

UNIVERSITY OF IFE · NIGERIA

Inaugural Lecture Series 51

NECESSITY AND
FREEDOM IN
NIGERIAN
FOREIGN POLICY

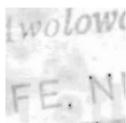
by OLAJIDE ALUKO

AZ: 506.3
IF2 I n 1
NO. 51



UNIVERSITY OF IFE PRESS

NECESSITY AND FREEDOM IN NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY



by

OLAJIDE ALUKO

Professor of International Relations

**An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ife
on 17th March, 1981.**

Inaugural Lecture Series: 51

University of Ife Press, Ile Ife, Nigeria.

© University of Ife Press 1982

One of the greatest advantages I have as the founding Professor of International Relations in this University is that I have no predecessor to whom eulogies even though unconvincing at times, could be recited. Not even in any of the other Nigerian universities, nor any universities in Black Africa do I have any predecessor in the field. The International Relations Department in Ife is the first in Black Africa, and I happen, by the Grace of God, to be the first Professor and Head of the Department which one of my former professors in the London School of Economics described as a rare distinction. Before 1976 when the University Senate formally established the Department there were only two Departments in the whole of Africa: one was, and still is, in the University of Cairo, and the other in the University of Witwatersand, Republic of South Africa. So this lecture is the first inaugural lecture in International Relations not only in Ife, but also in the whole of Black Africa. Moreover, it is also the first inaugural lecture in the Institute/Faculty of Administration. This is because although there was a Professor of Public Administration in the former Institute between 1968 and 1975, he did not give an inaugural lecture before he retired from the University. This was no fault of the incumbent, Professor Adebayo Adedeji, it was largely because in those days, the University authorities did not bother so much about inaugural lectures perhaps principally because the number of professors in the University up till September 1975 was small, just about 22 in all.

Since the showering of fulsome praises on my predecessors does not arise, one would expect me naturally to plunge straight into the subject of my lecture. However, before doing that, I need to touch a few other item related somehow to this lecture. The first is the purpose of inaugural lecture. The second is related to the first -what I intend to do with the professorial status conferred on me by the

University with effect from October 1977. The third is a brief discussion of the subject matter of International Relations as a distinct discipline in its own right especially as distinct from Political Science. The fourth is my brief account in the founding of the Department.

PURPOSE OF INAUGURAL LECTURES

I have decided to say something about this for two or three main reasons. First, there has been a gross misconception of the purpose of inaugural lecture. Some Professors see it as a social-political occasion for, in the words of a former Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, "wining and dining". Some Professors see the occasion as an opportunity to mark the effective assumption of their role as professors in the universities, while a few perceive it as a platform to rain abuse on their academic colleagues. All these are wrong, and are a misuse of inaugural lectures. The situation was not helped by the Senate declaration of 23 January 1980 that the purpose of an inaugural lecture is to "inaugurate a chair (i.e. the Professorship to which a person was appointed or to inaugurate a person (i.e. the Professor who was newly appointed 1)." I find it hard to understand the meaning of this. Perhaps it does not mean much, if it means anything at all.

From where we borrow the practice, inaugural lectures are for three main purposes - and all are purely academic. The first is to afford the newly-appointed professor to talk about the "state of the discipline." He may chart its progress, discuss its current health, its problems, and may examine its intellectual characteristics, explain it to the world's concerns or even justify its appearance in the academic curriculum. The second is to provide opportunity for the professor to present a piece of unpublished research upon which he has been working before his appointment or completed afterwards with his inaugural address in mind. It is in the nature of a public display of his credentials as a scholar, vindicating his appointment before a cross-

section of the University. The third is to afford the professor the opportunity to elaborate the scheme of research which he proposes to follow while occupying the Chair. Clearly it may have links with what he has done before, and he may already have embarked on some part of it. What he is doing essentially is to explain the plan he has drawn up for his future research rather than trying to justify his appointment with reference to past accomplishments.

What I intend to do with my professorship falls into the last two categories. While continuing with my study of Nigerian foreign policy - which I started after my exhaustive study of Ghana's external relations - I intend to focus my research on the international dynamics in Southern Africa. I have already done some work in this area. I published an article entitled "Nigeria, the United States, and Southern Africa" in "African Affairs" (London) The Journal of Royal African Society in January 1979; and I have just signed a contract with a British firm of publishers for a book entitled "Nigeria and Southern Africa."2 This book arose largely out of my extensive study trip to Southern Africa during the months of August and September, 1980. Pari passu with this I am working on a subject entitled "Angola and South Africa." This may take a longer time before completion.

The subject of my lecture this evening falls into the second category; but it will be closely related to the third. I have decided not to devote myself to the first category, that is, the state of the discipline for two main reasons. First, this lecture is not meant for the Nigerian audience alone, but for international intellectual community, the world of learning. Secondly, International Relations as a distinct discipline in its own right has long been established. Arguments about the properties of the field have ceased to be raised in almost all the states of the world. As far back as 1910, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace had set aside funds for the study of International

Relations, especially how its study could help "to hasten the abolition of international wars." At the end of the First World War, the study of International Relations began to flower with the establishment of such institutions as the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London in 1920, and the US Council of Foreign Affairs the same year, and similar institutions in France, Germany, and the Soviet Union. By 1923, the first Chair in International Relations, called Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics, was established in the University College of Wales, Aberystwth. The University of London followed suit. This quickly spread to many Universities in North America, and later to continental Europe.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS A DISCIPLINE

Nonetheless, I shall say something about the field of study called International Relations for two main reasons. First, being the first Professor of International Relations in Black Africa it is proper for me to say something however briefly on it. Secondly, there have been a great deal of misconception, misinformations, and/or sheer ignorance about the subject. Some see International Relations as a component part of Political Science. Others confuse it with History.

International Relations is difficult to define precisely. Professor Philip Reynolds says that the definition of International Relations involves "the whole range of human behaviour."³ He continues: "..... broadly speaking International Relations can be seen to subsume all the established or developing social sciences - sociology, social anthropology, economics, demography, political science, human geography, psychology, social psychology - with support from moral and political philosophy, history and law."⁴ He admits that such a field will be unmanageable; and he, therefore, goes ahead to divide International Relations into two categories - the micro-International Relations which focuses on the study of the state as an actor in the

international areas, and the macro-International Relations which focuses more on international actors than an individual state.

Simply put, the study of International Relations is the study of all relations across national frontiers. These include political, diplomatic economic, military, legal, cultural, social, religious, ideological, business, financial and other relations by government and non-governmental individuals and institutions. It is all-embracing. It is a distinct discipline in its own right. Its position as a distinct field of study has been further strengthened by the revolution in military technology - conventional, and nuclear technology, in communications and transport since 1945.

International Relations is different from Political Science in three main ways. Professor Geoffrey Goodwin says that it is different from Political Science because of the focus of the study. He argues that while the focus of International Relations is the study of political activity at the diplomatic level or the level of international society, that of Political Science is the study of political activity at the domestic level.⁵ Secondly, the range and scope of International Relations are wider, embracing not only political studies, but also military studies, international law, international development, international political economy, environmental, philosophical, and psychological studies. This is why in many British Universities, what we lump together in the Department of International Relations in Ife, are split into separate autonomous Departments. Thus in the University College, London, there is a separate Department of International Relations, a separate Department of International Political Economy, a separate Department of Politics, and a separate Department of War studies. This is largely true of King's College, London, and the London School of Economics, and many other British Universities such as Keele, and Sussex. In North America

where the enormous range and scope of International Relations are fully appreciated, there are Schools of International Affairs such as the one in the University of Columbia New York, which are far bigger than Faculties. On the other hand the Department of Political Science remains a relatively small Department within the Faculty of Social Science in the same University. Indeed, India has a big School of International Studies, bigger than any Faculty in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. I do hope that before too long, Ife will develop its own School of International Studies which will be organised into functional and geographical departments. Ife can do it. We are the pioneer in the field in Black Africa. We cannot afford to let the country and Africa down. Thirdly, the mode of study of International Relations is multidisciplinary. It has moved from the historical, descriptive, legistic approach to the multi-disciplinary mode of study using the skills of political science, economics, statistics, mathematics, physics and natural sciences. From a random example, one can take a look at Professor Karl W. Deutsch's book. The Nerves of Government, or David Singer's Quantitative International Politics, or Herman Khan's Thinking of the Unthinkable.

Finally, before dealing with my subject, I cannot but say something about my experience in founding the Department of International Relations in this University. My experience in Ife where I have spent the past 13 years without going on study leave or sabbatical, and where I have participated actively in University politics, and other purely academic activities is being compiled in a separate volume entitled: Ife Experience: Some Memories of Men and Events. As indicated above, I shall only confine myself to how the Department came about. It was a long and tortuous story marked with moments of frustrations and triumph. The story should be a book-length but I shall give only a synoptic picture here. The study of Inter-

national Relations in Ife owed much to the founding fathers of the former Institute of Administration who made it one of the three major areas of concentration of the activities of the Institute as contained in its Charter in 1963, five years before I joined the University. In March 1966, Dr. Adebayo Adedeji the then Deputy Director of the Institute, signed an agreement with the Ministry of External Affairs, Lagos for the training of young foreign service officers in the Institute. But this agreement could not be implemented as the country drifted into crisis in July 1966, and later to Civil War in July 1967. At the end of the war in 1970 when the then Federal Military Government failed to implement the agreement, Professor H.A. Oluwasanmi, the then Vice-Chancellor, and Professor Adebayo Adedeji, the then Director of the Institute, decided to start the Institute's programme in International Affairs which were post-graduate Diploma in International Affairs, and Masters in International Affairs and which were approved by the academic Board of the Institute and later by the University Senate, I as lecturer II then was authorised to make recommendations for appointments of staff for the programme. It is to their credit that none of my recommendations was ever turned down. In order to ensure that we had enough students for the programmes, the Director of the Institute then with the support of the Vice-Chancellor set aside some funds to provide scholarships to a limited number of students from within and outside Nigeria. With this provision of scholarships, we were able to attract external affairs officers from Kenya, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Ghana as students of International Affairs. By September 1971, we started to run our post-graduate programmes in International Affairs. It is upon this foundation that subsequent decisions of various committees of the University including the Governing Board of the Institute and the Senate were based that led to the formal establishment

of the Department as an autonomous unit within the new Faculty of Administration in March 1976. For the co-operation, encouragement and support I received from Professor Adebayo Adedeji, the then Director of the Institute, Professor H.A. Oluwasanmi, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University, I am indeed grateful. For the subsequent support we received later from the various relevant committees of the University and well-meaning individuals, I am most thankful.

Coming down to the subject of my inaugural lecture this evening - "Necessity and Freedom in Nigerian Foreign Policy" I shall say a few words on why I have chosen it. There are two or three reasons why I have chosen this topic. First is the lack of purpose and consistency in our foreign policy especially since the mid seventies. Secondly, there has been the tendency of the Nigerian government and some powerful sections of the public to overestimate our ability to influence external events, and perhaps shape world events in our own image. An example of this was the recent statement of the Minister for External Affairs Professor Ishaya Adu that Nigeria was "longing to become a world super power soonest." 6 And thirdly, there is the psychological trait among Nigerian leaders and some sections of influential opinion-moulders that we have a great deal of freedom of manoeuvre in the conduct of our external relations.

Although the title of this subject seems simple, it needs some clarification. Necessity is defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as "constraint or compulsion regarded as a law prevailing through the material universe and governing all human actions; constraining power of circumstances, state of things compelling to certain course." In this lecture we shall take "necessity" to mean the constraining power of circumstance, and the state of things compelling to certain course. The same Dictionary defines freedom as "personal liberty," "civil liberty", "independ-

dence", "liberty of action", "right to do"; "power of self-determination", "independence of fate or necessity." I shall use freedom here in the sense of liberty of action, freedom of choice. Indeed, one of the compelling and agonising problems that beset all governments all over the world is making choice, and setting priorities. In actual fact, as Professor Ernst van der Beugel, the Chairman of the Council of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London said while welcoming Mr. Helmut Schmidt, the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany to the first Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture in October 1977 "to govern implies a keen sense of priorities, and choice ..."7

The ability to make sensible choice amidst compelling and constraining circumstances (necessities) is where statecraft lies. Generally speaking, governments are not free agents. At home they have to yield to a number of pressures. Abroad, the room for manoeuvre is more restricted. This is understandable for a number of reasons. First, the laws of all governments stop at their borders (some even don't extend so far). Secondly, governments cannot have more than an imperfect knowledge of the outside world. Thirdly, for success, governments require the consent and co-operation of others. And in the ruthless international life in which we all live, this is hard to come by. Because of all these, governments in the international system are apt to find themselves doing what they must, rather than what they would, or ought. We shall come back to this shortly in relation to Nigerian foreign policy.

The word "policy" is defined by the Dictionary (COED) as "political sagacity"; "statescraft;" "prudent sagacity"; "craftiness"; "settled courses of action adopted by government", "party" etc. As usual, this definition is rather formal and legalistic. The useful aspect of this, however, sees policy as a course of action adopted by gover-

ment. Even here we have to be careful. For as Professor David Vital has argued, a settled course of action is doomed to failure. Still the fact is that some action are taken by government without having plotted any course. For instance, a government learns from the blues that the South African troops have occupied part of Mozambique and Angola or that the Russian tanks have moved into Kabul. The question that faces governments is what shall we do now, or what can we really do now, today and not tomorrow. Professor Vital goes on to say that policy can be defined in a rigorous way as "a formulation of desired outcomes which are intended (or expected) to be consequent upon decision adopted (or made) by those who have the authority (or ability) to commit the machinery of state and a significant fraction (or ability) to commit the machinery of state and a significant fraction of national resources to that end."⁸ Surely this definition is rather pendantic.

While it is true to say that one cannot talk of a country's foreign policy in general, one can talk of foreign policy in particular, i.e. policy towards neighbours, policy towards the UN or towards the Great Powers etc. For analytical purposes the discussion of Nigerian foreign policy will focus more on the process of formulation than on the outcome though the references will be made to the latter as appropriate.

Given these then, we shall begin by trying to analyse the Nigerian concept of national interest. For this concept is basic not only to foreign policy formulation, but also to international relations. It is a truism that the foreign policy of any country must be based on the premise of its national interest. This concept also provides the yardstick with which to assess the success or failure of any foreign policy.

NATIONAL INTEREST

While it is true to say that since independence the Nigerian leaders had had some assumptions about the country's national interests, these were never spelt out until the latter part of the seventies. The elements of Nigerian national interests which were recommended by the Adedeji Panel on the Review of Nigerian Foreign Policy in May 1976, and accepted by the Obasanjo government in June 1976 were as follows:

- (i) The defence of our sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity;
- (ii) The creation of the necessary political conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which would facilitate the defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;
- (iii) The creation of the necessary economic and political conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which would foster Nigeria's national self-reliance and rapid economic development;
- (iv) The achievement of collective self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world;
- (v) The promotion and defence of social justice and respect for human dignity;
- (vi) The promotion and defence of world peace.

The Report went on to elaborate on each of these six components of Nigeria's national interests. I shall only refer to one that has kept on recurring in the pronouncements and at times actions of our leaders since then. This is the second objective of "creating the necessary political conditions in Africa and the world which would facilitate the defence of our sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity." Central to this, the Report said that Nige-

ria's unity must be "clearly and consistently (identified) with the unity and freedom of Africa and the dignity of the blackman everywhere."¹⁰

The definition of Nigeria's interest along the lines recommended by the Adedeji Report and accepted by the Obasanjo government is open to criticism on at least two grounds. First, the objective laid down except the first one, namely, the defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity are not realisable. They are beyond our capability. The second, third, fourth and even fifth objectives are nothing but sublime fatuity. To illustrate this point further, one should refer to the national interests of Britain, an industrial and technological giant, and still a major power despite her recent decline as spelt out by The Central Policy Review Staff (otherwise known as the "Think Tank") in 1977.

These were four, namely:

- (a) to ensure Britain's external security.
- (b) to promote her economic and social well-being
- (c) to honour certain commitments and obligations (e.g. to the dependent territories)

The second ground on which the national objectives of Nigeria as recommended by the Adedeji Panel on the criticised is that it is not ego-centric. Central to any concept of national interest is the self-interest of that country. And central to the concept of national interest must be the security of the country, and the well-being of its people. Any other interests such as defence of some values abroad such as human rights, human dignity, democratic values, capitalist or socialist values must be related directly or indirectly to the well-being and security of the country. For governments all over the world are paid, financed and supported primarily to promote the interests of their peoples. Any foreign policy, therefore, that is not based on self-

interest is either self-contradictory, or treasonable or founded on error.

The section 19 of the 1979 Constitution that says something about the objectives of the country's foreign policy does not help. Apart from promoting African unity, it commits the country to the "total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa" and "all other forms of international co-operation conducive to the consolidation of universal peace, and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states, and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestation." In his address to the National Assembly on 16 October, 1979, President Shehu Shagari said one of the objectives of his foreign policy was to promote the interests of "all black people throughout the world." Here again, one can see that the objectives is not Nigeria-centred, but Africa-centred, even world-centred. Not only is this politically unsustainable beyond rhetorics, it is casting a role for the country far beyond its power. The end result of this type of posture is failure and frustration.

Given the lack of proper understanding and appreciation of Nigeria's national interests, one can understand the confusion, inconsistency and lack of purpose that have characterised our foreign policy. What then should be our national interest? I do not have a blue-print for this. All I can do is to put together some things from the practice, pronouncements, and the publications of the various Nigerian governments themselves. For it is the governments that set out national interests. Let us begin by looking at the objectives of The Four Year Development Plan 1970-74 to which all subsequent governments have subscribed. These are:

- (i) a united, strong, and self-reliant nation;
- (ii) a great and dynamic nation;
- (iii) a just and egalitarian society;

- (iv) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens;
- (v) a free and democratic society.

All these are realistic objectives. While launching the Third National Development Plan 1975-80 in March 1975, General Yakubu Gowon said that the goal of "all good well-meaning Nigerians- and what they wish for this country, whether they be soldiers or civilians cannot but be the same: that is, the greatest good of this nation and its people."¹² Even though General Obasanjo accepted the recommendations of the Adedeji Panel on the country's national objectives, he tried to stress on different occasions as the then Head of State, there were basic objectives of the country. These were - territorial integrity (national unity and stability); independence; and rapid economic development through the application of modern technology.

From all these, if we accept the definition of Professor Joseph Frankel of national interest, however imperfect, as being "the sum total of a nation's interests as consisting of the following important elements in the descending order of priority:

- (i) Self-preservation of the country, that is the defence and protection of its territorial integrity, and of its people;
- (ii) The defence, and maintenance of the country's independence;
- (iii) The economic and social well-being of the people;
- (iv) The defence, preservation, and promotion of the ways of life of the people especially their democratic values;
- (v) The enhancement of the country's standing and status in the world capitals especially in Africa;
- (vi) The promotion of world peace.

All these interests which I have closely examined elsewhere ¹³ cannot be pursued at the same time. Some have to be sacrificed for lesser ones. But the vital interests of the country such as its self-preservation, independence, economic and social well-being and values must remain central to our foreign policy.

This leads me to the constraints of circumstances or (necessities) that confront Nigeria in the pursuit of these interests. The constraints could be divided into two categories; external and internal ones. For analytical purposes I shall employ the modified version of Michael Brecher's model ¹⁴ based on in-put - out-put and system analysis. On this model the external constraints could be divided into five: global, sbordinate, subordinate other, dominant bilateral, and bilateral level. The internal constraints could be divided into five namely, military capability, economic capability, political structure, interest group, and competing elites. In this lecture however, we shall not deal with pressures from bilateral level because they are too many, and moreover unimportant as the dominant bilateral pressures.

EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

Pressures from the global level that impinge on foreign policy decision-makers in Nigeria are two-fold, one arises from the rivalry and competition between the two Super powers, and the other arises from Nigerian membership of the UN. Since the intense competition to between the East and the West dominated, and has continued to dominate, the international system on Nigeria's independence, Nigeria had little option other than to adopt a policy of non-alignment to the power blocs. For any alignment with either of the power blocs would have cost her embarrassment at home, and loss of respect abroad. So the adoption of non-alignment was more of a necessity than choice.

Likewise, Nigeria's membership of the UN has imposed certain obligations on her. Examples include the Nigerian participation in the United Nations Force for the Congo (ONUC), in the early sixties, and the participation of Nigerian troops in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

The pressures from the subordinate system (i.e. regional level) that influence Nigerian foreign policy could be grouped into two. The first is the pressure arising from the membership of the OAU. Its Charter has imposed some obligations on Nigeria. It was the need to keep Africa united, especially at a time General Gowon was the Chairman of the OAU in 1973 that led Nigeria to join, and lead other African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in the negotiations with the EEC late in 1973 and led to the Lome Convention I of 1975. Indeed before the founding of the OAU the Nigerian leaders have seen their primary role in foreign affairs as lying in Africa. As Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa told the UN General Assembly on 7th October, 1960 "since we are in Africa our primary concern is for that continent." Thus we see that the fact that the main thrust of Nigerian foreign policy since independence has been towards Africa is a necessity rather than choice. The second type of pressure in the regional level that has imposed some restrictions on Nigeria's external behaviour has been the existence of white-minority ruled regimes and apartheid in Southern Africa. From independence Nigeria has been doing her best to oppose the existence of the racist, white supremacist regimes in Africa. In this regard, it is important to remember that Sir Abubakar played an important role in the events that led to the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961. This opposition to the racist and apartheid regimes in Southern Africa has continued by all the subsequent governments in Lagos. Here again, we see that the areas of choice are rather limited, and that it is the nece-

sities of the situation that have been dictating the attitude and policy to the while doubts in Southern Africa.

Although the Commonwealth is not strictly a regional organisation, Nigeria's membership of it imposes some obligations on her such as the need for close informal political consultations between its members, and the co-ordination of a common position on international economic and technical matters. Because of her membership, Nigeria has to pay annually an average N35,000 to the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, and some additional sum of N13,000 towards the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Assistance. While it is realised that some opinions at home are critical of Nigeria's continued membership of the Commonwealth, it has to be said that as long as we remain a member of the organisation we have to accept any obligations arising from it. In any case, such obligations are light, and hardly detract from the country's sovereignty and independence.

On the level of subordinate other (i.e. sub-regional level) which in this case is the West African sub-region, pressures from there have been intense. Although all the states in West Africa, and those in Equatorial Africa were weak militarily and economically in relation to Nigeria, and until recently were not considered as posing any security threat to Nigeria, the Nigerian leaders since the early years of independence have been taking active interest in the developments in the area. Indeed, the sub-region should be regarded as the first line of defence of Nigeria's sovereignty, and the core area of concentration of her diplomacy. The Nigerian government's initiative in the formation of the Chad Basin Commission, and the Niger Basin Commission both in 1964, and the formation of the ECOWAS in May 1975 were a recognition of the importance of that area for Nigeria's security and diplomacy. Memberships of these inter-governmental agencies such as the ECOWAS have

imposed some obligations on the country especially the protocol on free movement for a 90 day period for ECO-WAS citizens signed in 1979.

Pressures from dominant bilateral on Nigeria could be said to have changed somehow since independence. During the first half of the sixties, Britain's relations with Nigeria could be said to be dominant. Not only were there close political, diplomatic, military and economic ties between the two countries, there was a great deal of mutual understanding and perhaps compassion between the leaders of both countries. Because of these diplomatic, personal and other ties, it was not easy for Nigeria to take any tough attitude towards the U'K' Thus rather than breaking diplomatic ties with Britain at the middle of December 1965 over Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) as recommended earlier on by the OAU Council of Ministers, Sir Abubakar flew to London to see how a "solution" could be worked; and that trip led directly to the Commonwealth Summit in Lagos early in January 1966.

Although at the end of the Civil War some feeble attempts were made to revive that pattern of close Anglo-Nigerian relationships, this was no longer possible. For as from the late seventies the United States relations with Nigeria have more or less become dominant. There had been two state visits to the U.S. within three years - one by General Obasanjo in October 1977, and the other by President Shagari in October 1980. In return President Carter visited Lagos in March 1978, and Mr. Walter Mondale the then U.S. Vice-President visited Lagos in 1980. Apart from this, the U.S. has replaced Britain as the single largest market for Nigeria's crude oil. The U.S. takes an annual average of over 75 per cent of Nigeria's crude oil. If it is remembered that oil provides over 90 per cent of Nigerian foreign exchange earnings and over 80 per cent of the Nigerian government revenue, then the importance

of this market to Nigeria will be appreciated. Apart from all this, these increasing close political, economic and financial ties with the U.S. have been supplemented with the establishment of a series of joint commissions on such things as higher education, technical education, agriculture, and technological fields. Given all these then, it is difficult for the Nigerian government to play a free hand in dealing with the U.S. For the restrictions on such freedom of manoeuvre are now more complex than ever before.

INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

Internal pressures that have limited freedom of choice in Nigerian foreign policy arise from three levels, namely, the military, economic, and political. I shall deal with each of these briefly.

Except for the period under the military in the seventies, stable political order has tended to elude the country. The Nigerian government of the First Republic was made up of a coalition of rather incompatible parties - the banned NPC and the banned NCNC. While the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar was from the NPC, the then Minister of External Affairs, Dr. Jaja Wachuku belonged to the NCNC. Apart from this, there were political rivalries between the Regional Governments, and the Federal Government. All these together with the relapse to ethnic rivalries, hostilities and hatreds weakened the Balewa government to such a point that the government could only play a recessive role in Africa especially from the 1963 census crisis until the January 1966 "coup". Indeed, the cautious attitude of the Balewa government to the Congo crisis was largely a reflection of the political limitations placed on it at home.

With the return of civilian administration in the country since October 1979, the political auguries for the country

are hardly better than the First Republic. Although under the 1979 Constitution, the control and conduct of external policy and defence matters are vested in the Federal Government, the Shagari government's control of these is not as near absolute as that of his military predecessors. The 1979 Constitution restricts the power of the Federal Government in some foreign policy matters. Under Section 5(3)(a), the President cannot declare war between Nigeria and another country without the approval in a resolution of both Houses of the National Assembly in a joint session. Furthermore, under Section 5(3)(b), the President cannot send any member of the armed forces on combat duty outside Nigeria without the approval of the Senate. Under Section 12(1), no treaty between Nigeria and any other country shall come into force unless the National Assembly has enacted such a treaty to law. Under Section 74(2), no money can be spent by the President from the Consolidated Revenue Fund without the authorisation of the National Assembly. It was under this constitutional provision that the National Assembly queried the N10 million independence grant to Zimbabwe by the President in April 1980. Finally, the appointments of Heads of diplomatic Missions have to be ratified by the Senate before becoming valid (Section 157(4)). It has taken nearly 18 months to get most of the non-careers Heads of Missions nominated by President Shagari approved by Senate. No one can tell how long it will take the Senate to approve the career Heads of Missions nominated by the President. Perhaps another 18 months or more!

Apart from all these constitutional restrictions, the Federal Cabinet consists of a coalition - almost as in the First Republic though under a different system - of two rather strange bed-fellows, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), and the Nigerian People's Party (NPP). While the President is from the NPN, the Minister for External Affairs

belongs to the NPP. This cannot but create some problems and limitations on the formulation of foreign policy.

There are still some other political problems in the country. Nigeria has, since October 1979, come under a uniquely awkward political arrangement in which five different political parties control different number of states in the Federation. While the Federal coalition parties control 10 states, the other three parties control 9 states. All this reflects the diversity in culture, history, tradition, and perhaps in religion in the country. Thus while constitutionally the control and conduct of foreign policy are vested in the Federal Government, the political realities at home dictate caution abroad lest the opponents of the government should seize its adventurism abroad to undermine its position at home. In actual fact, Ambassador Gabriel Ijewere has stated that even under the military, the vast diversity in the country had dictated caution and moderation in the foreign policy posture of the country. 15

Likewise, the limitations placed on the country's foreign policy by its economic weakness is hardly less staggering. Potentially great economically with a population of about 80 million covering an area of about 356,699 square miles, Nigeria is richly endowed by nature. Apart from a variety of agricultural products such as cocoa, palm-products, cotton, coffee, groundnuts, rubber, and logs, Nigeria has a large number of valuable and strategic mineral resources such as tin, columbite, tantalite, wolfram, gold, lead-zinc, limestone, clay, kaolin, marble, coal, iron, uranium, lignite, natural gas, and crude oil. Apart from crude oil very little of these has been mobilised let alone developed.

While since the mid seventies the country has become the sixth oil exporting country in the world with a daily average of about 2 million barrels, other sectors of the

economy have been depressed. Indeed, agricultural capacity has declined both in the area of cash crops, and food production. The food situation was so bad that on some occasions shortages could be experienced in the country. By 1979, a country that was self-sufficient in food production, and was able to produce surplus for exports to other West African countries even in the midst of a gruesome Civil War has since resorted to food imports to meet domestic consumption. For example in 1979, the sum of N1,700 million or 13 per cent of all the import bills for that year was devoted to food imports. 16

Manufacturing industry is still at its infancy contributing about 7 per cent of the Gross Domestic product in 1979. Likewise, the level of technological development is very low. Although the oil boom which in 1980 accounted for N9.918 billion or over 80 per cent of the total Federal revenue of N11.806 billion has enabled the government to build its external reserves to over N5 billion in October 1980, the economic position is not all that strong. For if the oil market were to glut and prices were to fall as during the 1977/78 period, the country would run into balance of payments deficit as in the period from 1976 to 1979. Indeed, the balance of payment surplus of N1.53 billion recorded in 1980 was largely due to the high prices of oil in the world market following the crisis in Iran, and subsequently the Gulf war between Iran and Iraq.

Despite the boom in oil industry, the country has been borrowing money abroad since 1977. In the 1981 budget proposals presented to the National Assembly on 24 November, 1980 by President Shagari there was provision for external loan of some N1.522 billion. The recently launched Five-Year Development Plan 1981-5 made provision for further external loans for development.

Per capita income is about N250 a year. The economy remains predominantly a colonial one, depending on the

export of primary products and the import of finished goods. In almost every sense then, the economy is still underdeveloped.

The implications of this for the foreign policy of the country were serious. First, this meant that the Nigerian government could not support its foreign policy with much economic and financial muscle. Thus Nigeria was unable to fulfil her promise to provide financial grant of about N10 million to Mozambique in 1977 despite the solemn understanding given by General Obasanjo, then the Head of State to President Samora Machel during his state visit to Nigeria. Likewise, Nigeria was unable to provide more funds for the African Development Bank and the OAU Secretariat to assist in the relief of refugee problems in many African states late in the seventies. Nor could Nigeria provide technical know-how in any significant way to other African countries. Here again we see that economic constraints have set limits to freedom of action by Nigeria.

Similarly, the restrictions on the country's foreign policy placed by its military weakness is no less daunting. Although in size the armed forces have grown from about 10,000 in 1966 to about 146,000 in 1980 according to the Military Balance 1980/81, the armed forces are ill-equipped. Although the army has recently acquired some tanks - 64T-55 medium-range tanks, and 50 scorpion light tanks, it has no single mechanised battalion. In comparison with this not only has Libya got 24 mechanised battalions, she also has 12 tank battalions with 2,400 T-54/-55/-62/-72 medium range tanks as well as 200 "Lion" (Leopard I) medium range tanks. As against Nigeria's 20 "Saladin" armoured vehicles, Libya has 100. 17 In addition, Libya has different types of modern sophisticated weapons and equipment that the Nigerian armed forces do not have.

The Nigerian Navy consisting of about 8,000 men and women is poorly equipped. It has no destroyer, nor enough

frigate to patrol our territorial waters. Nor does it have enough serviceable naval boats for transport within our territorial waters even in case of emergency.

Likewise, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) which is 8,000 strong is ill-equipped. Although the NAF has 21 combat aircraft, about half of these are not serviceable. In comparison with this, Mozambique has 36 combat aircraft, and all of them are in top shape, while Libya's Air Force of about 4,000 strong has over 287 combat aircraft, 18 and all are in serviceable condition. In comparison with South Africa, the military capability of Nigeria is very low as I have indicated elsewhere.

Almost all the arms and ammunition used by the Nigerian armed forces are imported from external sources. This could be used as blackmail against the country by these foreign suppliers. The level of military technology in Nigeria is very low if it exists at all. The effectiveness of the military intelligence network is hardly in the best shape. The mobilisation capability of the armed forces must be slim. Likewise, it is hard to say that the level of leadership, training, morale and discipline has been high in the country's armed forces. All these are serious. For in modern warfare what matters is the quality rather than the quantity of men and weapons, and equipments.

The end result of all this military circumstances is that there is a severe limitation on the use of the country's armed forces as an instrument of foreign policy. Not only can the armed forces not support and supply any active operation anywhere in Southern Africa, they were even unable especially the Nigerian Air Force to provide air cover to our troops sent to Chad early in 1979, and to flush out by air attacks the Chadian dissidents that were harassing Nigerians along the Northern-Eastern border with Chad between October and November 1980. Those who lament the failure of the Nigerian Government to confront Libya

militarily over Chad after the Libyan troops had flushed out the dissident factions of Hissen Habre, and had announced the merger, or is it annexation of Chad, with Libya late in December 1980 should realise that given the military constraints (necessities) on the country, the Government's reaction could hardly have been different unless the government was bent on going down in a disastrous defeat in the streets of Ndjamena.

So far I have examined the external and internal constraints (necessities) imposing restrictions on the freedom of choice on the various successive Nigerian leaders since independence. I shall now go on to the final aspect of my thesis in this lecture that despite all my arguments above, Nigerian leaders still have some scope for choice, some room for manoeuvre however limited. It is the failure of our leaders to observe these limitations, and to take advantage of opportunities that might exist that has brought about errors. These are diplomatic errors committed between the zone of the realm of necessity, and the realm of freedom.

The catalogue of errors in our foreign policy is long. I shall only refer to a few salient ones. The first is the failure of our leaders especially the post-1975 ones to appreciate severe external and internal constraints on their freedom of choice, and therefore strike a foreign policy that will be Nigeria-centred, that is, that will be self-seeking in the sense that its primary preoccupation should be the promotion of the country's security and the well-being of the people, and any other policy must be directly or indirectly related to this basic egocentricity of foreign policy. It is the failure of this that has led to the utter neglect of all successive Nigerian governments to defend stoutly the interests of Nigerians that were either persecuted, harassed or even killed in foreign countries. The most notable was the murder of about 15 Nigerians on the grounds of the Nigerian Embassy in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in

January 1976. Yet, the then Federal Military Government did nothing against such atrocities and murderous crimes against Nigerians, and against all the norms of international law. Our leaders should be reminded that any foreign policy which fails consistently to recognise the claims of the people as being basic is built on a foundation of sand. Sooner or later it will provoke the dissent of those people. And its disasters will become their opportunity.

The second error is to cast for Nigeria a role in world affairs that is clearly beyond our means. As Professor F.S. Northedge has said ".....it is an elementary technical rule of international politics never to embark upon any international action without a reasonable assurance that the means exist to follow it through to the end." 20 And closely related to this is an Arab proverb which states that "...the word you have not spoken is your slave; the word you have spoken is your master."

Ignoring all this, General Olusegun Obasanjo as the then Head of State, told the UN General Assembly in October 1977 that if South Africa was prepared to defend apartheid with nuclear weapons Nigeria was ready for it. Similarly, in November, 1980 President Shagari declared in Lagos that his government would embark on arms race with South Africa if Pretoria was bent on defending apartheid with arms. Not only this, both at the OAU Summit in July 1980, and at the UN General Assembly in October, 1980 President Shagari declared that "Namibia must be independent" in 1981. It seems strange that intelligent men at the helms of the country's affairs could make such sweeping statements when in fact they know that the country did not have - nor does it still have - the means to bring all this about.

This has not only conveyed an impression of political infirmity, and military impotence and confusion abroad, it has also produced some demoralising effect at home. Furthermore, such statements have been damaging to Nige-

rian interests in Southern Africa, and have been counter-productive. For the verbal threats have been used by the apartheid government to strengthen its arms build-up both in conventional and nuclear weapons. On the other hand, there has been no appreciable increase in the quality and fire-power of Nigeria's armed forces.

Another error which is somehow avoidable relates to Nigerian Southern African policy to ally with the Western powers especially since early 1977 in the task of eliminating the white supremacist regimes in that sub-region. If anything, the lessons of the Civil War as well as the past attitudes of the Western powers to the liberation movements ought to have convinced our leaders that the Russians, the East Germans and other Eastern European powers are our "natural allies" in the struggle against oppression, black enslavement, and the mass violation of fundamental human rights in that part of Africa. What we now have in Southern Africa is rivalry between the West and the East with Nigeria solidly on the side of the West.

Still another is the failure of the Obasanjo government and his successor to condemn African dictators such as Bokassa, Idi Amin, and Nguema all to whom before their overthrow in 1979 committed atrocities including genocide against their own people. Likewise, the failure of the Obasanjo government and that of Shehu Shagari to accept as irreversible changes in Ghana in June 1979, and Liberia in April 1980 respectively has left a bad taste in the mouth. Another error is lack of consistency. To give one or two examples, the Obasanjo government severely criticised the Moroccan occupation of the former Spanish Sahara as weakening African struggle against the forces of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and reaction. But the Shagari government has tended to turn a blind eye to the crimes of Morocco against the people of Western Sahara. This is rather sad especially if it is remembered that over half of the OAU member

states have recognised the POLISARO regime as the legal and legitimate government of that territory.

There is also the psychological error made by most Nigerians in and outside government that because of the size, population, and the agricultural and mineral resources in the country, we are destined to lead Africa. As far as many Nigerians are concerned, leadership position in Africa has been assigned to this country by History. Indeed, such a modest leader as Sir Abubakar was of this view as he referred to Ghana with disdain as an "ant" compared with Nigeria which is an "elephant." Successive leaders except General Gowon have tended to even lord it over the rest of the continent. Vast size, and population, and abundance of resources do not guarantee in any automatic way the leadership of this continent. Until we are able to establish a stable political order at home, industrialise and take-off technologically, and improve the quality of life of our people, no country within and outside Africa will accept our claim to leadership in Africa seriously except to flatter us.

Still another error is that the Nigerian government allowed itself during the 1977/78 period to be lured by France to introduce its troops into the quagmire and the many-sided civil war in Chad in order to make it possible for the French troops that have been introduced into Ndjamena since 1969 to be withdrawn with some grace. Rather than studying the situation in Chad carefully, the Obasanjo government decided in March 1979 to send troops to that country without adequate preparation. By June, 1979, the Nigerian troops were denounced as an "army of occupation" by the various Chadian warring factions, and the Nigerian troops had to scuttle out of Ndjamena with ignominy with a few casualties left behind.

These errors could be multiplied. What I shall do is to try to suggest some recommendations to avoid them. First, our concept of national interest has to be - re-defined in

such a way to be egocentric. Secondly, our foreign policy objectives must flow from the circumstances of the country both external and internal. Thirdly, our leaders must ensure that our ends are related to the means available to us. In this regard, Ministers must not be afraid to tell the public of the hard facts of international life, and the options available to the country. Fourthly, there must a thorough and unceasing study of international problems to enable our leaders, and opinion-moulders to understand and appreciate as much as humanly possible the forces operating in foreign lands so that their decision will have taken all possible variables into account. Fifthly, the Nigerian government should in reality adopt the principle of self-reliance in almost all sectors if the country's independence is to be meaningful. Finally, the Federal Government should provide enough funds to promote the in-depth study and analysis of international issues and problems in the existing Universities, and other institutions where International Relations is being studied. Other institutions and centres for the study of international problems should be established by the Nigerian government within the shortest possible time.

I have in this lecture tried to analyse what International Relations is and as distinct from Political Science. I have also dealt with the concept of national interest as accepted by the Federal Government. Its weakness have been pointed out. What I consider should be the elements of the country's national interest is also examined. Both the external and internal limitations to freedom of choice in foreign policy have been outlined. A catalogue of avoidable errors is also given. If these suggestions are followed closely, we can justifiably expect a foreign policy that will not only promote our security, and unity and ensure a decent living standard to all Nigerians, but will also provide our country with a sense of purpose, and direction in the in this complex, ruthless, and turbulent world of the last score of the 20th century.

FOOT NOTES

Senate Paer of 23 January 1980, Minute 251.

Olajide Aluko, *Nigeria and Southern Africa* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1981).

Reynolds, P.A. *An Introduction To International Relations* (London, 1971), p.4.

Ibid, p.6

Goodwin, Geoffrey. *The Study of International Relations in The Year Book of World Affairs* (London) 1973.

Sunday Punch (Lagos) 13 July 1980.

For details see *The Survival* (London, IISS) January/February 1978.

Vital, David. *The Making of British Foreign Policy* (London, 1968), p.11.

Report of the Committee on the Review of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Including Economic and Technical Co-operation under the Chairmanship of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, (Lagos May, 1976), p.59.

Ibid, p.60.

Review of Overseas Representation - Report by the Central Policy Review Staff (London, HMSO, 1977), pp. x - xi .

Address by His Excellency General Yakubu Gowon at the Formal Launching of the Third National Development Plan 1975-80 (Lagos. Govt. Printer 1975).

Aluko, Olajide. *Essays on Nigerian Foreign Policy* (London: George Allen & Unwin 1981).

Brecher, Michael. *The Foreign Policy System of Israel* (London, O.U.P. 1972).

Ijewere, Gabriel O. *Two Decades of Independence in Nigeria with Special Reference to Nigeria in International Relations: Text of paper presented on the Occasion of the 20th Independence Anniversary of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of External Affairs, September, 1980.*

West Africa (London) 15 September, 1980.

For details see *The Military Balance 1980/81* (London: IISS 1980).

Ibid.

The Daily Times (Lagos) 16 February, 1981.

Northedge, F.S. *The International Political System* (London, 1978), p.116.