

Nigeria's Bid For A Permanent Seat At The Security Council: Leverages, Benefits And Challenges

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Abstract: *The study is on Nigeria's bid for a permanent seat at the Security Council as a foreign policy goal, with emphasis on the leverages, benefits and challenges; it adopted the Game Theory as a tool for critical analysis and applied the secondary research methodology with the review of related literature in the field. The study views Nigeria's peace keeping effort, having the largest black population and the largest economy in Africa as leverages for achieving such policy goal; a boost in Nigeria's image/prestige, influence of conference venue and veto as a tool to sway global policy to her advantage are benefits derivable; but weakening economic base, lack of consensus among UN member states on the issue of permanent and non-permanent position, opposition from traditional P5 members and Intra-African politics are challenges to such policy goal. However, through effective diplomacy, economic aid and propaganda Nigeria should emerge one of Africa's preferred choices. The study therefore recommends the composition of a diplomatic committee of eminent persons to project Nigeria's candidacy through active collaboration with Egypt, G4 countries and the support of the P5 especially France.*

Keywords: *Permanent seat, Security Council, Foreign policy*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since independence Nigeria's foreign policy has been conducted by incumbents of decision making position in an intricate and complex domestic environment cum the global context, following procedures of negotiations, compromise and sometimes coercion in pursuance of goals that have bearing on her interest in relation to the international environment but based on afro-centric principles. The above view suggest that three variables are constant in the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy like all other nations, they include the human element- leadership, domestic environment and the global context. While changes in global context represents specific driver of certain policy goals, the internal characteristics of the actor in question will determine whether such actor has the ware withal to pursue such goals and leadership helps to mediate between the internal characteristics and the global context by acting as the "intellectual filters through which objective realities are interpreted" Kegley *et al.*, (2011).

In the case of Nigeria's bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council the call for the reform of the Security Council organ of the UN provided the global context driving such a policy goal. But it requires the intellectual ability of leaders with will to engage the ware withal at the nation's disposal to achieve such a policy goal. Though, Nigeria may have leaders with will and the ware withal to leverage on to achieve the goal and enjoy the benefits of such policy goal but the fact that foreign policy involves multiple actors could create some challenges. The problem therefore is to identify the leverages, benefits and challenges that could militate against Nigeria's bid for a permanent seat at the Security Council. The questions that can help to address the above stated problem are how internal characteristics and actor leadership could act as leverages to such a policy goal? In what ways does permanent seat at the Security Council benefit Nigeria? What are the challenges working against such objective and how can they be addressed? But the starting point shall be the clarification of the concept foreign policy and its Nigerian character.

II. FOREIGN POLICY DEFINED

First of all it should be acknowledged that foreign policy is a public policy whose goals is to meet certain expectation of incumbents of policy making positions and the general public in relation to the external environment. It is conceived as the overall orientation and policy intentions of a particular country towards another, the objectives that a country seek to achieve in her relations with others and the means for achieving the said goals Adeniran, (1982). To Nnoh, (1978) it is the reaction of a nation to the external environment involving the organization of both domestic and external relations.

In other words, foreign policy is the sum total of the decisions made on behalf of a given political unit... entailing the implementation of goals with direct reference to the external environment (Smith *et al* 2008). The above views of Foreign policy indicates that there is no consensus among scholars on a singular meaning of the concept foreign policy; but consensus exist in the fact that it has to do with interactions between states in pursuit of their interest outside their territorial borders. Consequently, the study views foreign policy as the goals and objectives a state seek to achieve in her relations with other states or international organizations and the choice of means and processes for the achievement of such stated goals.

Nevertheless, Nnoh, (1978) and Smith *et al* (2008) definitions are both instructive for this study. This is because they both speak to the fact that foreign policy is a domestic reaction to the external environment. In this case, the clamor for the reform of the UNSC is the external impulse that has created an opportunity for Nigeria's foreign policy to tilt towards the direction of a permanent member of the UNSC.

Although foreign policy is about the consummation of goals, these goals are of various profiles, there are core or vital goals which have to do with security and survival of states and cannot be compromised and there are desirable goals which centers on expansion and the consolidation of state powers. Though the quest for permanent seat at the Council does not bother on the survival of Nigeria, but it is a desirable goal that helps to consolidate her powers and fulfillment of her foreign policy principle at the global stage.

III. THE PRINCIPLES OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

The Nigerian foreign policy since inception in 1954 when colonial overlords transferred the power over external relations has been predicated upon the principle of Afro-centrism. The concept emphasized that Africa is the center piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. This foreign policy trust reflects in the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy in the 1979 and 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it states as follows:-

"The state shall promote African unity, as well as total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international cooperation 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 ramifications"

(Quoted in Anthony, 2006)

Based on these principle Nigeria has pursued vigorously the liberation of Africa from colonialism and the liquidation of Apartheid from Southern Africa to the extent that Nigeria was termed a frontline state against Apartheid notwithstanding the fact that she is not proximate to South Africa in geographical terms.

Efforts at the review of the principles underlying Nigeria's foreign policy have not altered markedly the Afro-centric stance though it tended to focus more attention on economic issues rather than liberation issues. For instance during the era of President Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria's foreign policy principle was reviewed and the excerpt of the outcome document stated as follows:-

"there is no permanent friend or permanent enemy but permanent interest; the promotion and protection of national interest; the promotion of African integration and support for African unity; the promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of international peace; the elimination of all forms of discriminations; respect for international law and treaty and the promotion of a just world economic order" (Quoted in Lawal *et al* 2015).

This article therefore makes the case for a further review of the principles guiding Nigeria's foreign policy to move it from its Afro-centric stance to a globe-centric stance since major issues relating to African liberation have evaporated and the fact that Nigeria has not actually confined her foreign policy to Africa but has excelled in peace keeping and peace enforcement globally make such call all the more important. The said reform will better position Nigeria to pursue goals such as a permanent seat at the Security Council considering the fact that there are variables it can leverage on to achieving such a policy goal.

IV. NIGERIA'S LEVERAGE IN THE QUEST FOR PERMANENT SEAT AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL

By leverage the study means the variables that work in favor of Nigeria to the achievement of such a policy goal. Aderemi, (2015) argued that Nigeria's role in the liberation of Africa from colonialism and apartheid makes her qualify for a permanent seat at the Security Council. But this study thinks contrariwise, whereas Nigeria did well to fight for the independence of African countries like Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique Western Sahara and the liquidation of Apartheid South Africa, it could be argued that Nigeria's efforts in such liberation struggle only added to exacerbating insecurity in the world rather than alleviate it as the then freedom fighters whom Nigeria supported were termed terrorist, meaning that Nigeria sponsored terrorism during the liberation struggle.

But the role Nigeria has played in the area of peacemaking, peace keeping and peace enforcement is seen by this study as what qualifies her for a permanent seat at the summit of power (The Security Council). This is because such roles actually correspond with the duties and responsibilities of the Security Council as enunciated in Article 24 of the UN Charter. This role is better appreciated when closer attention is given to the number of peace keeping and enforcement missions Nigeria has participated in and the number of

military and police personnel she has contributed to UN operations. For instance about 1,350 military and police personnel participated in Congo operations 1960-1964; while over 5,500 participated in Lebanon 1978-1983, 1,035 participated in Dafur in 2007 etc. Adesoji, (2015). Such contributions go a long way to meeting the standard set by the UN 'Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change' which emphasized that new members must have contributed "most to the United Nations financially, militarily and diplomatically," Since Nigeria has the above record as leverage, incumbents of policy making and implementation should capitalize on the leverage as a stepping stone to achieving a permanent seat for Nigeria at the Security Council.

Second, Nigeria is the largest African country and by extension the country having the largest concentration of the black people in the world with the population of over 170 million people. This suggests that in terms of demography, Nigeria's power potential is greater than South Africa and Egypt who are also in context for a permanent seat at the summit of power. Note that in the calculation of power, population is a fundamental variable that constitutes state power; since Nigeria has it to her advantage, it must be used to exert influence for the achievement of a permanent seat at the Security Council.

Third, Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa; this became evident with the rebasing of the nation's economy in 2015. Whereas Nigeria's GDP/ stands at \$509 billion following the rebasing of the economy, those of South Africa and Egypt are at \$322 and 286.5 respectively. On the other hand While Nigeria's GDP per capita stands 3,205.3 thousand USD, those of Egypt and South Africa stand at 3,198.7 and 6,482.8 respectively World Bank 2016). Though South Africa's GDP per capita stands higher than Nigeria's GDP, it can be adduced to her low population.

More also, the fact that Nigeria is the only truly African country that represent the black race among the contending countries is the more reason why Nigeria has a better chance for a slot at the Council. But for this point to attract the attention and sympathy of all and sundry, incumbents of policy making positions in Nigeria should direct the attention of the world to it through policy pronouncements and initiatives. Such policy pronouncements and initiatives must emphasized that should South Africa or Egypt be chosen at the expense of Nigeria it will only serve to entrench White dominance at the Council and the purpose of an African slot would have been defeated since South Africa and Egypt do not actually present a true representation of the black race but the extension of white supremacist and Arab world. But Nigeria has all the embodiment of a true representative of the black race as she has the largest concentration of the black population in the entire world and the benefits of a permanent seat at the council can only be enjoyed if Nigeria is able to make it to the Council. It is therefore important that we identify some of such benefits if only to spur policymakers to pursue policies in that regard.

V. BENEFIT ACCRUABLE FROM PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP OF UNSC

Though some have argued that there is no significant benefit for such a policy goal for Nigeria and Nigerians at large, this study contends that the policy is of immense benefit to Nigeria since it is capable of producing what Kegley *et al* (2011) termed Two-level Game – policy that meet both domestic and external goals.

One of the major benefits accruable from Nigeria's permanent membership of the Security Council is that of image and prestige. It has been noted that the policy of prestige is the third of the basic manifestation of the struggle for power on the international scene... and an indispensable element of rational foreign policy. Morgenthau, (1986) emphasized that

"it is in the tribute others pay to his goodness, intelligence and power that he become fully aware of and can fully enjoy what he deems to be his superior qualities... it is only through his reputation for excellence that he can gain the measure of security, wealth and power he regards to be his due"

From the above it is obvious that irrespective of the fact that Nigeria is the biggest country in Africa and has played the Big Brothers role in helping African countries in need, the tributes that should be paid to her have not been paid; consequently Nigeria though is aware of her superior qualities is yet to enjoy benefits accruing from such qualities. But the ascension to the position of a permanent member of the Security Council will help her enjoy wealth and power accompanied with reputation and prestige that goes with the office. This can be achieved through what Morgenthau (1985) calls diplomatic ceremonials and the display of military force.

Whereas Nigeria has demonstrated military force through her peacekeeping roles, she has not been able to do so through diplomatic ceremonials, but the pursuit and achievement of the permanent membership of the Security Council will go a long way to boosting Nigeria's diplomatic ceremonials. The case of Genoa who had to offer the Pope some millions for her envoys to be received at *Sola Reggia*- the most exalted chamber for receiving special envoys in the Papacy- rather than *Sola Ducale* –the lower chamber, is a classical case that indicates the level statesmen will go to command the same respect with others. Morgenthau, (1986). The same could be said of Nigeria, if such a policy goal is realized, Nigeria could be seen with some level of equality with the great powers.

In addition, membership of the Security Council could boost the Nigerian tourism sector because being at the zenith of power helps to influence conference venues to one's advantage. For instance conference relating to Africa's economy, politics, security, environment etc. could easily be influenced to hold in Nigeria once Nigeria is at the summit of power. This will in turn boost the tourism sector of the economy through hotel accommodation, transportation etc. which in turn will add more value to the Nigerian economy thereby increasing her GDP growth and fulfilling the Two-level Game.

Apart from influencing conference venues to one's advantage, Nigeria's permanent membership of the Security Council could also help her influence major appointments at the UN and her agencies to her advantage. For instance

Boutros Boutros Ghali could not serve a second term as the UN Secretary General due to the United States opposition to his candidacy. Moreover, Rattray was not reappointment as the Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) due to China's opposition to his candidacy Lydia, (2015). In the same vein Nigeria will be able to influence major appointments at the UN should it attain the position of a permanent seat at the Council

Again Nigeria has a lot to gain as a permanent member of the Security Council with a veto power otherwise called the Great Power Unanimity principle. In a way it can be used as a bargaining tool for certain vital policy goal that Nigerian would want to pursue within the system. For instance one of the major reasons China and Russia vetoed the resolution to intervene in the Syrian crises was because of Russia's and China's strategic interest in Syria (Alex Bellamy 2013). Recall that the intervention in Libya led to the loss of business opportunities by Chinese firms in Libya, therefore it was in a bid to avoid a repeat of similar fate that China and Russia vetoed the resolution calling for intervention in Syria. So if these countries could use the Security Council veto right to sway decision to their own advantage Nigeria's permanent membership of the Security Council will also offer Nigeria such an advantage. Unfortunately Nigeria's ascension to such privileged position among the comity of nation is faced with fundamental challenges.

VI. CHALLENGES MILITATING AGAINST NIGERIA'S BID FOR PERMANENT SEAT AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Aderemi, (2015) identified corruption, weak democratic institutions, weakening economic base, bad leadership, insecurity and poverty as major challenges to realizing such a policy goal. While not disputing the virility of such claim as they represent the challenges from the domestic environment, this study sees major challenges to such quest from, the global context relating to lack of consensus on the issue of veto for new permanent members, intra-African politics, and opposition from traditional P5 members.

One of such challenges is the lack of consensus among various coalitions on the categories of membership. Whereas, the Ezulwini Consensus which represent the African position are agitating for at least two permanent seats with veto power, the G4 comprising Japan, Germany, Brazil and India promote permanent membership with veto only after a period of review. On the other hand the Uniting for Consensus comprising Italy, south Korea, Indonesia and a host of others, called for a 25-member Council, which would be achieved by adding 'no permanent members to the Council, but would rather create new permanent seats in each region, leaving it to the members of each regional group to decide which member States should sit in those seats, and for how long' Nadin (2014). Until these divergent positions are streamlined by consensus, reform at the Security Council will continue to be elusive and if that remains the case Nigeria cannot ascend that exalted seat as a permanent member.

Opposition from the present permanent members against the addition of new permanent members is also a great

challenge. As the classical case of Genoa referred to above revealed, the opposition from the Republic of Venice constrained the Papacy from receiving the representatives of Genoa in Sola Reggia. This has also become manifest in the ongoing effort at reform of the security council, as some of the P5 want to maintain the status quo by denying the entrance of new set of permanent members. For instance between 2014 and 2015 the Chair of Intergovernmental Negotiation IGN produced a framework document and asked Member States to "populate" the text within three weeks. Whereas about 120 countries made contributions to the document, China, Russian Federation, US objected to the process and did not want their positions to be included in the 20-pages populated framework document Swart, (2015).

Swart, (2015) emphasized that the five permanent members do not agree on a solution, while the United Kingdom publicly favors new permanent seats for the G4 and two African countries, but without the extension of veto rights; France seems open to the aspirations of the G4 and Africa, including veto rights. But China, Russian Federation, and the US prefer moderate expansion with some new permanent members, but they do not agree on which countries exactly nor do they agree to extend the veto rights to the new entrants.

The third major challenge this study has identified is what the study termed intra-African politics of African representatives. Whereas African countries have pledge to stand by Ezulwini Consensus, they contend that countries that will represent Africa must be elected by Africans themselves. Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt are major contenders for the seats. Though the contribution of Nigeria to peacekeeping, liberation struggles and her population may work to her advantage, politics among African nations have not always favored Nigeria. This implies that Nigeria have not been able to exert greater influence as it should politically in Africa. For instance during the burial ceremony of Nelson Mandela of South Africa Nigeria was not given an opportunity to make a speech neither was her name mentioned as a frontline state against Apartheid.

Moreover, Garba J (1991) noted that at first appearance of the MPLA government at the OAU summit in Mauritius 1976, Nigeria's name was conspicuously absent from the list of countries to which they publicly paid tribute for assistance in achieving their independence. In other words, irrespective of Nigeria's efforts at showing the Big Brothers concern to her fellow Africans, the deference she expected has not always been given. Recall that in 2005, South Africa and Nigeria tried to bring about a convergence with the G4 and Africa's position that would allow a final decision on veto rights to be postponed until a future review took place. Resistance to this idea from parts of the African Union especially Egypt was fierce, leading ultimately to Ezulwini Consensus which jettisoned Nigeria's position on the matter of veto. The implication is that when the matter of African representative is narrowed down to voting, most African countries may vote against Nigeria.

Nevertheless, as the Game theory stipulates, Nigeria can emerge the preferred choice for Africa through the adoption of a more sophisticated strategy and effective diplomacy. Nigeria should strive to win the support of current permanent

members, the G4 countries and other African countries for such an exalted office. The first step to this is that Nigeria should engage in shuttle Diplomacy to France as President Goodluck Jonathan did and eventually secured the support of her French-speaking neighbours in the war against terror. The essence is to ensure that Nigeria use France to court the support of her French-speaking neighbours to vote in her favour when the matter is narrowed down to African Union.

Other ways to do that is to attach string to every aid given to African countries in view of the fact that there is no free lunch or dinner in international relations. Propaganda is also a veritable tool for this grand design, especially to discredit South Africa's candidacy. Considering her effort to the exacerbation of the Ivorian crisis, failure to effect ICC warrant of Arrest against Omah El-Basher of Sudan, encouragement of discriminations through xenophobic attacks against fellow blacks and the embarrassment caused Nigeria by intercepting the fund meant for the procurement of military hardware for the prosecution of the war against terror. Note that all these were attempts by South Africa to challenge and discredit Nigeria, but it could prove to work for the good of Nigeria through effective propaganda.

VII. CONCLUSION

From the above discourse, it is clear that foreign policy is about the consummation of goals which are of different profile. While some of the goals are vital others are desirable but not indispensable, yet the achievement of such goals must be predicated on the internal characteristics of the nation concerned (Nigeria), the actor's leadership and the global context or environment.

Consequently, Nigerian leaders over the years have based her foreign policy on the principle of Afro-centrism due to realities she was confronted with at independence. But the study advocates a world-centric view of Nigeria's foreign policy since those other issues have been liquidated. And a seat at the UNSC is one way to make this shift to globe-centric based foreign policy.

This is imperative because Nigeria has played effectively the role or responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council, though she is not yet a permanent member; she is the biggest African country in terms of population and economy. More so her image and prestige will be boosted through such policy goal. Nevertheless, there are challenges of lack of consensus among UN member states, opposition to reform from traditional permanent members and intra-African politics of the choice of African representatives.

But through effective diplomacy, economic aid and propaganda Nigeria will emerge as the preferred representative for Africa. To do so, incumbents of policy making positions should determine the goal of permanent membership of the UNSC in light of the power actually and potentially available to Nigeria for its pursuit; assess the objectives of South Africa and Egypt and the power actually and potentially available to them for the pursuit of the same objective; determine the extent to which these objectives are compatible with each other and employ the means most suitable for the pursuit of such objective Morgenthau (1985).

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