacy is a political tool used to achieve economic ends.[2]

Since the classical times, down to the Westphalian State system in 1648, the configuration of the international system had vacillated between bipolarity and multi-polarity; but the foundation of diplomatic relations had remained unchanged. From the formation of the Delian League by Athens and the Peloponnesian League by Sparta; down to the Concert of Europe in 1814 initiated by Clement Metternich to contain nationalism and revolution in Europe; to the formation of the Triple Alliance by Germany, Austria and Italy; and the Triple Entente by Britain, France and Russia; to the rise of the East and West blocs of the Cold War era (1945-1991): diplomatic relations had been tailored more than all else to preserve the sovereignty and economic interests of States, particularly those of the strong. And these interests were vigorously pursued on the world stage through a highly fluid foreign policy posture: that alternates conveniently between interventionism and isolationism as national interest demands.

International history reveals that for the sake of their national interest, State actors in the international system consistently alter and adjust their relations and behaviour towards one another. They conveniently make and break relationships to suit their national interests. Hence, it has been observed that friends and foes are not permanent in international relations, but only the interests of sovereign states are. And this characterisation of State relations is equally true of the Suzerain relations in Bible times and in other pre-modern city-state systems. For instance, Biblical evidence reveals that for 400 years the Jews were enslaved by Egypt; but when the nation of Israel, in the Promised Land, was threatened by Assyria and Babylon, the Jews sought assistance from Egypt. More so, in pre-colonial Nigeria, the friendship between Benin Kingdom and Great Britain established through the Gallwey Treaty of 1892 quickly changed to antagonism; when Oba Ovonramwen of Benin violated the provisions of the treaty. And this resulted in the Anglo-Benin war in 1897 that was aimed at reestablishing the British economic right in the forest region. In these instances and numerous others, it is discernible that in diplomatic relations among organized political entities friendship and enmity are secondary to national interest.

It is against this backdrop this paper seeks to examine Nigeria's current multilateral diplomatic relations problem it captures as 'Giver in Lack'. However, it centralizes the discussion on Nigeria's multilateral engagements with her West African neighbours through the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS); and with Japan through the Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development (TICAD), in an attempt to demonstrate that Nigeria's diplomatic relations and foreign policy since 1960 are counterproductive, schizophrenic and paradoxical. Because under ECOWAS, Nigeria engages the rest of West Africa as a messianic and charismatic State; while at the same time Nigeria is relating with Japan as a beggar nation. This foreign policy contradiction, this paper argues owe its existence to the extreme Afrocentric nature of Nigeria's foreign policy: which apparently prioritizes the interests of West Africa and other African states over Nigeria's interest.

Consequently, in the twenty-first century this paper argues that Nigeria need to wake up from her diplomatic slumber. To do this, Nigeria must change Africa as the centerpiece of her foreign policy and replace it with her expedient national political and economic interests. Therefore, we insist that interest diplomacy is the key to making Nigeria reap bountifully in West Africa: where she has been sowing bountifully since 1960. This will enable Nigeria remove the veil of Big Brother Africa, or better still 'Giver Diplomacy', that is currently obscuring her foreign policy vision; and put on as it were the garment of a serious international businessman, who is consistently wary of opportunities to invest her resources in places in West Africa and continental Africa where she will surely reap the dividends of diplomacy and grow her wealth. With this gain Nigeria can drive her economy to growth and development, and cease to be an international parasite or beggar under TICAD seeking to reap where she has not sown.

The Historical Context of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

At independence on October 1, 1960, Nigeria adopted a three concentric circle foreign policy thrust that places Africa, particularly West Africa, as its centerpiece. This was an apparent expression of Nigeria's solidarity and intention towards building strong friendship in Africa. But this is a fundamental negation of traditional best international practices where States prioritized national interest over the interest of other states. As noted in the foregoing introduction, because of the realization that no State can survive as an island of its own in the international system; States over time have maintained flexible and changing foreign policies that do not permit permanent friendship nor foe; but the permanence of their national interest. And this is the evident reality in the modern international system. For example, the United States of America (USA) under President Donald Trump have continued to pursue foreign policies in the 21st century that hurt; and are detrimental to the interest of America's long-time friends in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other allies, particularly Great Britain her oldest ally. Fitting examples of this can be seen in the Trade War, the USA initiated with China, the USA withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal, and her Solo execution of the Iranian General Qasem

Soleimani. These actions were taken to contain the acclaimed danger China and Iran posed to America's economic interest; and the reassert her dominance in global politics.

Consequently, it becomes mind bugling pondering over the rationale behind an undeveloped State like Nigeria has remained stuck to an Afrocentric foreign policy in the 21st century. A policy thrust that clearly seek to foster and maintain permanent friendship between Nigeria and her West African neighbours and continental Africa than advance the political and economic interests of the nation. Hence, this study opines that the key to comprehending Nigeria's dysfunctional multilateral diplomacy today reside in understanding the historical context of her foreign policy. But before we proceed further, it is germane we ask this question first: what is foreign policy? The pertinence of this question cannot be overemphasized due to the fact, the accurate understanding of Nigeria's foreign policy and the historical context that informed her Afrocentricism, is first and foremost dependent on our grasp of what foreign policy is. This will enhance our grasp of the interest responsible for States behaving the way they do in the international system.

Little wonder, J.C. Johari observed that foreign policy and diplomacy are complementary parts of national interest.[3] The national interest of a State is the core interest(s) protected and promoted by its government beyond its national boundary.[4] Consequently, Solomon Akinboye and Ferdinand Ottoh write that,

> *Foreign policy is a policy (of a State) that transcends national boundaries. It is the action a State embarks upon in its interaction with other members of the international environment, in the process of striving to attain its objectives and goals…*[5]

Charles Lerche and Abdul Azizsaid define foreign policy as the general principle upon which a state bases its relations and reaction to the international environment.[6] While Joseph Frankel conceives foreign policy as a dynamic process of interaction between the changing domestic demands and supports and the changing external circumstances.[7] This implies that the foreign policy of a nation is not supposed to be static; it must change to be able to respond and adapt well to changing domestic and global conditions. Therefore, due to need to respond to the dynamic characteristics of international relations, Olajide Aluko observed that at times: "In foreign policy matters many actions are taken without any course being plotted or adopted or even understood…"[8]

However, as regards Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy that arguably prioritizes the interest of African states in her multilateral diplomatic engagements with members of the continent; we observe a worrisome contradiction because the rationale behind adopting this foreign policy posture appears to be the ironical belief that by seeking the good and welfare of her West African and African neighbours, Nigeria is arguably seeking her own interest. This idealist foreign policy thrust is rooted in the historical experiences

and encounters that shaped the formation of Nigeria's Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) and her domestic foreign policy making environment before 1960.

Long before the attainment of Nationhood through the Lugardian political surgery in 1914; and eventual Statehood in 1960; the peoples of the Nigeria and like other Africans were integrated and locked with the rest of the world in an unequal and exploitative frameworks of diplomatic relations. During the periods of the Trans-Sahara, Trans-Mediterranean, Trans-Atlantic and Legitimate trade, the abundant human and material resources of Africa were massively harvested as low hanging fruits from the region by its underdevelopment partners. While African labour was used to power European plantations; Africa's raw materials fed European industries. This lopsided diplomatic relations snowballed into the colonial period: where the people of Africa came under the full-fledged political and economic domination by European powers. Understandably, Joseph Osagie explains that,

> *The contact between Africa and Europe has always been rooted in economic considerations... The earliest contact between Africans and Europeans can be traced to about the fifth century B.C.E. when the Carthegians began to trade across the Sahara; and acted as middlemen between African and European traders.*[9]

However, the road to colonialism in Nigeria and Africa was paved by the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, where the Europeans powers: Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Italy gathered in Germany under the oversight of Otto Von Bismarck to peacefully resolve their scrambling and bickering for territories in Africa that almost pushed Europe to the brink of war.[10] At the end of the proceedings of the multilateral diplomacy, the European powers agreed on the modality for the partition and occupation of Africa; and this gave rise to the artificial demarcation of the Africa into boundaries presided over, as colonies, by European States.

By 1900, the de-facto occupation of Nigeria by the British was complete through the effective conquest and subjugation of all opposing indigenous population. Subsequently, in her attempt to establish de-jure control over Nigeria, the British introduced the indirect rule system as a means of giving legitimacy and popular support to colonial rule. More so, Western education was introduced and socio-economic and health services provide as a way of enhancing the appeal of foreign domination and dismantle all traditional nationalist resistance to colonial economic exploitation. However, the neglect of the emergent education elites of Nigeria in the colonial administration of the nation, and the resultant oppression, suppression and marginalization of Nigerians by the colonialists; coupled with the introduction of the elective principle in 1922[12] fertilized the soil for the emergence of anti-European sentiments and rise of party politics in 1923: when the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was formed by Herbert Macaulay.[13]

Overtime, Nigerians' resentment towards European domination and exploitation found full expression in the formation of more political parties such as the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), Action Group (AG) and Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC).[14] These political institutions emerged in Nigeria to coordinate the people's struggle for decolonization; and served as the foreign policy foundation of Nigeria when the nation attained sovereignty in 1960. However, the fact that the 1960 foreign policy of Nigeria was Afrocentric demonstrated that her long history of foreign enslavement, dominion and exploitation, especially in the hands of European powers, conditioned the minds of her foreign policy makers drawn from the elites of the three dominant political parties of the time into believing what they conceived as Nigeria's manifest destiny to liberate the people of Africa from any form of foreign domination and exploitation. Consequently, giving aid and assistance to help advance the course and welfare of Africans was conceived as the raison d' etre the "Giant" or "Big Brother Africa". Therefore, Nigeria's foreign policy pattern since 1960 has continued to revolve around being a protective wall and diplomatic bulwark to shield African States from exploitation. Hence, Olajide Aluko observes that,

> *Nigeria's policy towards the rest of Africa has always been based on the same principles… because of the continuing existence of colonial and white supremacist regimes in some part of Africa a fifth principle was added: the total eradication of colonialism and racism from Africa.*[15]

Therefore, it is safe to contend here that it was Nigeria's historical experience that turned the nation at independence into a messianic State of some sort. And it is fundamentally responsible for Nigeria adopting an Afrocentric foreign policy disposition that sought to respect the sovereign equality, territorial integrity, and not to interference in the internal affairs of African States; while being fully committed to promoting cooperation and integration in the region.[16] The grand climax and paradoxical consequences Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy is that it had reduced the nation to a selfless giver, that is a donor State, in the twenty-first century. Thus, there is no gainsaying the fact that the historical context of Nigeria domestic foreign policy making environment had forged the nation into an idealist and Charismatic State that, as it were, detests conditional giving in Africa, which is symptomatic of, and tantamount to international exploitation.

Interest Diplomacy: Manifestations and Currency in International Relations

Without doubt, Nigeria's foreign policy focus negates the core philosophical framework on which international and diplomatic relations are anchored. It is this reality that informsthe expedient need for this paper designed to revisit the issue of States and national interest in international relations. At this juncture, the objective of the study is to demonstrate the manifestations and currency of interest diplomacy as means to an end in the international system. For the

Nigerian State, this is meant and foreign policy makers this is hoped to be a call to foreign policy reawakening and a stitch in time that can help the nation get her international acts together. The urgent need for a foreign policy renaissance in Nigeria is evident in the argument of John Rourke[17] that international politics has the potential of extinguishing the whole human race. It follows therefore that Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy is a danger her continued existence; and capable of undermining the interests and welfare of Nigerians at home and abroad. Understandably, Charles Adenrele Alade opines that international relations is studied for the purposes of future explanation and predictions.[18]

The implicit lesson contained in Alade's view is that Nigeria's diplomatic future, as a nation, would continue to be bleak; if her foreign policy makers do not deliberately revert to interest diplomacy. Interest diplomacy in bilateral and multilateral relations had for years ensured the survival and rise to greatness of realist States. These States such as Great Britain, Russia, France, Austria and the United States of America (USA) had ridden on the back of interest diplomacy to attain great heights in the international system. Since its first contemporary manifestation in 1776, when the USA at independence adopted the foreign policy of isolationism to protect her core national interests: her political and economic survival; interest diplomacy has evolved to be the main currency in international relations. In 1789, the outbreak of the French Revolution, cruel execution of the French Monarch, King Louis XVI, and the revolutionary doctrine of equality, liberty and fraternity triggered the European recourse to interest diplomacy, particularly, during the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1814). Herbert L. Peacock explains it this way,

> *The French Revolution of 1789 struck not only at the foundations of the "ancientregime", but also of the other States of Europe, great and small. In 1792, we see the beginning of French efforts to spread Revolution abroad by military means and likewise the efforts of Great Powers to crush the Revolution almost at its birth.*[19]

Hence, the Quadruple Alliance that was formed by Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia to contain the imperial ambition of Napoleon Bonaparte; and quash the Napoleonic Wars grew from the international interventionism in the internal affairs of France, the French Revolution triggered. Thus, the Quadruple Alliance it can be argued was the first multilateral diplomatic framework on which interest diplomacy was conducted in modern international relations. It was also formed as a coalition or peace keeping force in Europe not out of solidarity and sentiment; but to teach the French and Europeans generally that revolution anywhere in the continent against constituted authorities is unwelcomed and would be suppressed by brute force. More so, Peacock revealed that England, Spain, Holland, the German and Italians that intervened in the revolution in France were also guided by economic motives: which is the prospect of territorial gains.[20]

During this period of trial for France, the peasants of France, who had tried to introduce American ideals to Europe, expected assistance from the USA on the grounds that, France gave assistance to the USA during her war of independence against Britain. But out of concern for her national interest, the USA refrained from helping France. A.J. Grant and Harold Temperley in their study "*Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (1789-1950)*," observed that although the help France gave to the USA was at great financial cost to her treasury; it however contributed immensely to the triumph of the American cause.[21]Therefore, providing insight into why the American resorted to cautious and interest diplomacy when France needed her the most, Alexander Hamilton explains that,

> *France, with all the great maritime powers united against her, would be unable to supply the deficiency (naval power which the USA lacks at the time). She cannot afford us that species of cooperation which is necessary to render our efforts useful to her, and to prevent our experiencing the destruction of our trade.*[22]

Subsequently, the management of multilateral diplomacy from the congress of Europe down to the Bismarckian Alliance system was rested squarely on interest diplomacy. Hence, the interest of States either individually or collectively dictated the tune of international relations down to the twentieth century when African States began to emerge as sovereign actors in the international system. However, since the emergence Nigeria, she has proven to be enigmatic political entity among the comity of nations. While states such as the USA among others in the twenty-first century has continued to pursue what she conceives as her clear national interest within and outside America: in Iraq, Libya, Syria, North Korea, Iran and elsewhere. Nigeria has been found prioritizing and pursuing the interest of other African States. And this has continued to raise serious legitimate concerns in the country and elsewhere. Because the foreign policy orientation of Nigeria clearly negates the age long philosophical foundation on which past multilateral diplomatic relations were anchored- national interest.

Nigeria and ECOWAS: Negation of Best Multilateral Diplomatic Practices

In the near past, when multilateral diplomatic principles such as balance of power, collective security, and open diplomacy emerged in international relations; they developed as means of pursuing and preserving the perceived national interest of States- survival. Consequently, multilateral diplomacy observably functioned under the guiding principle of live and let live. In the twentieth century, multilateral diplomacy reached a new height when States voluntarily transferred part of their sovereignty to create International Governmental Organization (IGOs), starting with the League of Nations in 1920,to ensure their collective survival. After the League collapse in 1939; States blew the breath of life into the United Nations in 1945, bringing it to live for their collective good. And the same can be said of the European Union, when

it was formed in 1957. But in Africa, we find a sharp contrast in Nigeria's multilateral diplomatic relations with her West African neighbours since 1975; because of her precarious foreign policy twist that negates best international diplomatic ethos and practices.

Nigeria obviously since attainment her of independence has failed to use her national power and leadership position in West Africa to advance her political and economic interests. She has also failed to protect the lives and properties of her citizens in diaspora; and reap the dividends of her direct diplomatic investment in the sub-region. Describing the power of Nigeria, the "*Anti-Corruption Handbook for Nigerian Youths*" reveals that,

> *Nigeria is one of the world's most unique nations. She has large and luscious pastures, abundant human and natural resources: huge deposit of petroleum, tin, columbite, iron ore, coal, limestone, lead, zinc, natural gas and hydro electric energy. Nigeria also constitutes the international focal point for trade and commence… as the biggest market in Africa.*[23]

Rightly, when the nation joined the international community, Nigeria was looked upon as a beacon of hope for Africa and expected to fully harness and maximize her national resources to become a great nation. But Nigeria's leadership has thus far proven to be no different from Mansa Musa of ancient Ghana. They have perfected the art of resource squandering and international largesse through what this paper terms as "Giver Diplomacy". In this regard, Nigeria has arguably positioned herself as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) of Africa. And this foreign policy dysfunction can be explicitly seen in Nigeria's multilateral diplomatic relations with ECOWAS that has boomeranged on her.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established by fifteen (15) West African States on May 28, 1975.[24]It was formed during the heat of the Cold War politics; which made the economic development disparity between the Western bloc, Eastern bloc and the Non-Alignment camp very clear. Hence, at their independence in the twentieth century, most West African states joined the international community as economically less privilege and disadvantaged Third World Countries. In fact, in West Africa the economic fortunes of States in the sub-region deteriorated to the point that by the mid-1970s West African States, particularly the non-oil producing ones, were on death-roll because of the global oil price shock in 1973.[23] Consequently, ECOWAS emerged as a regional economic solution to help fast track the economic recovery and the development of West African States.

It is along this line that, Article II of the ECOWAS Treaty stipulated that the rationale behind the formation of the West African international organization was to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity, particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and

in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its people of increasing and maintaining economic stability. And to foster closer economic relations among its members and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent.[26]However, it is discernible from the provisions of Article II of the ECOWAS Treaty, that the Community has the double barrel aim of promoting economic development in West Africa and Africa at large. And Nigeria with her abundant resources and Afrocentric foreign policy disposition occupied the driver's seat in ensuring the actualisation of ECOWAS goals. Consequently, Nigeria anchored her multilateral relations with ECOWAS on 'Giver Diplomacy': spending and investing everywhere in Africa without dividends.

While Nigeria's giver diplomacy cuts across countries and continents, the major beneficiaries of her giver diplomacy in Africa are ECOWAS and its members. According to Article 51 of the ECOWAS Treaty, the source of funding for the Community's operations was to come from:

i. Contribution from member States
ii. Income from community enterprises
iii. Receipts from bilateral and multilateral sources as well as other foreign sources; and
iv. Subsidies and contributions of all kinds and from all sources.[27]

Although Article 51(1) points out that the funding of ECOWAS was to come from all members; but since its inception Nigeria had been the only reliable source of fund and solo financier of the Community. After it was formed in 1975, it was estimated that ECOWAS required about $926,000,000 USD to accomplish it economic recovery programme in West Africa. Towards realising this sum, Joseph Garba, Nigeria's then Minister of Foreign Affairs (1975-1978), reports that Nigeria contributed about one-third (1/3) of the total budget.[28] But what is paradoxical and ironic here is the fact that despite her huge spending on ECOWAS Nigeria's Afrocentric (friendship policy with other African States) and the personalization of diplomacy by her leadership prevented the nation from reaping where she had sown her money.

In the first instance, the foremost benefit Nigeria would have derived from her leadership role in ECOWAS ought to have been the location of the headquarters of the Community in the country. Instead, when the economic regional body was formed in 1975, because of the desire of Nigeria's Head of State, Yakubu Gowon, to grow and sustain his friendship with General Gnasingbe Eyadema of Togo, he allowed the headquarters to ECOWAS to be located in Togo, despite Nigeria being the brain child and biggest financier of the Community.[29] Subsequently, Nigeria's diplomacy of friendship manifested in Muritala Muhammed's activist foreign policy and Olusegun Obasanjo's foreign policy of handout: where the generous sharing of money (giving of handouts) was considered the most effective method of achieving Nigeria's foreign policy objectives,[30] even in issues and countries that are of no direct relation or benefit to Nigeria.

It is along this foreign policy direction that Garba writes that Nigerian government gave twenty million dollars to Angola as an outright grant during her crises; and a few hundred thousand dollars were also handed out to countries like Cape Verde, Guyana and Benin.[31] Further, Nigeria set up a Trust Fund of $100,000,000 at the African Development Bank (ADB) as aid to needy African States.[32] And in 1975, after the Commonwealth Conference in Kingston, Jamaica, the Nigerian President, Gowon, in an act of international solidarity and largesse travelled to Grenada and paid the salaries of her civil servants; and deployed a contingent of Nigerian police to Grenada to train her police force with Nigeria shouldering the full financial cost.[33]

More so, since the establishment of the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in 1990[34] as the military organ of ECOWAS; Nigeria has sacrificed the lives of her troops and scarce fund to keep peace in West Africa and beyond and make ECOMOG functional without gaining any direct economic benefit. In Liberia, Chad, Sudan and Mali among others, Nigeria has contributed to peace building and gave all in the process but in return gained nothing. Perhaps, it more appropriate to say that Nigeria moved into these theatres of conflict with no clear national interest or intended economic gain in sight. The problem with Nigeria's military diplomacy even predates the establishment of ECOMOG. For example, in 1972, the Nigerian army was deployed to Niger by Gowon to forestall a military coup on the grounds of his personal friendship with President Hamani Diori.[35]And this is illustrative of the lack of national interest that has continued to plague Nigeria's foreign policy; and degraded her multilateral diplomatic engagements in West Africa into a mere charitable exercise.

Conversely, instead of Nigeria reaping from her West African neighbours where she has invested her money and troops; we find the reverse to be the case. Nigeria's West African and African neighbours have continued to take advantage of her resources and population to grow and develop their economies through acts of exploitation. For instance, during the Nigerian Civil War, President Eyadema of Togo intercepted seven million pounds in Nigerian currency which Biafra intend to dump in the world's currency market in order to create financial instability in Nigeria. But, instead of freely returning the money to the Nigerian government, Eyadema ceased the opportunity to milk Gowon, his supposed friend. He demanded for two million pounds from Nigeria as a condition for returning the money. But after a long bargaining process, the ransom price was reduced to £500,000 pounds.[36]However, it should be noted that, at this time, Nigeria's Naira ranked among the top ten (10) strongest currencies in the world.[37]Therefore, Eyadema clearly wanted exploit Nigeria for the interest of Togo.

In the twenty-first century, with a population estimated at 200,000,000, Nigeria has become a market other African States are exploiting to grow their economies. And countries like South Africa, Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Niger among others are consistently capitalizing on Nigeria to grow their economy. But it is South African that is currently taking the lead in this regard. South

African multinational corporations such as MTN Telecommunications, Multi Choice(DSTV and GOTV Cable Networks) and Shoprite are making millions of dollars out of the Nigerian economy daily; and robbing the Nigerian government by evading taxation. While at the expense of the Nigerian tax payers, the Nigerian government has continued to provide security and protect the properties expatriates and investors in the country.

But unfortunately, this diplomatic harvest of bounty Nigeria accords other Africans is not being reciprocated to Nigerian businesses and investors in Africa. Especially in South Africa, where Nigerians and Nigerian investments in the country have continued to be the victim and targets of Xenophobic attacks. The causal killings of Nigerians, even in unlikely places such as Ghana demonstrates how Nigeria has reduced itself to a Lilliputian, due to her failure to reap from her international diplomatic investments in Africa. And to add salt to injury, Nigeria even plans on pursuing a Visa-on-Arrival policy 2020 for all Africans, including South Africans; knowing that South Africa from according Ghanaians Visa-on-Arrival in South Africa moved on to offering Ghanaians Visa free entry status into the second largest industrial economy in Africa. And this diplomatic privilege Nigerians are still begging and dying for. Realistically, therefore, South Africa sees Nigeria as huge market and Nigerians as the goose laying the golden egg based on the huge revenue the nation can generate selling Visa to Nigerians alone.

More so, Nigeria's frequent border closures despite her heavy in investment to promote open borders and economic cooperation through ECOWAS in West Africa is another foreign policy paradox. Apparently, aware of her West African neighbours exploitative designs, Nigeria has resorted to periodically closing her border to trade, against the provisions of ECOWAS, to save her economy. But this is another foreign policy irony considering the gains Nigeria can derive from ECOWAS, if she revamped the manufacturing sector of her economy. Based on her leadership role in the Community, it would have been very easy for Nigeria to flood and dominate West African market with made in Nigerian goods. Along this line, as a reward for her heavy spending in West Africa and Africa in general, Nigeria can give conditions and mandate her neighbours to patronize her products. Rather, we find on the other hand that, it is goods from Nigeria's West Africa neighboursand beyond that have almost flooded Nigerian markets to the near total displacement of Nigerian made goods. Consumable goods, disinfectant and herbal products among other from Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Niger among others have continued to thrive in Nigeria despite the nation's comparative cost advantage in producing similar goods. Consequently, the question must be asked: since Nigeria has failed to derive meaningful and maximal economic benefit from ECOWAS; is the time apt for Nigeria's exit (*Nigexit*) out of ECOWAS?

Without doubt, in the forty-five (45) years existence of ECOWAS, Nigeria's membership of the community has brought the nation more pain (losses) than gain. However, the time is not yet ripe for "*Nigexit*". Nigeria's exit from ECOWAS now is not practical and advisable; because it will do the underdeveloped nation

more economic harm than its membership of the Community had caused. This point can be gleaned from the British delay to leave the European Union despite having a developed industrial economy and the people's mandate to do so. Therefore, the key to making Nigeria's multilateral diplomatic relations with ECOWAS beneficial to the nation is the complete overhaul of her Afrocenric foreign policy posture. There must be a deliberate jettisoning of her giver diplomacy; and a calculated policy reversion to interest diplomacy. Nigerian leaders must engage the rest of the Africa not on personal grounds or based on sentimentalities; but squarely based on what Nigeria can gain from relating with and assisting others. While this is the obvious dimension ofNigeria's foreign policy in the Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development (TICAD); but she is, however, engaging Japan as a beggar nation.

Nigeria and TICAD: The Rise of Parasitic Diplomacy

Years of giving of herself financially to fund the operations of ECOWAS, keep the peace across Africa, and cater for the interest of Africans without reaping has drained Nigeria and rendered her a: 'Giver in Lack'. Nigeria currently lacks economic development, social cohesion and security; and now depends on, and in a more appropriate term, begs creditor nations and other development partners for the kind of aid she philanthropically lavished on her African neighbours. And one of the external sources where Nigeria expects to reap from where she has not sown is Japan through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Hence, this paper terms this international behaviour as "Parasitic Diplomacy". The diplomatic relations irony that exists in Nigeria's dependence on Tokyo for economic aid is evident in the economic contrast between both States. While 4.5% of the world's resources are found in Nigeria; Japan and on the other hand has no natural resources. Yet, Japan has been able to harness her intellectual resources to become the third leading and most economically developed nation in the globe.

Understandably, after the Cold War (1945-1991) launched the problem of economic development to the front burners of international relations; and exposed the economic nakedness and underbelly of African States, Japan decided to help develop the continent and its people. Hence, shortly after the Cold War ended, Japan initiated the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993.[38] TICAD was conceived not as a full-fledged international organization, which according to the Union of International Association (UIA) must be a body with some degree of permanence in the form of a standing representative agency (Secretariat) concerned with international questions and having universal membership,[39] but as an instrument of Summit or Congress Diplomacy.

As a multilateral platform for diplomatic relations, the government of Japan through TICAD sought to promote policy dialogue between African leaders and other development partners on pressing issues such as economic development, poverty and conflict plaguing Africa.[40] Since the wheels of TICAD as a mechanism for congress diplomacy was set in motion in 1993, stakeholders in

Africa and Africa's development partners comprising the Government of Japan, United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), African Union Commission (AUC) regional organizations, civil societies, organized private sector and all leaders of African states meet every five (5) years up until 2013 to brainstorm and find collective solution to the underdevelopment of African States. But starting from 2016, the Japanese led African economic development summit is now meets every three (3) years either in Japan or Africa.[41] Commenting on the impact of TICAD as a multilateral platform for African development, Achim Steiner, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, remarked that:

> *TICAD has made a seminal contribution in mobilizing the global community in support of Africa's development priorities. It is also plays a crucial role in amplifying the continent's voice in the global development discourse.*[42]

Table 1: TICAD Timeline and Objectives, 1993-2019

TICAD	OBJECTIVE(S)
TICAD 1, 1993	To reverse Africa's post-Cold War economic development decline through economic aid and assistance. It adopted the Tokyo Declaration on African Development aimed at promoting political and economic reforms in Africa.
TICAD 2, 1998	To reduce poverty in Africa and integrate Africa into the global economy. It adopted the principle of African ownership and international partnership as its guiding ideological framework to drive development in Africa.
TICAD 3, 2003	To support the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the blueprint for achieving peace and socio-economic and development in Africa.
TICAD 4, 2008	To boost Africa's economic growth; ensure and promote human security in Africa according to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and address environmental issues and climate change in Africa.
TICAD 5, 2013	To commemorate the 20th anniversary of TICAD and 50th anniversary of the African Union. It focuses on achieving a robust and sustainable economy; inclusive and resilient society; and peace and stability in Africa.
TICAD 6, 2016	To promote structural economic transport through economic diversification and industrialization; improved health care system for good quality of life; and social stability for shared prosperity.
TICAD 7, 2019	To advance Africa's development by focusing on the three pillars of economy, society, and peace and security. It seeks to examine how Japan can work with Africa to tackle climate change, poverty, drought; and Africa's worsening health care system which is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with the June 2019 G20

	resolution reached at the Osaka Summit in Japan.

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7)*, August 28-30, 2019, p. 7. Available at:https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000507203.pdf Accessed February 13, 2020.

From the table above, it can be seen that TICAD since its inception had tried to coordinate global partnership for Africa's development. It is along this line that TICAD, as a summit level international relations framework, is anchored on the philosophical principle of "African Ownership and the International Partnership". But this raises the fundamental question of whether Japan and other development partners supposedly concerned about Africa's development are toeing the line of Nigeria's 'Giver Diplomacy' in their relations with Nigeria and the rest of the continent. This question is more appropriate given the fact that in 2019, the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe claimed that Japan seek to achieve tangible results in Nigeria through in-depth discussions geared towards fast tracking peace and security and economic development in the country.[43] Further, he asserts that, Japanese companies seek to boost Africa's development through quality infrastructure, human resources development; and through science, technology and innovation.[44]

However, unlike Nigeria charismatic foreign policy posture towards ECOWAS and continental Africa, insight into Japan's motive for seeking to help Nigeria and the rest of Africa can be gleaned from the Japanese 2019 "*Diplomatic Bluebook*." Revealing Japanese national interest in Africa, the Japanese *Diplomatic Bluebook* discloses that,

> *With a population of over 1.2 billion people spread in 54 States, the international community (including Japan) is drawn to Africa because of its high market potentials and natural resources.*[45]

Further, it revealed that because of Nigeria's economic potentials, many Japanese companies are interested in doing business in the country.[46] Therefore, from the foregoing, it is safe to contend that the proposed$30 billion US dollars[47] Japan disclosed through her deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Shunsuke Takei, that she plans to invest in Nigeria and other African countries from 2016-2018 under the Public-Private Partnership Scheme is arguably a means of creating in-roads for Japanese companies into Nigeria's economy for exploitation.

Going forward, this demonstrates that if Nigeria hopes to achieve economic growth and development through parasitic diplomatic relations with Japan through TICAD; the nation is living in a modern era of illusion. The reality of international relations is that States, Japan inclusive, would use what they have to get what they want from other States. And this is exactly Japan's goal through TICAD in Nigeria and other beggar nations that constitute the continent. Hence,

as a matter of urgency, Nigeria needs to learn from Japan and other realist States such as USA, Russia, China, and Britain who are never shy to pursue their national interests beyond their boundary. Therefore, it is not a surprise that foreign aid and grants from the creditor nations and the Bretton Woods institutions are always come with strings attached. And in recent times, the coalition of States led by the USA that intervened in Iraq and Libya, it has been found acted based squarely on their economic interest in the region- crude oil. Therefore, Nigeria's huge spending on ECOWAS and other African states; and the sacrifice of her troops to keep peace in West Africa and beyond should stop being anchored on Afrocentricism or Big Brother diplomacy. They should be rooted squarely on Nigeria's clearly identified national political and economic interests beyond her boundary than all else.

In the final analysis. This paper argues that, it is high time for Nigeria, the giant of Africa, woke up from her deep sleep. Because, Nigeria's current status as a 'Giver in Lack' or better still 'Rich Beggar' is a mockery and diplomatic slap on the face of the nation. It portends a huge diplomatic risk for the nation; and capable of reducing Nigeria to the proverbial fool at forty, who is a fool forever. On October 1, 2019, Nigeria turned fifty nine (59) approaching sixty (60) in October, 2020;since time is money and waits for no one, Nigeria cannot afford to waste any more time to growing and developing her economy. This makes it more germane for the nation to learn from international history and modern diplomatic best practices in conducting her international engagements the twenty-first century. This will help pre-empt Nigeria from becoming a permanent 'international fool' and 'laughing stock' that gives everything free to everybody, especially Africans, and receives nothing free from anybody.

Conclusion

Thus far, this paper has demonstrated that the Afrocentric context of Nigeria's foreign policy is historically determined. And it maintained that, it is fundamentally responsible for the Nigerian government's apparent loss-win multilateral diplomatic disposition in its engagements with ECOWAS States and the rest of Africa. By adopting Africa as the centre piece of her foreign policy, Nigeria has reduced herself into an international giver without benefit. She engages incontradictory and negative international relations with her Africa neighboursthat have so far proven to be detrimental Nigeria's prospect of economic growth and development. While Nigeria had almost been singlehandedly funding regional economic cooperation and integration in West Africa, and peace in continental Africa with her money and troops; she has failed to begin her charity from home and to harvest economic goodies from the international assistance she renders others.

Paradoxically, this paper finds that instead of reaping economic dividends from her effort to birth ECOWAS; Nigeria has been found periodically closing her borders to trade with her West African neighbours. While ironically striving to open her economy to Japan, through TICAD, in hope of obtaining economic aid and assistance grow and develop her economy. Hence, based on Nigeria's

derogatory cap-in-hand approach (Beggar Diplomacy) to develop her economy; when could have easily harvested economic gains from the numerous countries she has invested her money and troop to develop her economy; this paper concludes that Nigeria needs an urgent paradigm shift in her foreign policy focus. And the key to achieving this is Nigeria meticulously averting her parasitic and beggar diplomatic status in modern multilateral relations. This implies that Nigeria must permanently jettison the notion 'Africa as the centre piece' of her foreign policy and substitute it with interest diplomacy in her interactions with ECOWAS members and African States at large.

Bibliography

1. H. Nicolson, *Diplomacy,* London: Oxford University Press, pp. 4-5.

2. J.E. Spero, *The Politics of International Economic Relations,* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977, p. 4.

3. J.C. Johari, *International Relations and Politics (Theoretical Perspective in the Cold War Era),* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., 2009, p. 464.

4. *Ibid*., p. 442.

5. S. Akinboye and F. Ottoh, *International Relations,* Lagos: Concept Publication Ltd., 2005, p. 115.

6. C. Lerche and A.A. Said cited in Olajide Aluko, *Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy,* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1981, p. 2.

7. J. Frankel, *International Relations in a Changing World* quoted in O. Aluko, *Essays in Nigeria Foreign Policy,* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1981, p. 2.

8. *Ibid*.

9. J.I. Osagie, "Regional Cooperation and Integration in Africa" in Fred I.A. Omu and Leo E. Otide (eds.), *Themes in International Studies and Diplomacy,* Benin City: Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, 2002, pp. 170 – 171.

10. *Ibid*., p. 172.

11. M. Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule,* London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1968.

12. G.O. Olusanya, "Constitutional Development in Nigeria, 1861-1960" in ObaroIkime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History,* Ibadan: HEBN Publishers Plc., 1980, p. 522.

13. G.O. Olusanya, "The Nationalist Movement in Nigeria" in ObaroIkime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History,* Ibadan: HEBN Publishers Plc., 1980, p. 556; and R.L. Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 44.

14. B. Ige, *People, Politics and Politicians of Nigeria (1940-1979),* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Plc., 1995, pp. 27 – 43.

15. O. Aluko, *Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy,* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981, p. 236.

16. *Ibid*., p. 324.

17. J.T. Rourke, *International Politics on the World Stage (6th ed.),* New York: McGraw Hill Publishing Companies, 1997, p. 10.

18. C.A. Alade, *Theories, Concepts and Principles in the Study of International Relations,* Lagos: ELMI Educational Ltd., 1997, p. 2.

19. H.L. Peacock, *A History of Modern Europe 1789-1981 (7th ed.),* London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1982, p. vi.

20. *Ibid*., p. 44.

21. A.J. Grant and H. Temperley, *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (1789-1950),* London: Longman Group Ltd., 1952, pp. 15 – 16.

22. A. Hamilton, "Letter of Pacificus" quoted in Chris Brown, *International Relations in Political Thought,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 286.

23. T.H. Joda, *Anti-Corruption Handbook for Nigerian Youths: A Fundamental Paradigm for Re-branding Education, Business, Politics and Public Administration in Nigeria,* Abuja: Succez Guide Consulting, 2011, p. 2.

24. Ministry of External Affairs, *Nigeria and the ECOWAS since 1985*, Enugu & Lagos: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd. & Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, 1991, p.1.

25. *Ibid*.

26. *Ibid*., p. 143.

27. *Ibid*., p. 172.

28. J. Garba, *Diplomatic Soldering,* Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1987, p. 4.

29. *Ibid*.

30. *Ibid*., p.10.

31. *Ibid*., p. 11.

32. *Ibid*.

33. *Ibid*., p. 12.

34. J.I. Osagie, *Regional Cooperation and Integration in Africa,* pp. 181-182.

35. Joe Garba, p. 4.

36. *Ibid*., p. 45.

37. Tabi Haman Joda, *Anti-Corruption Handbook for Nigerian Youths,* p. 3.

38. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)*, August 28-30, 2019, p. 4. Available at https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000507203.pdf. Accessed February 13, 2020.

39. S.A. Shokpeka, "A History of International Organization Since 1919" in Fred I.A. Omu and Leo E. Otoide (eds.), *Themes in International Studies and Diplomacy,* Benin City: Department of History and International Studies, 2002, pp. 318-319.

40. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development*, p. 4.

41. *Ibid*.

42. *Ibid*.

43. *Ibid*., p.1.

44. *Ibid*.

45. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Japanese Diplomatic Bluebook 2019*, p. 1. PDF file Available at <https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/pp.page22e_000929.html? Accessed February 13, 2020.

46. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook*, p. 16.

47. *Ibid*., p. 2.

ISSN: 2756-5831 (ONLINE)