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Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under Two Military Juntas, 1983-1993: A Reflection of the Buhari and Babangida Regimes.

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Abstract: Foreign policy is the methods and means used by a nation-State to achieve its aims and interests in its relations with other nation-States. In the conduct of foreign policy, the main objective is to protect the security of the State, improve the political, social and economic well-being of the citizenry. Therefore, the paper questioned Nigeria's foreign policy and how it affected her external relations during the two military regimes of General Buhari, 1983-1985 and, General Babangida, 1985-1993. General Buhari's foreign policy decision to closed Nigeria's borders with her neighbouring West African countries strained her relationship with them. General Babangida's cancellation of the June 12, 1993 national election results dented Nigeria's image globally. The paper's methodology was based on secondary sources. The paper further observed that the Buhari regime inherited the deepening economic crisis, which Nigeria was engulfed in during the civilian administration of Shehu Shagari. Therefore, in order to revamp the economy, the Buhari regime emphasized that Nigeria's foreign policy would revolve around its national security and economic well-being of Nigerians. The Babangida's regime foreign policy was more African-focused. The regime gave assistance to some African liberation movements for the struggle of their independence. This led to the liberation of Namibia, Mozambique from colonial rule. Equally, the Babangida regime restored peace and order in the Liberian civil war. The paper also found out that the Buhari regime conducted external relations with a retaliation reactions policy, while the Babangida regime used skillful and economic diplomacy in its foreign policy

conduct. It concludes that both military regimes never had any regards to the fundamental human rights of the citizenry.

Key words: Foreign Policy, Military Junta, Diplomatic Relations, Retaliation Reactions, Economic Diplomacy.

Introduction

Much of the foundation of what we know as Nigeria's foreign policy since independence in 1960 is directly owed to vision of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria's first Prime Minister and Head of Government, October 1960 to January 1966. As the Head of the self-government from the late 1950s, he carefully articulated and enunciated the fundamental principles that would underpin the country's external relations after independence, and established the basis on which Nigeria would relate with all countries, big and small, as well as what would be its attitude towards international organizations. These visions were spelt out in major speeches, especially from 1958 when the date of independence had been set for October 1960. It was from that movement on that the man who would be the country's first Head of Government had been expressing his views concretely on foreign policy and indicating the direction of his thoughts on diverse issues of world politics (Fawole, 2003:38).

Similarly, a review of Nigeria's foreign policy positions over the years does point up a number of philosophical-conceptual building blocks which are strongly related to the state of the international environment. Within the context of decolonization, "self-determination and self-government" were core

philosophical principles that informed the country's foreign policy. As the country matured as an independent and sovereign nation, other philosophical principles that became part of Nigeria's foreign policy fundamentals are enlightened national interest, African solidarity, interdependence, inter nationalism, asymmetric world order and supranational authority (Ogwu, 2005:7).

The pursuit of Nigerian foreign policy began in earnest after the attainment of independence on October 1, 1960. In the foreign policy statements made in August and December, 1960 respectively, the first Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, outlined some objectives of the country's foreign policy. These objectives or goals of the Nigerian foreign policy have consequently been maintained despite numerous changes in government. At independence, the country's foreign policy sought to achieve the following objectives: promotion of the economic well-being of Nigerians and Africans; promotion of Nigeria's territorial integrity, eradication of all forms of racism and colonialism from African continent; promotion of the rights of black men all over the world; and promotion of international peace and security (Ogwu, 1986:8; Olusanya and Akindele, 1986:3-5).

On January 15, 1966 the military swept away the Balewa government in a bloody coup led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, saw the murder of the Prime Minister A.T. Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the Northern Region and Chief Samuel Ladoke, the Premier of the Western Region. This coup ushered in the military junta of General Aguyi-Ironsi which only lasted for six months. The General Ironsi administration was overthrown in a bloodier military coup of July 29, 1966 which brought in Yakubu Gowon, then, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Nigerian Army as the new Head of State. General Gowon was overthrown in a military coup on July 29, 1975 which ushered in the dynamic and radically inclined government of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed. General Murtala Mohammed was assassinated on February 13, 1976 in a military coup attempt. His Deputy, General Olusegun Obasanjo became Head of State. He ruled from 1976-1979 when he transmitted power to the democratically elected government of President Shehu Shagari. President Shagari was succeeded by General Muhammadu Buhari in a military coup on December 31, 1983. At this point, it is imperative to make a preamble of the Buhari and Babangida military juntas so as to have a discernable thesis.

The Buhari military junta equally re-launched Nigeria's commitment to the freedom and liberation struggle of African countries still under the minority white supremacists rule,

especially in South Africa. General Buhari continued with Shehu Shagari, his immediate predecessor policy of expulsion of illegal aliens of neighbouring West African origin as well as the closure of its borders with her West African neighbouring countries to stem or stop the influx of illegal goods into Nigeria and currency trafficking. Thus, this severed Nigeria's relationship with her neighbouring West African countries. Again, Nigeria's diplomatic relations with Britain was sour during General Buhari's reign. General Buhari military led government lasted for only twenty months. He was overthrown in a military coup on August 27, 1985 which ushered in General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida as the self-acclaimed "Military President" of Nigeria.

The military junta of General Babangida is known to have successfully brought peace to the Liberian civil war and liberated some African countries from colonial rule such as Namibia to a state of independence. During this period, Nigeria assumed the 'Big Brother' role of peace making on the African continent and became a major donor nation in Africa. General Babangida annulled the June 12, 1993 presidential election results. This led to protest by Nigerians and the United States of America and the European Union threatened sanctions on Nigeria. General Babangida ruled Nigeria until August 26, 1993. Therefore, this paper examines Nigeria's foreign policy under the Buhari and Babangida military

regimes, and made a comparison of the Buhari and Babangida military juntas, and draws a conclusion.

Nigeria's Foreign Policy under Muhammadu Buhari Regime, 1983-1985

What turned out to be the Buhari regimes foreign policy throughout its twenty-months tenure was defined by both the circumstances that preceded its entry into power as well as the texture and tone of General Buhari's inaugural address to Nigerians on December 31, 1983. Delivered in a tone that suggested seriousness, Buhari made the nation to believe that the deposed civilian experiment had gone completely awry after only four years, almost destroying the nation in the process. His tone suggested the arrival of a regime that was set to correct the fatal errors of the ousted civilian administration. He asserted, without mincing words, that Nigerians had no other country that they could call their own and thus that all hands would have to be on deck to salvage it together. It was this tough broadcast that set the tone for the subsequent inflexible and uncompromising foreign policy postures that distinguished the regime (Fawole, 2003).

It is fair to assert that General Buhari was not a novice both in terms of administration and foreign policy. He was a prominent member of both the Murtala Muhammed and Olusegun Obasanjo regimes, having served variously as Military Administration of Borno State and later a Federal Commissioner for Petroleum. The latter post must have given him

greater exposure to the intricacies and intrigues of global energy politics in particular and international diplomacy in general. Apparently, because of the centrality of foreign policy to the administration, General Buhari appointed Dr. Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, an International Relations lecturer and Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) as Minister of External Affairs and Major-General Joseph Garba, as Permanent Representative at the UN in New York. General Garba was the flamboyant Commissioner for External Affairs during the Muhammed and Obasanjo regimes from 1975-1978, a period of intense diplomatic activism that saw Nigeria emerging as the *primus inter pares* on the continent. It was therefore, thought that the declaration of being an offshoot of the last two military regimes and the appointment of two knowledgeable men into the sensitive diplomatic portfolios signified a new era of return to a dynamic and activist foreign policy (Fawole, 2003).

The usurpation of power by General Buhari was in many ways an important crossroad for Nigeria, primarily in domestic policy but also in external relations. According to him, "no country in the world can command the respect and admiration of the international community without a dedicated purposeful leadership and indeed, no country can conduct a successful foreign policy without its putting first, house in order" (Buhari, 1994). Therefore, in order to succeed in achieving a

change in the foreign policy, the regime believed that the starting point should be to revamp the economy first. Understandably, throughout its existence, the Buhari regime focused its attention and effort at economic recovery. That is why the regime further affirmed that: Federal government will maintain and strengthen existing diplomatic relations with other States and with international organizations... we also honour and respect all treaty obligations entered into by the previous government (Mbachu, 1996).

The regime went further in an address to a world press conference a few days after its emergence to assure foreign investors and the Western powers especially of the security of their investments. As General Buhari announced: "I wish to re-affirm that Nigeria will continue to honour its international commitments at multilateral and bi-lateral levels. We shall maintain cordial relations with friendly countries based on mutual respect, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other" (Mbachu, 1996).

The first major foreign policy issue that the new Buhari regime had to deal with was actually an outgrowth of domestic policy, that is, revamping the ailing national economy. This is because it inherited severely damaged economy and its main objective was to put it back on track. It also inherited the proposal to seek an International Monetary Fund (IMF) bail out facility of \$2.2 billion from its predecessor to provide badly needed economic relief. The amount

was expected to cushion the impact of a badly depleted national treasury and the considerable reduced revenues from crude oil. There was a ray of hope that the resumption of negotiations with IMF would eventually result in some much needed economic relief. But it would appear that the initial optimism for approachment with the IMF was sadly misplaced. Negotiations between the IMF and the Buhari government could not progress as smoothly as initially anticipated because of disagreement over the conditionalities that the lending institution attached to the loan facility (Fawole, 2003).

The IMF conditionalities involves thus: "A review and curtailment of public expenditures , reduction of government subsidies, classification of parastatals into 'economic' and 'social' categories, stoppage of non-statutory transfers such as loans to State governments, simplification and rationalization of tariff structure, review of interest rates, vigorous export promotion, relaxation of import restrictions, and devaluation of the naira" (cited in Fawole, 2003).

Research studies have it that, the above IMF conditionalities were unaccepted by the Buhari military government. In his words, General Buhari said: "We have realized the damage IMF loans have done to developing countries. None of the developing countries that have taken IMF loans have come out of it well. So if we are to go by historical indications, to take IMF loan on the terms they want us to, will be tantamount to virtually destroying our

own country. Devaluation does not make sense to Nigerians at all. Equally, according to Gambari (1989:32), these conditionalities would merely worsen rather than improve the state of health of the economy, and that there was no developing country that took IMF loans on those standard conditionalities without severe damage to its economy.

According to academic studies, the Buhari regime promulgated a number of draconian Decrees with the aim of tackling the corruption malady in Nigeria. These Decrees prescribed harsh penalties for offenders such as death by firing squad for drug trafficking, illegal oil bunkering, tampering with electricity and NEPA installation among others. There was also a Decree that prohibited the publication or disclosure of government information that could embarrass it. In other words, the Decree was an anti-press legislation against the free flow of information.

Equally, according to Tyona (2019), a cross section of political gladiators were convicted of different corrupt practices under the government of General Buhari. The regime also condemned a number of Nigerians involved in drug trafficking to death and executed by firing squad.

The Buhari administration believed that the old conception of Africa being the policy center-piece would be properly defined. Under Buhari's regime, relations with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member-States reached an all time low. Not only were the

nation's borders permanently closed against its neighbours, thus badly hurting their economies, the regime did not heed all the appeals, for them to be re-opened. The position of the Buhari regime's foreign policy toward its neighbours has been justified in literature as promised on the basic rationale behind the coup itself, which was to arrest the country's rapidly deteriorating economic situation, eliminate corruption and improve the well-being of the generality of Nigerians (cited in Tyona and Abagen, 2019).

The regime took a few important foreign policy steps with significant implications for Africa as a whole. For example, the regime recognized the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as an independent nation in Africa notwithstanding protests from Morocco. This was quite different from Shagari's regime posture. The Buhari's regime also pledged to support the OAU's effort in general towards the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. In the same vein, the regime pledged Nigeria's direct assistance to Angola, Mozambique and liberation struggles in South Africa and Namibia (Mbachu, 2011:160).

In another development, in order to attract Western foreign investors, the regime gradually reversed the indigenization policy and Decrees. The regime spent high proportion of the country's foreign exchange earnings on external debt servicing. The regime also embarked on counter trade with such Western countries as Italy, Canada, Brazil, France, and

Austria. This practice would not have been bad, but for the fact that the country had only oil to barter with, such that it was in such a weak position that the regime virtually was begging these Western countries to accept oil at a dangerously low rate vis-à-vis the high rates of these other countries' goods and services (Mbachu, 2011).

In another dimension, relations with Britain were adversely affected during the General Muhammadu Buhari military junta. Texts have it that the soured relations came as a result of the regime attempted the kidnap/abduction of Nigeria's former Minister of Transportation, Umaru Dikko from London with the aid of Nigerian officials and Israeli's mercenaries. The Buhari's government denied any involvement in the botched kidnap. Sources further reveals that this led to the British government to seized and detained the Nigerian Airways Boeing 707 cargo plane that was waiting to convey Umaru Dikko back to Nigerian soil and equally, the British government announced the expulsion of the Nigerian Counselor and Attaché from Britain. In its usual tit-for-tat manner, the General Muhammadu Buhari led military junta retaliated by seizing a British plane en route London with over two hundred passengers and a crew of over twenty and also expelled the British High Commissioner and Attaché in Nigeria and demanded the two diplomats to leave the Nigerian soil effectively immediately.

In addition, according to Fawole (2003) Nigeria was still reeling in the

diplomatic brouhaha and bad publicity that attended the Dikko kidnap when it was suddenly jolted again by the visit of two prominent traditional rulers to Israel in August, 1984. The Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade, and the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, had reportedly paid an innocuous private business visit to Israel, but the visit generated considerable diplomatic headache. The two traditional rulers, although visiting Israel in their private capacities, were reportedly received in audience by the then Israeli President Chiam Herzog, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and other senior Israeli government officials who were anxious to capitalize on the event for political mileage. This official reception was widely publicized in the Israeli and international media as Nigeria's surreptitious attempt to reopen diplomatic relations that was severed in compliance with OAU directive in 1973. This visit and the attendant adverse publicity justifiably incurred the anger of the government which promptly suspended the two rulers as Chairmen of their respective State Councils of Traditional Rulers for six months, restricted them to their domains and asked them to surrender their passports to their local government authorities. These actions sent strong signals that government did not condone their naive attempt to conduct diplomacy on its behalf. In the first instance, they had no mandate to conduct diplomacy on behalf of the Nigerian government, at least not on such a highly sensitive matter as recognition of Israel. General

Muhammadu Buhari military junta came to an end on August 27, 1985 via a military coup led by his Chief of Army Staff, Major-General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.

Nigeria's Foreign Policy under Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Regime, 1985-1993.

General Babangida took over power from General Buhari on August 27, 1985. And became the sixth military Head of State in Nigeria. In fact, studies have it that, he declared himself "Military President", hence became the first in Africa and probably the world (Tyona and Abagen, 2019).

The manner and style of foreign policy implementation is one area in which the Babangida regime distinguished itself from its predecessors. While still retaining the essentially Afrocentric focus there was a clear emphasis on the need to relate foreign policy to the domestic economic situation. This is important to note because, at the time the Babangida regime assumed office on August 27, 1985, the Nigerian domestic environment was characterized by several adverse developments which had repercussions for the conduct of foreign policy. For instance, at the level of the economy, the collapse in the early 1980s to the world oil market had drastic consequences for the country. Regrettably, the world oil market crash came at a time when Nigeria had come to depend on oil exports for some 90 percent of its foreign exchange. At political level, the highly authoritarian posture

adopted by the Buhari regime, his blatant suppression of basic democratic rights, including the freedom of speech and of the press, and the total refusal of that government to discuss the country's political future with a view to setting a date for the return to civilian rule, further undermined the country's image. All these and others help to mould and shape the foreign policy posture of President Ibrahim Babangida (Mbachu, 2011).

Therefore, the regime of Babangida set out early to repair the damages done to Nigeria's foreign policy by the Buhari administration. Both the IMF loan stalemate and the frosty relations with the West were quickly resolved. Nigeria soon resumed its diplomatic relations with Britain. In the same spirit, the closure of Nigeria's borders with her neighbours together with the vexing issue of illegal aliens, which had converged to worsen relations between Nigeria and her neighbours were astutely reversed to the admiration of West African countries, culminating in the provision of economic assistance to these countries, which won him the Chairmanship of ECOWAS for three consecutive terms (cited in Fayomi et al, 2015).

In essence, this era only marked a high point of the country's rising international profile; it also conferred commensurate prestige to Nigeria in her foreign policy. The success of Babangida's foreign policy initiative was attributed to the crop of intellectuals who he assembled as members of his "kitchen cabinet".

Among them were personalities such as Eliagwu, Obiozor, Ofoegbu, Akinyemi, Chime, Olagunju, Oyovbaire, Ogunsawo, Oshuntokun, among others. Despite the remarkable contributions to Nigeria's foreign policy by these intellectual giants, the foreign policy arena under Babangida nonetheless, suffered great confusion and incoherence resulting in the arbitrary change in the Ministers of External Affairs (cited in Fayomi et al, 2015).

Furthermore, this confusion was greatly reflected in the regimes bid to elevate religion as a conscious guide to Nigeria's foreign policy. This was demonstrated by the circumstances that surrounded Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1987. The regime decided to change Nigeria's status from that of an observer status to a full-fledged member without due consideration of both domestic and international concerns. The direct result of this was a serious and lasting dent on the regime's credibility. For instance, the decision by Babangida to make Nigeria a full member of a largely Islamic grouping of States generated considerable opposition at home and remains one of the most highly contentious and unresolved issues in the country till date (cited in Fayomi et al, 2015). The Babangida military juntas according to sources also restored diplomatic relations with Israel and allow them to establishing a diplomatic presence in Lagos without reciprocal presence in Tel Aviv, and limited the Israeli Ambassador's

movements to only the Southern part of the country.

Again, the Babangida administration from onset, made plain its commitment to pursue with vigour Nigeria's foreign policy principle of regarding Africa as the centre – piece of our foreign policy. Within this overall framework, many important innovations were introduced by the government in order to enable it carry out more effective and relevant role in Africa. They include: (a) The employment of economic diplomacy as a reliable instrument of foreign policy. Economic diplomacy was intended to open up business opportunities for Nigerians in other countries, (b) The introduction and extension of Technical Aid Corps (TAC) scheme. Under the scheme, Nigerian professionals and experts whose services were required by other African countries were seconded, at the Nigerian government's expense, to those countries for a period of up to three years, (c) The introduction of the principle of reciprocity whereby, without prejudice to the centrality of Africa to Nigeria's foreign policy, the government would make it a point to consult only with African governments which seek Nigeria's opinion and views on matters that concern them individually or collectively, (d) The conclusion of bilateral agreements with as many African countries as were willing, to institutionalize their cooperation with Nigeria, (e) The strengthening of Nigeria's commitment to regional economic cooperation in Africa, (f) The intensification of the anti-

apartheid goals against the racist South Africa, (g) The Nigerian commitment to African regional organization, especially the OAU and the African Development Bank (ADB), (h) The willingness to intervene directly in violent conflicts between African States and within specific countries as a neutral arbiter and honest broker. Formation and sponsorship of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone are handy examples (Mbachu, 2011).

Equally, the Babangida military junta gave moral, financial, diplomatic, and material support to Namibia which were critical in winning her independence under South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in 1990. Apart from all the resources given to SWAPO to prosecute the war of liberation, the Nigerian government also gave Namibia specific assistance immediately before and after independence to enable the new state start off smoothly. These include: (a) The sum of N100 million (US \$11 million) voluntary donations by Nigerians raised at the launching of the Namibia Solidarity Fund by President Babangida, (b) Payment of US \$400,000.00 assessed contribution to the OAU to aid SWAPO's electoral campaign in 1989, (c) Voluntary contribution of US \$100,000.00 to the UN for the repatriation of Namibian refugees and exiles to participate in the democratization process, (d) Payment of US \$162,674.00 million to assess contribution to the budget of the UN Transition Assistance Group

(UNTAG), (e) Contribution of personnel to perform electoral and police duties (cited in Abagen and Tyona, 2018).

In addition, according to Mbachu (2011) just as its African policy, the Babangida regime's actions and policy towards the Black people in the Diaspora contained important elements of innovation and continuity. The regime with such influential members of the Black in the Diaspora as members of the Black Congressional Caucus of the United States and the government of Jamaica in its bid to co-ordinate Black peoples response to the problem of apartheid in South Africa, especially after the rise of power of F.W de Klerk. But the most important new policy measure adopted by the Nigerian government and which is of considerable interest to the entire black world is the decision to campaign vigorously for reparation to be paid by the West for the enslavement of Blacks.

In another development, the regime of General Babangida is seen as the body that legalized corruption. His administration refused to give account of the Gulf War windfall, which is estimated to be \$12.4 billion (Tyona, 2019). In the final analysis, according to Tyona and Abagen (2019) following the country's debilitating transition programme by the Babangida government, it became evident when the June 12, 1993 presidential election was annulled. To stem the ugly tide, he hurriedly put in place an Interim National Government, headed by Ernest

Shonekan who lasted for about three months.

A Comparison of the Buhari Regime Foreign Policy with the Babangida Regime Foreign Policy

Foreign policy can be seen as a set of carefully articulated goals, aims and interest used by a nation-State to guide its actions and conduct with other nation-States or multi-lateral public institutions or organizations in the international or global arena. The foregoing assertion entails that foreign policy is carried out by the government in power. On this basis therefore, the Buhari and the Babangida regimes are similar in nature and character, because both were military juntas.

One practical difference is that the Buhari regime conducted external relations by a policy of retaliation reactions (tit-for-tat). While the Babangida regime conducted its foreign policy through skillful diplomacy. Babangida equally employed economic diplomacy to revitalize Nigeria's economy. Another difference is that the Buhari regime tackled the official corruption malady facing Nigeria. He jailed corrupt government officials. While the Babangida regime legalized corruption.

Again, the difference is that President Babangida single handedly changed Nigeria's status from that of an observer status to a full member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). While, the Buhari regime strongly objected to full membership of the OIC. Also, Babangida restore diplomatic relations with Israel which

was another foreign policy action taken by the regime. It could be recalled that Nigeria, under the auspices of the OAU, had broken diplomatic ties with the State of Israel in 1973. Successive regimes since the mid 1970s adhered to the decision even though pressures to change the stance were piled on Nigeria (Fawole, 2003), including the Buhari regime did not restore diplomatic ties with the State of Israel.

Another difference is that General Buhari's regime closed Nigeria's borders with her immediate neighbours and equally changed the Nigerian currency which affected their survival. While the Babangida regime reopened Nigeria's borders with her immediate neighbours and also gave them financial support.

Domestically, the Babangida regime according to reports was said to have organized state sponsored terrorism through assassination of prominent Nigerians who frustrated his regime. On the other hand, the Buhari military Junta suppressed the basic democratic rights, such as freedom of the press and freedom of speech. Equally, the Buhari regime never discussed the political future of Nigeria in terms of setting up a transition programme that will facilitate the return to democratic rule. While, the Babangida regime did set up a transition programme, but he (Babangida) deliberately subverted his own transition programme, when the June 12, 1993 presidential election was annulled. This undermined the Nigeria's image, internationally.

Conclusion

This paper takes a look at Nigeria's foreign policy under two military juntas of Buhari and Babangida from December 31, 1983 to August 26, 1993. It observes that when the Buhari regime came in power on December 31, 1983, it was more concerned with the Nigerian problems of corruption and indiscipline than with foreign policy. The regime came on board when Nigeria was faced with a depressed economy. In trying to revamp the deepening economic crisis, the Buhari regime closed Nigeria's borders with her immediate neighbours such as Benin, Chad and Niger Republic and equally changed the Nigerian currency. This wrecked the economies of those neighbouring countries, because they depended on Nigeria for survival. The Buhari regime also recognized the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic as an independent country in Africa. This diplomatic action rescued the OAU from collapse and Morocco's blackmail. Buhari regime foreign policy with the West was based on retaliation reactions (tit-for-tat). The regime was terminated via a military coup on August 27, 1985.

The coming into being of the Babangida regime on August 27, 1985 made efforts to normalize friendly relations with Nigeria's immediate neighbours. The closed borders were re-opened and the regime equally gave assistance to them and other

African countries. Babangida foreign policy innovations led to the independence of Namibia, Mozambique and the majority rule in South Africa. The regime spent billions of US Dollars on ECOMOG to restore peace in the conflicting States of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Politically, Babangida established two political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) to enable his military junta transmit power to a democratically elected government, but his military junta annulled the June 12, 1993 presidential election in which Alhaji M.K.O Abiola emerged as the winner. This brought political tension in Nigeria, Babangida then step-aside as Nigeria's military President on August 26, 1993. Therefore, both military juntas highly abused the fundamental human rights of Nigerians which dented the country's image internationally.

It is imperative to note that with the emergence of democracy in Nigeria in May, 1999, there was a new approach to Nigeria's foreign policy. This paradigm shift was from an African-focused to a global-focused foreign policy, mostly at the economic level. Thus, Nigeria's foreign policy was redirected to where she can get technical aid and developmental funds or where she stands to benefit from globalization.

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