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From Pariah to Accommodation: The Nature and Pattern of Nigeria's Foreign Relations, 1999-2007

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Abstract

Foreign policy is an endless dialogue between the domestic and external forces. Since its independence in October 1960, Nigeria's foreign policy under successive administrations, military or civilian, has been shaped by domestic and external forces. Against this background, the paper examines the influence of domestic factors on Nigeria's external policy from 1999 to 2007. Prior to the emergence of the Fourth Republic led by President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007, Nigeria's domestic environment was characterised by massive criticism both from within and outside due to the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida and the high-handedness and gross human rights violations of the regime of General Sani Abacha that preceded it, leading to Nigeria's sanctions by the United States, European nations, and suspension from the International Community. The paper explores the impact of Nigeria's expulsion from the international community on Nigeria's external image and economy. It discusses the various foreign policy strategies of President Obasanjo's administration to restore the country's external image, which led to the revival of Nigeria's economy during the period of study. The paper adopts the historical and analytical research methods. It utilises primary and secondary data collected from newspaper reports, official publications, and books in discussing the nature and pattern of Nigeria's foreign policy from 1999 to 2007. Based on what has been done so far in this research, the findings reveal that Nigeria's foreign policy during the period under review was shaped by domestic factors. Findings have also shown that the Nigerian economy experienced a sharp improvement with the Foreign Direct Investment initiative of the Fourth Republic. The paper concludes that the foreign policy initiatives of the Nigerian administration from 1999 to 2007 repositioned the country's external image and cleared the negative perception of Nigeria held by the West. The paper recommends that the Nigerian government should always adopt cost-benefit analysis in conducting the country's external relations.

Keywords: *pariah, domestic environment, external image, international community, shuttle diplomacy.*

Introduction

Foreign policy decision-making is very critical to a country's socio-economic and political development. It is a process of dialogue between domestic and external forces, a dynamic process shaped by domestic exigencies and aspirations together with the forces of economics, politics, and socio-culture in the international system (Njoku, 2005). Foreign policy, in essence, is an endless dialogue between domestic and external forces (Osarumwense, 2015). Nigeria's foreign policy since independence has pursued fundamental issues that border on both domestic and external spheres. At independence, Nigeria pursued an Afrocentric foreign policy, prioritising the well-being of Africa and African peoples. As Prime Minister Alhaji Tafawa Balewa declared, "on the question of colonialism and racial discrimination, I am afraid that we in Nigeria will never compromise" (Ogunnubi, 2018). This policy thrust informed Nigeria's role in Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and its instrumental role in resolving conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It could be said that Nigeria's foreign policy since 1960 has reflected the country's national interest while also responding to critical domestic exigencies.

The period from 1999 to 2007 is particularly significant in Nigeria's history as it marked Nigeria's readmission to the comity of nations after a long period of political and economic suspension from world bodies. This is the period of Pariah to Accommodation. The interplay between domestic politics and external factors shaped the foreign policy decision-making process of the Fourth Republic, led by President Olusegun Obasanjo. The political transition from military to civilian administration on 29 May 1999 placed an enormous task on the government to redeem the country's battered image in pursuit of national interest. Prior to the advent of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria's domestic setting was marred by socio-political and economic upheavals. This was occasioned by the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election by General Ibrahim Babangida's military regime, a development that illustrates the inherent contradictions of military involvement in election administration (Fagbadebo & Yusuf, 2026). The annulment not only truncated democratic participation but also deepened exclusionary politics, particularly for women whose participation in the electoral process has historically been constrained by such authoritarian interventions (Yusuf & Fagbadebo, 2026a).

The subsequent regime of General Sani Abacha, marked by gross human rights violations and aggressive domestic policies, led to Nigeria's isolation as a pariah state in the international system. This isolation exemplifies the governance challenges associated with military leadership in Africa, where authoritarian control undermines institutional legitimacy, women's inclusion, and public trust (Yusuf, Fagbadebo & Awotayo, 2026). Furthermore, the systemic corruption and misgovernance that characterised prolonged military rule eroded national development, underscoring the nexus between corruption, weak institutions, and the failure to achieve sustainable development goals (Akindele et al., 2026). This legacy of exclusion also manifested in community peacebuilding and governance structures, where women were structurally sidelined from formal peace processes despite their critical roles at the grassroots (Yusuf & Fagbadebo, 2026b). Thus, the foreign policy re-engineering from 1999 to 2007 was not merely an external accommodation strategy but a deliberate effort to rebuild domestic legitimacy. It required strengthening electoral integrity, curbing corruption, and promoting inclusive governance, particularly women's political leadership, as a foundation for sustainable development policies in West Africa (Fagbadebo et al., 2026). This paper focuses on the descriptive and historical analysis of the impacts and implications of some political developments on the country's foreign policy. The annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election and the human rights violations of the Abacha regime had implications for the country's image in the international system, which the Obasanjo administration sought to redress. The paper identifies the administration's foreign policy initiatives and how they helped restore Nigeria's external image. The analysis covers all phases of Nigeria's external relations between 1999 and 2007, providing an opportunity to discuss domestic exigencies and how they shaped Nigeria's foreign relations.

Nigeria's Domestic Environment, 1985-1999

Gen. Ibrahim Babangida overthrew the regime of Gen. Muhammad Buhari on 27 August 1985 and governed until 1993. His regime promised to restructure the Nigerian economy and establish a political structure that would bring about democratic governance. According to him, "military incursion into politics is to correct the wrongs in the political and economic sectors of any country". He further asserted that once that task is accomplished, the military would have no reason to remain in power (Agbese, 1990). Gen. Babangida's promise and move to hand over political power suffered a setback, and his economic programme brought heavy hardship to Nigerians. The promise of establishing a political structure that would return Nigeria to democratic governance and set the country on a path of economic development was not kept when he cancelled Nigeria's most free and fair presidential election on 12 June 1993.

In June 1998, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida admitted the annulment of the 12 June 1993 election. Mohammed, a son of Babangida, affirmed that his father was forced to cancel the election due to pressure from fellow generals. The cancellation of Nigeria's presidential election created an unstable political environment, leading to civil protests and an unending political crisis in the country. The country's domestic environment during this period drew the attention of the United States, Britain and international bodies of which Nigeria is a member. The establishment of an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan was tasked with bringing the country to a state of political stability, leading to Gen. Ibrahim Babangida's "stepping outside".

The ING was charged with the responsibility of leading the country through the transitional phase to democratic governance. Unfortunately, this task was cut short by the sudden seizure of power by its Secretary, Gen. Sani Abacha, in November 1993**.** Gen. Abacha unceremoniously overthrew Chief Ernest Shonekan on 17 November 1993, without any hint of jubilation among the civilian populace because Nigerians were protesting the annulment of the June 12 (Egwaikhide & Isumonah, 2001**)**. The General's sudden seizure of power came as a surprise not only to the Nigerian people but also to the international community. Gen. Abacha focused more on the country's domestic image, keeping its external image at an all-time low. The dictatorial nature of the regime retarded Nigeria's political and economic advancement. This development led to the emergence of anti-Abacha groups demanding the revalidation of the results of the

June 12 presidential elections. The government responded by suspending all democratic structures and calling for the establishment of a new structure (Onoja, 2005).

The regime was characterised by a series of brutalities that suppressed all labour unions in the country and cracked down on opposition civil society groups and individuals. There was widespread political instability, characterised by assassinations directed against prominent opposition leaders, especially from the Southwest, the stronghold of the opposition groups. Prominent among the Nigerians assassinated was Kudirat Abiola, one of the wives of the acclaimed winner of the June 12 presidential election, Chief MKO Abiola; Chief Alfred Rewane, a strong member of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), escaped assassination. Others, like the leader of the Afenifere socio-cultural group, Chief Abraham Adesanya, and Alex Ibru, publisher of the *Guardian Newspaper,* escaped assassination. Many pro-democracy activists, such as Professor Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro, and Chief Adabayo, went into self-exile. The Nigerian press was also not spared from the regime's crackdown on opposition. Many anti-Abacha-policy journalists were imprisoned without trial. Prominent among them were Kule Ajibade of *The News*, Ben Charles-Obi, editor of the defunct Classique magazine, George Mbah of the Tell Magazine and Chris Anyanwu. This unprecedented crackdown created wide uncertainty. They also explained why the country ranked very highly among countries with human rights violations during the period (Egwaikhide & Isumonah, 2001**)**. All European Union ambassadors, as well as those from Canada and the United States, were recalled due to the high-handedness and undemocratic policies of his regime. An emergency debate on the floor of the Commonwealth meeting on Gen. Abacha's human rights violations and dictatorial government was condemned by member states of the Commonwealth of Nations, and strict economic and political sanctions were recommended against his regime. The regime ignored the international community's interventions and resisted all external interference in Nigeria's affairs, creating negative perceptions of the country in the international system.

In November 1995, against entreaties from the international community, the regime executed an environmental activist, Ken. Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni indigenes. The action was condemned by the international community. Subsequent upon this, Nigeria was sanctioned and suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations. The United States imposed severe sanctions on Nigeria. For example, Nigerian political office holders and non-political office holders who profited from the regime and those hindering the country's transition to democracy were handed an immigration ban. The United States also suspended its military assistance and other related military aid to Nigeria. The country, thereby becoming a pariah, was isolated from the world body, including the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Nigeria was unable to engage with multilateral financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, which undermined the country's financial and economic viability.

Nigeria's foreign policy and diplomatic intercourse under Gen. Sani Abacha shifted from the usual Western romance to the East, thereby finding friends in Iran, Libya, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey who were not in the "good book" of the West, most especially the United States, as a result of their radical Islamic ideology and fanaticism. For example, Nigeria welcomed Libya's President Muammar Gaddafi in violation of the UN air embargo imposed on Libya in 1992 (Chukwu, 2023). Nigeria's fraternising with these regimes further worsened the country's negative perceptions by the United States and other Western powers. The regime aligned with the Republic of India in the supply of logistics to the Nigerian military forces. Nigeria was flooded with Indian made vehicles, and many of these vehicles were given to the Nigerian armed forces. This development reduced Nigeria's dependence on the West for military logistics. This was the state of Nigeria's domestic image and its impact on the country's external relations before the regime's collapse following the sudden death of General Abacha on 8 June 1998. The regime of Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar commenced the transition to democratic rule, culminating in the inauguration of the Fourth Republic on 29 May 1999.

The Nature and Pattern of Nigeria's Foreign Relations, Post-Military Era, 1999-2007

The restoration of Nigeria's domestic and external image was a major foreign policy goal of Gen. Abubakar's regime. This task posed a major challenge to his administration's efforts to restore the country to civilian rule

through reconciliation. This reconciliation began by encouraging Nigerians who had fled the country due to their strong criticism and condemnation of previous regimes to return home. Political detainees, who were incarcerated because of their criticism of the Abacha regime, were set free, including a former military head of state, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, who was imprisoned on the allegation of a coup plot to topple the Abacha regime in 1995. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo later became president of Nigeria on 29 May 1999.

Gen. Abubakar's commitment to return the country to democratic governance eased tensions both internally and externally. In his address to the United Nations, Gen. Abubakar stated that "our goal is to return our country to a democratically elected civilian government on 29 May 1999" (United Nations Press Release, 1998). Bilateral relations between Nigeria, Europe, and other African countries were improved; visa restrictions imposed on Nigerians by the United States were suspended, and other Western countries signalled a roadmap for Nigeria's image restoration. Representatives of international organisations and prominent world leaders, such as the late South African President Nelson Mandela, visited Nigeria on a fact-finding mission to confirm Gen. Abubakar's commitment to returning Nigeria to democracy. The regime of Gen. Abubakar sought to bring the country out of its pariah status while pursuing the mandate of returning Nigeria to democracy. This mandate was fulfilled on 29 May 1999 when he successfully handed over political power to President Olusegun Obasanjo. The emergence of President Obasanjo's administration marked Nigeria's fourth republic and set the roadmap for fully restoring the country to its prime place in international affairs.

With the return to democracy and the emergence of the fourth republic under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the restoration of Nigeria's battered image became a fundamental task. The administration repositioned the country's foreign policy within the international community. The primary focus was to restore Nigeria's tarnished image while pursuing the country's economic interests in the international arena. This was manifested in the president's Shuttle Diplomacy to Europe, America, and various international fora, advocating Nigeria's political, economic, and social interests, as well as debt forgiveness. The administration solicited support from international bodies to rescue the country from economic distress and acknowledged the impact of economic decay on Nigeria's external image. According to President Obasanjo,

> ... it inherited an economy with the following characteristics: declining capacity utilisation in the real sector, poor performance of major infrastructure facilities, a large budget deficit, rising levels of unemployment and inflation. In addition, the economy had grave problems of import dependence, reliance on a single commodity (oil), a weak industrial base, low levels of agricultural production, a weak private sector, a high external debt overhang, inefficient public utilities, low-quality social services, and an unacceptable rate of unemployment (Nwozor, 2009).

President Obasanjo demonstrated his administration's commitment to restoring Nigeria's political, economic and international image in his statement on the regime's foreign policy focus.

> We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and OAU, and other international bodies… (*The Vanguard Newspaper*. 29 December 1999).

This policy statement guided the resolve to restore Nigeria's position in global affairs. At the United Nations General Assembly, the President reaffirmed his administration's effort to ensure good governance and respect for human rights. International confidence in Abuja paved the way for Nigeria's election to the executive body of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (Duke-Abiola & Zainab, 1999). President Obasanjo adopted a revitalisation policy aimed at boosting Nigeria's external image. He pushed for the restoration of Nigeria's diplomatic relations with the United States and European Nations. This effort paid off when Nigerian ambassadors and attachés were suspended during Gen. Abacha's regime was replaced, and new foreign missions were established. Nigeria was appointed to the Commonwealth

Ministerial Action Group (CMAG). The European Union and other economically developed countries lifted their economic sanctions on Nigeria.

The administration embarked on more tasks of bringing Nigeria out of its pariah status "by consolidating democracy at home, respecting fundamental human rights and encouraging Nigerian economic reforms, good governance and transparency with a view of boosting international economic cooperation and reassuring the rest of the world that Nigeria was truly back on track. A country's foreign policy must align with global realities such as human rights, security, and democracy. President Obasanjo's acknowledgement of the impact of global realities necessitated the formulation of Nigeria's foreign policy of reconciliation with the Western powers. Abuja worked tirelessly to bring Nigeria back into the Commonwealth of Nations, a goal achieved in 2000 (Okpokop, 2020).

One immediate foreign policy action initiated by President Obasanjo's administration to restore Nigeria's external image was the use of Shuttle diplomacy. The president embarked on a series of foreign trips to meet with world leaders in Europe, America and Africa, pursuing Nigeria's interests in particular and Africa's in general. The Shuttle diplomacy was to reassure the international community and other countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas that Nigeria has been put on the path of democratic principles. The Shuttle diplomacy took the President on a tour of several countries in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas from 1999 to 2007. Although these numerous trips were criticised, their impacts on Nigeria's external image cannot be overemphasised. The shuttle diplomacy restored the country's battered image both at home and abroad. Nigeria's socio-political and economic relations with the Western powers, especially the United States, Britain, China, and the rest of the world, were achieved by liberalising Nigeria's economy, allowing free flow of goods in and out of the country, and embarking on privatisation and commercialisation programmes with the aim of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

Foreign Direct Investment was a major source of foreign investment into the country. President Obasanjo tenaciously pursued the FDI policy as part of its economic diplomacy. He met with the Group of 8 advanced nations to press for better economic conditions for Nigeria and Africa in general. The President also spoke vigorously in many annual G8 Summit meetings to advocate Nigeria's economic interests and negotiate favourable economic conditions for Nigeria and Africa in general. With the shuttle diplomacy strategy, which enabled President Obasanjo to embark on numerous overseas trips, the President pushed for the repatriation of Nigeria's common heritage, which had been stolen and held in overseas banks under previous military administrations. According to Sonowo, at the last count, President Obasanjo had made over 180 foreign trips in four years (Sonowo, 2000). These foreign trips are considered the highest in Nigeria's history. Shuttle diplomacy was a calculated strategy by the Nigerian government to improve Nigeria's bilateral economic ventures with countries in the West, Asia, and Africa. This move led to an Open Skies Agreement between Nigeria and the United States Air Force in 1999. The Nigerian government also negotiated the lifting of the ban on direct flights between Nigeria and the United States, which had been suspended under Gen. Sani Abacha. The reestablishment of air links between Nigeria and the United States improved commercial and business activities between both countries.

Furthermore, President Obasanjo visited industrialised nations to advance Nigeria's national interests and to advocate for fair representation in economic relations. Nigeria, under the administration of President Obasanjo, pushed for the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and canvassed for the country's international debt conciliation and relief to ease its debt burden, which has retarded Nigeria's economic development over time. Privatisation was intended to improve the efficiency and profitability of government-owned enterprises, reduce their dependence on government funding, and increase Nigerian citizens' participation in economic activities through share ownership in productive investments (Arifalo & Ogboyega, 2023). As part of his policy to revamp the country's weak economy, the President launched the Nigerian Economic Policy (NEP) immediately after his administration began in 1999. The cardinal objective of the NEP was to revive the country's weak economy and improve the living standard of the Nigerian people. The NEP was an economic strategy in repositioning Nigeria's economic image abroad. To bring his economic

policies to fruition, the president established an economic team led by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala. She was instrumental in advancing the President's policy for Nigeria's economic revival. Consequently, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) were established, signalling to the world that Nigeria is working hard to tackle corruption in the public and private sectors.

Nigeria entered a joint economic partnership with the United States International Development Agency (USAID) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), through the establishment of an airline and a mutual open-skies agreement. This partnership was geared toward developing a critical economic and industrial sector of the country. This paid off with an influx of aid and foreign investments into the country. The shuttle diplomacy led to the recovery of Nigeria's looted funds held in foreign banks in Europe and America. As part of his foreign policy drive, the president embarked on frequent leader-to-leader interactions with world leaders and Nigerian communities in the diaspora, and on Nigerian government policies and programmes aimed at redeeming the country's tarnished socio-political and economic image.

Nigeria's foreign policy from 1999 to 2007 also drove improvement in Nigeria's socio-cultural and economic cooperation with China, in a bid to strengthen Nigeria's relations with Asian countries. For example, during a two-day visit of President Olusegun Obasanjo to China in 2001, the president emphasised the need for business and entrepreneurial cooperation between China and Nigeria. The visit brought together the Nigeria-China Business Forum, comprising business entrepreneurs, to discuss areas of collaboration and ways to create and expand the new economic vistas of both countries (Adejugbe, 2000). The primary focus of the Shuttle diplomacy as a foreign policy strategy was to bring Nigeria out of isolation and reintegrate the country into the world system to benefit from the global economic growth and investment. The influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Nigeria during the period was a factor of the Shuttle diplomacy. The Shuttle diplomacy enabled the President to solicit debt reduction and debt forgiveness. A total of 18 billion dollars from the Paris Club was written off. This reduced the country's external debt from 36 billion Dollars in 2004 to 3.5 billion Dollars in 2007.

During the President's visit to Canada in May 2000, he stated at the State Dinner Hosted by the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada, that

> … the issue of the debt overhaul continues to incapacitate our ability to provide succour to our people, and we fear that each day that passes without a favourable resolution of the debt problem is a day lost for democracy. What I am advocating is that, while appreciating Canada's past support for the reduction and cancellation of debt, I wish to appeal to you to redouble your efforts to secure the total cancellation of all Third World debts (Ad' Obe Obe, 2001).

The debt relief eased Nigeria's economic burden. The administration exploited this relief to chart a new economic path capable of releasing the forces necessary for economic growth and development. According to the Paris Club, 'the debt relief represented an important contribution to Nigeria's fight against poverty (Club de Paris 2005). The relief was one of the achievements of the President Obasanjo administration. The debt relief enabled his administration to establish economic policies geared toward economic recovery. Some of these economic policies included the Virtual Poverty Fund (VPF), established to use savings from debt relief to support education, health, and rural infrastructure, and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), which supported macroeconomic stability and growth in the public and private sectors, among others.

The Nigerian Fourth Republic and its foreign policy decision-making were primarily aimed at addressing the country's economic, political, and socio-cultural challenges. These were achieved at the bilateral, multilateral, sub-regional, regional, and global levels (Abdulmumin, 2004). Nigeria's foreign policy strategy between 1999 and 2007 pulled Nigeria out of socio-political and economic isolation. It is imperative to note that Nigeria's foreign policy and diplomatic strategies to restore the country's image were reciprocated, leading to Nigeria's

reacceptance into the community of nations. Evidence of Nigeria's domestic reorganisation and restructuring, and the testament of democratic practices, attracted visits from prominent world leaders to Nigeria. Leaders like former Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton and George Bush, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and a host of others from Canada, China, and many Third World countries visited the country. Evidence of Nigeria's acceptance into the international community includes hosting the All Africa Games and the Commonwealth Meeting of Heads of State and Government. The visits of world leaders impacted Nigeria's economic, political and socio-cultural development and helped reduce the international community's negative perception of the country.

Part of the foreign policy of President Obasanjo during the period put Nigeria on an economic development pathway with the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), its African Peer Review Mechanism and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as mechanisms to address the lingering economic problem and poverty in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. NEPAD was established with the cooperation of Algeria, Senegal and South Africa. Leveraging the opportunities of NEPAD, President Obasanjo and his Algerian counterpart, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, established a Bi-National Commission to oversee the implementation of three key projects, including the Trans-Sahara Pipeline, the Trans-Sahara Highway from Lagos to Algeria, and the optic fibre link (Abdulmumin, 2004).

Restoring the country's tarnished image and promoting Nigeria's development, President Obasanjo solicited telecommunications investors to facilitate domestic and international interactions as the world becomes globalised. This paid off with the introduction of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) in Nigeria. Nigeria's Fourth Republic also recorded remarkable success in maintaining peace and security. According to President Olusegun Obasanjo, in his Speech at the 26th Ordinary Summit at ECOWAS held in Bamako, Mali, 14th December 2000, he stated:

> It is satisfactory to note that our organisation has given greater expression to the dictum that economic integration cannot be foisted on an unstable political environment. This is why we have remained relentless in our search for peace and security in the Sub-region (Ad' Obe Obe, 2001).

Beyond Nigeria's active role in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Darfur (Sudan), Nigeria brokered peace talks between the Sudanese government and the factions in Abuja. The government has also demonstrated its commitment to peace and security as the basis for socio-economic integration of the West African Sub-region through relentless efforts to restore peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Obasanjo's Nigeria supported the ECOWAS peacekeeping projects to curb violence and conflict in the Sub-region. Nigeria's "roundtable talk" diplomacy led to the peaceful resolution of internal conflicts and political instability in ECOWAS member countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Senegal, and to the foiled military coup in São Tomé and Príncipe in 2003. In line with Nigeria's Afrocentric leadership, President Obasanjo's administration served as a third party in the controversial land dispute between Zimbabwe and Britain. Nigeria pleaded with the West to remove economic sanctions on Zimbabwe, which were heavily impacting Zimbabwe's economy at the time. The Shuttle diplomacy brought Nigeria out of its pariah status and addressed its economic problems by attracting investors to the country. Nigeria's foreign policy from 1999 to 2007 was largely proactive and dynamic. The President's personal involvement and international shuttles contributed largely to the country's renewed foreign policy during the period under review.

Conclusion

The nature and pattern of Nigeria's foreign policy under President Obasanjo's regime were shaped by the events and developments that preceded it. The president's economic diplomacy, inherent in his shuttle diplomacy, was successful not only in bringing the country out of its pariah status but also in reviving the country's battered economy. The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) strategy, the fight against corruption in the country and the national economic programmes of his administration were fundamental in Nigeria's

political and economic revival. The dividends of the administration's fight against corruption helped boost foreign investors' confidence in the country. The success of the debt-reduction campaign and the administration's development agenda across Nigeria's economic and industrial sectors set the country on the path to economic recovery. Among his administration's investment breakthroughs was the telecommunications sector, with the introduction of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) in August 2001. This breakthrough revolutionised the Nigerian telecommunications sector by introducing the first official GSM network, ECONET WIRELESS.

A major contribution of this article is that it will help increase understanding of the impact of the domestic environment on a country's foreign policy. Knowledge is all about knowing, and knowing is a by-product of contributions of scholarly writings from any field of endeavour. The analysis of the interplay between domestic and external forces in the conduct of foreign policy will help broaden the understanding of the dynamics of foreign policy formulation in the era of domestic crisis. As aforementioned, Nigeria's foreign policy since independence has been shaped and influenced by its domestic factors.

Besides, many articles have been written on Nigeria's foreign policy, but no work has specifically focused on the impact of Shuttle Diplomacy on a country's foreign policy, as discussed in this article. Another area in which this article has contributed to knowledge is the interplay of continuity and change in a country's foreign policy. The article unravelled the elements of change and continuity in the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy under successive Nigerian administrations. For example, one aspect of Nigeria's foreign policy that successive Nigerian administrations, military or civilian, have sustained is Nigeria's Afrocentric policy. The nature and pattern of Nigeria's external relations from 1999 to 2007 reflected the interplay between economic forces and national prestige. The revival of Nigeria's economy and its external image constituted a primary task for President Obasanjo's administration. The analysis of economic forces and foreign policy helps explain how domestic economic problems can shape a country's foreign policy. The economic crisis in Nigeria under the previous administration created conditions for urgent attention in the Fourth Republic.

Recommendations

Having critically discussed the nature and pattern of Nigeria's foreign policy during the Fourth Republic under President Olusegun Obasanjo, the author makes the following recommendations.

1. Domestic exigencies influenced foreign policy formulation. Domestic factors shaped foreign policy decision-making. The domestic challenges in Nigeria occasioned by Gen. Babangida's cancellation of the June 12 presidential election and Gen. Abacha's highhandedness and human rights violations, which led to Nigeria's suspension from international organisations and the series of sanctions that followed, shaped the foreign policy decision-making of the Fourth Republic. It is recommended that domestic issues should not always degenerate to the point of attracting international response, as in Nigeria from 1993 to 1998.
2. Leadership style drives foreign policy decision-making and implementation. The personality and charisma of the Fourth Republic's leadership contributed to Nigeria's swift reinstatement into the comity of nations after a long suspension. Due to President Obasanjo's charisma, his administration was able to navigate the politics of the international community at every international gathering, advancing Nigeria's economic interests and Africa in general. His negotiating and leadership skills yielded success with the Nigerian debt reduction and conciliation by Western creditors.
3. Constructive engagement is a fundamental instrument in foreign policy implementation. Leaders should be constructive in formulating and implementing their foreign policy in relations with other countries within the international system. The leadership of the Fourth Republic adopted a strategic initiative to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to Nigeria. This came to fruition with the introduction of Nigeria's first telecommunications investment.
4. Every leader or administration should prioritise their policies and programmes to be able to address critical areas of need through foreign policy. Foreign policy is formulated to address a country's critical needs. The dynamics of the international environment can influence a country's domestic system. Prioritising programmes and policies help to navigate the ever-changing international

environment. For example, Nigeria's tarnished international image and the need to revive the country's battered economy were major priorities for the Fourth Republic administration. President Obasanjo achieved this through his constant engagement with the international community and the United States.

5. Foreign policy must be in tandem with the changing international phenomenon. The ever-changing nature of the international system requires a country's foreign policy to be dynamic in response to the evolving international environment. The nature and pattern of Nigeria's foreign policy from 1999 to 2007 demonstrated its dynamism. President Obasanjo's foreign policy initiatives to reconcile and revamp Nigeria's battered image and economy were in tandem with the agenda of the international community, international bodies, and the United States. The fight against human rights violations, undemocratic governance and autocratic regimes was considered by the United States and other international bodies as a crime that should not be encouraged globally by any government.
6. Lastly, leaders or administrations should adopt the flexibility approach in the conduct of their domestic and international affairs. Flexibility attracts political and economic opportunities. When a leader is flexible, he/she can always navigate through the politics of international relations in the international system. The international system is a system of states pursuing political and economic power. In international politics, a country can leverage its political power to achieve its economic objectives. Over time, the United States has leveraged its political power to achieve its economic interests in world politics. Also, a country can leverage its economic strength to achieve its political interests. For example, the diplomatic standoff between the Nigerian and the British government in 1984 over the Nigerian government's attempt to return Umaru Dikko, the then minister of transport, back to Nigeria to face charges of corruption without passing through the proper immigration channel and the later standoff between the two countries show the impact of economic strength in resolving a political standoff.

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