Corruption and Foreign Policy Formulation and Implementation in Nigeria: An Overview

Olayinka Sodik Kazeem
Nigerian Institute of International Affairs
Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos State, Nigeria
olayinka.effect@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper examines the nexus of corruption and foreign policy formulation and implementation vis-à-vis the impacts on politics and governance in Nigeria. Using liberalism as a theoretical approach to capture the discourse, the paper relies on qualitative data collected from secondary sources. The study argues that political leadership and corruption are interwoven, with far-reaching implications for socio-economic development. The paper concludes that for Nigeria to experience political and socio-economic development, responsible and credible leaders must emerge to implant the act of good and selfless governance in the country through policy formulation and implementation. The study reveals that Nigeria has yet to benefit fully from the conduct of external relations since independence in 1960. This is because some of the domestic factors that determine Nigeria’s image (economy, military, demography, leadership, constitution, etc.) are not fully developed to give the nation the leverage to assert its influence at the regional level and on the global scene. It is, therefore, recommended that these factors that impede the formulation and implementation of Nigeria’s foreign policy should be looked into and resolved so that the country can benefit both from its domestic policy and foreign relations and maximize fully her potential rather than people turning the table for their benefit.

Keywords: Corruption, Foreign policy, Leadership, Nigeria, Governance.

Introduction

Corruption is one of the oldest and most perplexing phenomena in human society and every country. The conception of corruption, as a general disease of the body politic, was stated by ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. They viewed corruption as a cankerworm, which if allowed to penetrate a body polity, would render it useless. ‘Corruption is one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary world. It weakens decent government, fundamentally alters public policy, leads to the misallocation of funds, ills private property leads to the mismanagement of resources and private sector development, and particularly hurts the poor (Klitgaard, 1991). Corruption is a multilayered phenomenon backed by different economic conditions in each country. It pervades all levels of society. Although in the past it could have been considered a largely domestic issue, corruption now often transcends national
boundaries. Its consequences are global, and its hidden costs are immense. The private sector has responded by implementing ethics and compliance standards and regulations, while the public sector benefits from the ratification of recent laws and international conventions, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and International Anti-Corruption Law. Oversight bodies and mechanisms like the Fight against Corruption and Anti-Corruption Commissions to mention a few have been created to ensure the free flow of administrative effort to public sectors and to fight corruption. Corruption is endemic in many countries like Nigeria; continuing to drain off essential resources and political gains.

However, political corruption is not a new wave in the governance calculus of the Nigerian state. Since the beginning of the old and current administration of the polity in the country, there have been scenarios of official misappropriation of resources for personal gain. The increase in the political administration, sighting and the maximization of natural resources such as oil and gas are some of the major happenings seen to have ushered in corrupt practices in the country. Over the years, the country has seen its wealth wither with little to show in the living conditions of the average human being. One of the earliest political elites in Nigeria, Obafemi Awolowo, raised a very important concern, when he said, that since independence; the few have been enjoying the largesse of governance at the expense of the majority.

This perception is what engendered flippant disregard towards public property and a lack of public trust in the collective ownership of state property. Most politicians would like to recoup their money before considering the masses that voted them into power. Nigeria is but glued with deadly corrupt leaders who have made themselves demi-gods without considering the implications. Corrupt leaders are more celebrated than good leaders. Although corruption can be viewed as purely a domestic issue, the international dimension of corruption is no less important, as corrupt acts usually take place in multiple places and are generally linked to crimes carried out in other countries. As noted by Amundsen (1999), Corruption is found almost everywhere, but it is entrenched in most of the Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America and deeply rooted in many of the newly developed countries, with deep concern at the rate of ascendancy in third-world countries.

Moreover, the causes and the consequences of corruption are complex and diverse and have been sought in both individual ethics and civic cultures, in history and tradition, in the economic system, in the institutional arrangements, and the political system. As a result of these problems, the main thrust of this work is to examine the causes, nature, characteristics, and impacts on politics and governance and how it posits Nigeria with other states. Specifically, the objectives of the study are three-fold: First, to examine and establish the nexus of corruption and foreign policy formulation and implementation, with Nigeria as a case study; second, to review the essential elements of the various approaches that have been used to analyse corruption and foreign policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria; and third, to explore the impact of corruption on politics and governance with emphasis on Nigeria’s external relations in the contemporary world.

**Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

This study revolves around two major concepts, namely, corruption and foreign policy. It is, therefore, pertinent to operationalize them for purposes of clarity. Interestingly, several scholars and writers have written on Nigeria’s foreign policy, and there is a plethora of literature available on corruption. Thus, the literature review focuses on corruption and foreign policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria. Foreign policy has been defined by Keith R. Legg and James Morrison (1971) to be “a set of explicit objectives regarding the world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives. It implies the perception of a need to influence the behaviour of
other States or International Organizations”. According to the analogy “international system”, the system there is compared with the human body that is connected and as Boden (2008) says “a system, we mean at least a high degree of interdependence. This doesn’t mean that the state can’t stand aloof from another state, but that it is in the state’s interest to relate with other states, especially within the context of a complex world. Thus, if states must relate and interact then foreign policy could be said to be the ways, skills or instruments a state adopts to achieve its policies within the relations with other states.

According to Fawole (2003), the formulation of foreign policy requires a link between image/role perception and foreign policy. In his view, it is the image which a state conceives of itself and the nature of the operational environment that largely determines the state’s position and the role it would play in regional and global politics. Foreign Policy, therefore, could be said to be guidelines and principles a state has to follow in its business within the international arena. Contrarily, David Vital (1968) believes that states have no foreign policy but address issues the way they come. However, states could be said to be unpredictable on some issues, but, certainly, certain states will always act in a particular direction which is exactly what Foreign Policy is addressing. Thus, foreign policy could be described as the calculated ways and manners states choose to respond to events in the fluid and rapidly changing international system. It could also be described as pre-highlighted laws which states follow in their relations with other players in the world, but still at liberty to take initiative in certain events. Foreign policy also points to the internal image or domestic events of states which result later in the behaviour of such states in its interaction with other states. Thus, foreign policy is the expression of what goes within a country in its relations or behaviour within the international system (Ojo and Amadu, 2002).

Africa has been the centre-piece of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy since independence but arguments have been on the continuous relevance of this vision. Scholars have written on the relevance of this policy, some question the capability of Nigeria while some saw it as a lack of ideas or naïve on the part of Nigeria Policymakers (Hassan, 2011). However, the founding fathers have orchestrated this vision from the inception based on the prevailing occurrence in the then-international system. Africa was a newborn baby amid the Cold War and her place needed to be secured within the international system, this was also the period Africa struggled with colonialism and aimed for independence. As Fawole (2003) notes, Nigerians had expressed the belief that the country was preordained to play an important and leading role in African affairs.

Honourable Jaja Wachukwu, member of the Federal House of Representatives, while contributing to a 1960 parliamentary motion asking Britain to grant independence to Nigeria, declared that it was necessary because “the whole black continent is looking up to this country to liberate is from thralldom..., the whole Negroid race is looking up to Nigeria to be free from slavery”. In a similar vein, Stephen Okecha (1989) however, considers Nigeria’s Foreign Policy from the words of Major-General Ike Nwachukwu who holds the view that Nigeria’s Foreign Policy has thrived on economic diplomacy, which was designed to achieve a balance between Nigeria’s political and economic concerns. While this was so, it is saddening that Nigeria’s Foreign Policy is becoming dwindling due to economic pressure. He further holds that the Nigerian economy is largely dependent on this situation undoubtedly limits Nigeria’s potential to play a dominant role in international politics (Yahaya, 2006). He advised against a foreign policy that is characterized by flowery language and encourages a more serious approach to science and technology. He believed Foreign Policy is better pursued when a nation is powerful and power to him could only be a product of Science and Technology (Klitgaard, 1996).

Foreign Policy according to Joseph Frankel, “consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and others”. Keith R. Legg
and James Morris define the term as “a set of explicit objectives about the world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives. It implies the perception of a need to influence the behaviour of other states or international organizations. Dorothy Pickles (2015) argues that foreign policy implies “a stated set of attitudes towards the International environment, an implicit or explicit plan about a country’s relations with the outside world”. Foreign policy could be described as the calculated ways and manners states choose to respond to events in the fluid and rapidly changing international system. It could also be described as pre-highlighted laws which states follow in their relations with other players in the world, but still at liberty to take initiative in certain events.

In a related development, the word ‘corrupt’ when used as an adjective means “utterly broken”. Moriss, a professor of politics, corruption is the illegitimate use of public power to benefit a private interest. Economist I. Senior defines corruption as an action to secretly provide a good or service to a third party, so that he or she can influence certain actions which benefit the corrupt, a third party, or both in which the corrupt agent has authority. The World Bank extends the concept to include ‘legal corruption’ in which power is abused within the confines of the law as those with power often can shape the law for other protection. According to the anti-corruption program in Ethiopia, in 2000, corruption can occur on different scales. There is corruption that occurs as small favour between a small number of people (petty corruption), corruption that affects the government on a large scale (grand corruption) and corruption that is so prevalent that it is part of the everyday structure of society, including corruption as one of the symptoms of organized crime (systemic corruption).

The systemic corruption (or endemic corruption) is a corruption which is primarily due to the weaknesses of an organization or process. It can be contrasted with individual officials or agents who act corruptly within the system, factors which encourage systemic corruption including conflicting incentives, discretionary powers; monopolistic power; lack of transparency; low pay; and a culture of input. Specific acts of corruption include ‘bribery, extortion, and embezzlement in a system where “corruption” becomes the rule rather than the exception scholars distinguish between centralized and decentralized systemic corruption, depending on which level of state or government takes place.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts for this paper Liberalism - one of the major theories in the discourse of politics as a guide. One of the major proponents of this theory is Ludwig Von Mises. The assumptions of the theory include but are not limited to; its belief in the display of good acts as part of human nature. Liberalists believe good habits (such as telling the truth in diplomatic dealings with other nations) will result in peaceful and cooperative international relationships. They construct the world as a comity of nations knitted together to overpower common problems, challenges, and daunting issues (London & Daniel, 2005). The initial thought of the liberal is the identification of the program, importance, and value of human cooperation to serve the purpose of maintaining the existing state of cooperation among members of the human race and society. There is no opposition between foreign and domestic policy, and the question so often raised and discussed, is whether considerations of foreign policy take precedence over those of domestic policy or vice versa (David, 1968). Liberalists further argued that it is solely for a matter of convenience, classification and to subdivide problems into major types, and not because they believe that different principles are valid for each.

For liberalism, as a theory, its goal of domestic policy is the same as that of its foreign policy, peace. The ultimate ideal as envisioned by liberalism for humankind is the peaceful
co-existence devoid of friction. In the course of coming together to solve collective problems either within a state (domestic policy) or among states in the international system, there is the tendency of individuals, within a state or actors in the global scene or in the process of pursuing interest abroad to abuse the target (which is the interest in question) which may lead to impairment of integrity, virtue, or moral principle of states, individual, and the international community at large (Keith, 1971). Thus, the major concern of this theory as it relates to Nigeria (Lipset & Lenz 2000, pp.112-113). Bureaucratic petty corruption “is related to corruption of wants, needs, and demands when running of government. Electoral corruption occurs in the implementation end of politics. Decisions that corruption takes (petty); holistically in the following ways: Political corruption (grand); Bureaucratic corruption (petty); and Electoral corruption. Political corruption: An explanation of this could be given, that corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority. This is when the decision-makers, who are to formulate, establish and implement the laws on behalf of the people, are corrupt (NORAD, chapter 4, January 2000; The Encyclopedia Americana, 1999). It also occurs when policy formulation and legislature are tailored to benefit the legislature, executive and judiciary. Political corruption is synonymous with greed as it disturbs the way decisions are made, manipulates political institutions, and rules of procedure, and affects the running of government. Electoral corruption occurs in the implementation end of politics. Bureaucratic petty corruption “is related to corruption of wants, needs, and demands when one obtains a business from the public sector through inappropriate procedure (NORAD, ch.4, 2000).

Method and Materials

This paper adopts the use of descriptive and correlational design to describe the relationship between the two variables, corruption, and foreign policy. Data for this study will be drawn from secondary sources. The data will be obtained from published scholarly works available in textbooks, newspapers, articles, news magazines, conference proceedings, and internet sources. All data obtained will be analyzed using descriptive-analytical methods.

Analysis of the impact of Corruption on Politics, Governance and Foreign Policy

The concept of corruption is not new as a global phenomenon and not peculiar to Nigeria. However, corruption is endemic in Nigeria; it cuts across different levels as followers and leaders are corrupt. No wonder the former British Prime Minister, David Cameron said, “Nigeria is fantastically corrupt” This work therefore adopts to look at the nature, causes and characteristics of corruption as peculiar to Nigeria (Lipset & Lenz 2000, pp.112-113). Corruption is an ill that has interested many scholars, one of which states that corruption in Africa represents the systemic deviation from the established rules standards and norms by public officials and parties with whom they interact. It could be in different types, which include bribery, private gain and other benefits to non-existent workers and pensioners (called ghost workers) (Ruzindana, 1999). The dishonest and illegal behaviour demonstrated especially by people in power for their gain as stated by ICPC Act, section 2. Corruption comprises vices like bribery, fraud, and other related offences. Corruption is the misuse of power for personal benefit.

The nature, characteristics, and dynamics of corruption in Nigeria could be explained holistically in the following ways: Political corruption (grand); Bureaucratic corruption (petty); and Electoral corruption. Political corruption: An explanation of this could be given, that corruption takes place at the highest levels of political authority. This is when the decision-makers, who are to formulate, establish and implement the laws on behalf of the people, are corrupt (NORAD, chapter 4, January 2000; The Encyclopedia Americana, 1999). It also occurs when policy formulation and legislature are tailored to benefit the legislature, executive and judiciary. Political corruption is synonymous with greed as it disturbs the way decisions are made, manipulates political institutions, and rules of procedure, and affects the running of government. Electoral corruption occurs in the implementation end of politics. Bureaucratic petty corruption “is related to corruption of wants, needs, and demands when one obtains a business from the public sector through inappropriate procedure (NORAD, ch.4, 2000).
Electoral corruption: This is more prevalent in Africa and common in Nigeria. Votes are bought, people are killed, maimed and destroyed in the name of election, losers end up as winners in elections, intimidation, coercion and interference with freedom of election. Corruption entails sales of administrative, legislative, judiciary and governmental appointments. Other aspects of corrupt practices include disguised payment in the form of influence, favours to relatives, gifts, legal fees, or any relationship that sacrifices the public interest and welfare, with or without the implied payment of money is usually described as corrupt practices. Norad (2000: chapter 4). Other forms of corruption include Embezzlement: This describes a situation where state officials steal from a public institution, a public institution in which he/she is employed. In Nigeria, this is one of the most common ways of economic accumulation, perhaps, due to a lack of strict regulatory systems. This involves the stealing of public resources by public officials.

The impacts of corruption are universal even if there could be variations in the level of state and non-state responses to these consequences. Simply put; the level of corruption in Nigeria has reduced the amount of funds needed for development, just the same way it affects another economy. Corruption promotes the existence of an underground and illegal economy. The infiltration or injection of bribes into the security architecture, has made it easy for underground economies to thrive in substandard, adulterated, and counterfeit products, worth billions of dollars, the government does not benefit from taxes, nor are the people benefiting from the dangerous effects of adulterated drugs (Kayode, 2013). Corruption promotes poverty: A very good example could be made with the level of corruption in the management of the pension funds in Nigeria, it means, by implication that the pension funds, mean that retired Nigerians would not have access to their pensions as and when due. This means that those dependents to care for would be deprived of the needed funds. Some pensioners eventually died because of the rising expectations that often end in frustrations sometimes occasioned by standing for hours in long queues (Sklar, 2004). According to Myint (2000:50), Corruption has other social costs apart from poverty. In every society, there are guidelines to protect the public interests such as traffic laws, environmental controls, building codes and prudential regulation. Any attempt to violate these rules for economic benefits through corrupt means can cause serious social harm.

Violations of building regulations and the use of substandard building materials have led to numerous building collapses. The killing of innocent citizens has become reoccurring in Nigeria while large-scale oil spills with catastrophic effects have continued unabated in some parts of the country, which further creates room for political instability. This is because unrestricted corruption makes the state an unlimited allocator of wealth to individuals and groups. These characters of the state make it possible for the politics of do–or–die to take root, with politicians struggling to out-compete one another sometimes in a most violent manner. It must be recalled that the various military regimes that took overpower from democratically elected representatives of the people had always justified their intervention on the grounds of grand corruption and state treasury by political state actors (Robert, 1991). It lends credence to the criminalization syndrome of Nigerians, especially the youths. The youth have been convinced to be used by unscrupulous politicians to advance their parochial interests. This is evident in other activities like Yahoo Yahoo and 419 as used in our local parlance (Ogbeidi, 2012). Lastly, and as a result of the above-mentioned points, antidevelopment to a greater extent drastically reduces the number of resources available for developmental projects. Available funds that should have been used to better social amenities and physical infrastructure needed to encourage or put up a good life for Nigerians are stolen by a microscopic few.
Corruption and Nigeria’s Foreign Policy

The task here is to examine corruption as a bane of Nigerian polity and its influence on other countries of the world since independence. According to Michael M., Ogbeidi (2012) argued that the political development of Nigeria since independence has demonstrated that the gains of government become perpetually beneficial to the few at the expense of the general well-being of the Nigerian state. The alternation of political power between the civilian and the military has not in any way fared better in terms of corruption ratings. The political leadership has succeeded in entrenching this element by creating a fertile ground for the phenomenon to thrive at the risk of national socio-economic, cultural, and political development. Historically, corruption can be traced to the pre-colonial era in Nigeria, and as such the outlook on public ethics is different from that of the present-day, Colonial Government’s Report (CGR) of 1947. The African in the public service seeks to further his financial interest. (Okonkwo, 2007 cited in Michael Ogbeidi p.6). There has been a case of diversion of funds before independence (Storey, 1953, cited in Michael Ogbeidi p.6). The misappropriation of these funds over the years has seen Nigeria’s wealth fade away with little to show in the living conditions of the citizens. “The First Republic under the leadership of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister, and Nnamdi Azikiwe, the President, was marked by widespread corruption.

The First Republic (1960-1966) produced some politicians who corruptly enriched themselves. They indulged in flamboyant lifestyles and lived in big and good houses. The involvement of most Nigerians in politics right from independence is to make a share of their national cake. The First Republic was also noted for corrupt tendencies as some government functionaries, like the former Minister of Aviation Kingsley O. Mbadiwe were said to have built a magnificent mansion and displayed much affluence. When he was asked about his source of funds for such an edifice, he retorted, “From sources known and unknown.” Also, another prominent First Republic politician, Chief Festus S. Okotie-Eboh, who was the Minister of Finance, gave a similar response to charges of corruption levelled against him by referring to the bible as cited in the British Banks report of 1985, to those that have, more shall be given from those that do not have and shall be taken even little that they have. The context provided above, among other factors, paved the way for a group of young middle-rank army officers to topple the Nigerian First Republic politicians from power through a coup d’état on 15th January 1966 on the grounds of corruption (Daily Times newspaper of Nigeria, January 16, 1966).

Interestingly, the General Aguiyi Thomas Ironsi military government that replaced the sacked civilian regime instituted a series of commissions of inquiry to investigate the activities of some government parastatals and to probe the widespread corruption that characterized the public service sector of the deposed regime. The report on the parastatals, especially the Nigeria Railway Corporation, Nigeria Ports Authority, defunct Electricity Corporation of Nigeria, and Nigeria Airways used their influence to secure contracts (Sklar, 2004). From this analysis, the enthusiasm to deal with wrongdoers of the first republic died with the Gowon coup of July 1966, which ousted the Ironsi government because the politicians in detention were freed. This development had serious implications for the polity as the new set of rulers embarked on big projects, which gave room to loot the public treasury. The development clearly showed that the military rulers were not better nor different from the ousted civilian leaders. General Yakubu Gowon ruled the country at a time when Nigeria experienced unprecedented wealth from the oil boom of the 1970s. Apart from the mismanagement of the economy, the Gowon regime was involved in deep-seated corruption.

By 1974, reports of the unaccountable wealth of Gowon’s military governors and other public office holders had become the crux of discussion in the various Nigerian dailies.
Thus, in July 1975, the Gowon administration was toppled by General Murtala Mohammed through a coup d’état. The coup of 1975, among other things, was an attempt to end corruption in the public service. General Murtala Muhammed started on a very good footing by declaring his assets and asking all government officials to follow suit. He instituted a series of probes of past leaders. The Federal Assets Investigation Panel of 1975 found ten of the twelve state military governors in the Gowon regime guilty of corruption. The guilty persons were dismissed from the military service. They were asked to give up ill-gotten properties considered to be more than their earnings. A survey on the level of corruption was carried out in 2003 by the Institute of Development Research of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria ranked political parties in the country third in the list of the thirty most corrupt public institutions in Nigeria (Adekeye, 2003).

This is a sad development for Nigeria because political parties are the ideological powerhouse of civilian administration. On the contrary, political parties in Nigeria have been the main avenues for promoting corrupt practices in the country through godfatherism, and extortion, to mention but a few. At the 2003 Special Convention of the ruling People Democratic Party (PDP), where the presidential flag bearer was chosen, more than N1 billion bribe was allegedly shared with delegates by the Obasanjo group on the ninth floor of the Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja. A corrupt ruling party undoubtedly will always produce a corrupt government; it is difficult to separate the legislators and the executives at the federal, state, and local councils from the cardinal ideology of their political parties. If corruption in the 1990s was endemic, corruption since the return of democracy in 1999 has been legendary. Throughout the eight-year presidency of President Olusegun Obasanjo, he was fully in charge of the petroleum ministry, where high-level corrupt practices took place with impunity.

The over $400 million invested in the Turn-Around Maintenance (TAM) and repairs of the refineries failed to yield any positive result and the contractors awarded the contracts were never brought to book. Records have also shown that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is at the centre of major corrupt practices in the industry about the operation of its finances, especially in respect of actual revenue realized from the sale of crude oil, and other petroleum resources, such as natural gas.

Furthermore, the report by the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) indicated that 445,000 barrels of crude oil sold by the NNPC between January and July 2002 was not accounted for in its financial report. The report further indicated that within the seven months, there was a shortfall of N302 billion as undeclared revenue. The request by Haman Tukur, Chairman of RMAFC, to the Presidency to compel Jackso Gaius-Obaseki, former Group Managing Director of NNPC, to refund the remaining money into the government’s coffer was never heeded. More so, the joint panel of the National Assembly set up to probe the matter was also hindered by the Presidency and top hierarchy officials of the People's Democratic Party on the ground that the probe would send negative signals abroad about corruption in Nigeria, particularly because the Presidency directly oversees the petroleum ministry (Adekeye, 2003) Again, as noted by Adekeye during the first four years of Olusegun Obasanjo administration, federal ministers allegedly stole more than N23 billion from the public coffers.

An audit report released by Vincent Azie, acting Auditor-General of the federation, showed that the amount represented financial frauds ranging from embezzlement, payments for jobs not done, and over-invoicing, double-debiting, inflation of contract figures to release of money without the consent of the approving authority in ten major ministries. Rather than cautioning the ministers whose ministries were named in the fraud or inviting the independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to further investigate the veracity of the alleged fraud, some of them were hastily retired by the Presidency for procedural offences. What a country whose political leaders have opted to loot the public treasury with arrogance
and impunity. Indeed, it is difficult to think of any social ill in the country that is not traceable to the embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, particularly as a direct or indirect consequence of the corruption perpetrated by the callous political leadership class since independence. As further argued by Adekeye (2003), the cycle of poverty keeps growing with all its attendant consequences even as the rate of unemployment remains perpetually high.

By giving mediocrity advantage over intelligence through nepotism and cronyism, intellectual capital, which is the bulwark of development and advancement, has continued to drift abroad in search of greener pasture. Paradoxically, the scourge of corruption has left the country straddling two economic worlds at the same time. To state the obvious, the country has found itself in the quagmire of a country too rich to be poor and at the same time too poor to be rich. Thus, this has made it inevitable for every Nigerian to be a victim of corruption. (Extract from Adekeye, 2003:29-30). Foreign Policy is a pattern of behaviour that one state adopts in dealing with other states and as the strategy and tactics employed by the state in its relationship with other states in the international system, foreign policy thus connotes a plan or programme of actions of a state, which determines the sum-total of the state’s pursuit in the international system.

In this sense, therefore, national interest deals with the state’s desires and the definition of the most effective means to go about. It also deals with the image of a country among the comity of nations. The formulation of foreign policy requires a link between image/role perception and foreign policy. It is the image which a state conceives of itself and the nature of the operational environment that largely determines the state’s position and the role it would play in regional and global politics (Fawole, 2003). “From the immediate post-independence era of the early 1960, when US president L.B. Johnson kept confusing Nigeria with Algeria” (Alkali 2003, p.190, quoting Wayas 1979) to the first decade of the millennium when virtually every American household knows Nigeria due to the dubious behaviour of its citizens’ involvement in global crimes, ranging from drug trafficking to fraud (corruption).

Given its size, population and vast natural resources, Nigeria was perceived at independence as a country destined to play crucial roles in development in Africa and throughout the whole world (as it became involved in peacekeeping operations in Congo, Lebanon etc.) Prime Minister abhorred radical ideologies, he was passionate about Africa and African issues to which he gave significant attention (Fawole 2003, p.40). Foreign policy is used in many ways. It is generally a tool for a nation to relate with its contemporaries in the international system of states. It is used in such a way that a nation will benefit from the system, a fact that national interest dictates the nature and aims of foreign policy. Foreign policy is a strategy by a nation to maximize profits and record minimum losses in the global system. While a country’s foreign policy should be in tandem with the general principles governing international relations, including international law, international morality, etc., it still essentially remains an instrument of international muscle-flexing in most cases. In the context of modern power relations in the world and especially of the international threats, like underdevelopment, and poverty, facing the African peoples, Nigeria cannot be truly strong and united without a prosperous economic base. Material power exerts a disproportionate influence on international morality.

Nigeria should, therefore, pursue the task of development to make the national economy strong, dynamic, and responsive” (Cited in Ekundare 1971, p.157). According to Omotere (June 2011: 12) Nigeria’s use of foreign policy on the African scene is reminiscent of Morgenthau’s postulation that foreign policy is all about national power, power being the major tool in the struggle for the minds of men, the struggle which translates into foreign policy. For Nigeria, foreign policy is the veritable instrument of swaggering its political power and political influence in Africa. Its policy earns less military and economic power but
ears the country the image of the military, economic and political giant of Africa. This makes it have a disposition towards any ‘needy’ African nation. Nigeria had suffered some image problems in the immediate past.

These had included the Britain-Nigeria misunderstanding over the Umaru Dikko kidnap affair (Fawole, 2003:142-143), the Billy Eko and Gloria Okon drug peddling scandals to which erstwhile President Ibrahim Babangida was linked, corruption and advanced fee fraud (419) and Babangida’s endless transition programme (Akinterinwa, 2001). However, the gross human rights abuse, the ridiculous transition to the civil rule program under General Abacha and many instances of diplomatic failures in the management of the image problem. The Canadian government closed its high commission in Nigeria, South Africa severed ties with Abacha’s government and the American and British authorities imposed full military and limited economic sanctions to frustrate and, in the process, compel the military government to change its unpopular style of administration (Mbang, 1997:6). General Abdulsalam Abubakar contended with a most battered Nigerian international image, an isolated country, and a messy foreign policy from 1998 on assumption of power after the sudden death of General Abacha. Abubakar’s quest to launder Nigeria’s image abroad and renounce its pariah status, made his administration adopt a foreign policy of retreat. He changed the combative nature of the previous administration in the utilization of instruments of policy to attract foreign pardon and sympathy towards Nigeria.

Some authorities in foreign policy, including Ojo and Azeez (2002: 216-17) have argued that this was meant to reintegrate Nigeria into the comity of nation. The whole essence of reintegration strategies was to bring Nigeria back into the mainstream of the global capitalist economy after a long absence (Saliu, 1999: 236). Abdulsalami’s approach was however too pacifist and rather than restore Nigeria to the old uncompromising enviable position, it demeaned the country as Nigeria had always occupied a dignified position in global politics, not at all appearing beggarly in the old uncompromising enviable position. These are the compelling factors according to relevance and import to this paper. It examines the reaction and retreat in the foreign policy of a nation that had a long-range policy target to assume a leadership position like the United States, in the world. But Nigeria, a country richly endowed with natural resources and high-quality human capital is yet to find its rightful place among the comity of nations.

A major reason that has been responsible for her socio-economic stagnation is the phenomenon of corruption. The corrupt tendencies of the political leadership class in Nigeria since 1960 and its implication for socio-economic development. The project concludes that for Nigeria to experience sustainable socio-economic development, responsible and credible leaders must emerge to implant the act of good and selfless governance in the country (Mbang 1997: 6). In other words, the Federal Government should sit up and study Nigeria’s Foreign policy machinery and try to make it more dynamic, more focused and more responsive to the needs of the citizens. Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be given adequate training to perform their duties more effectively, not downsizing “as canvassed for by the Presidential Advisory Council (PAC) on Foreign Relations. This is a scientific era when Nigeria needs meticulous planning and deployment of sufficient skills to achieve her goals. As Dickson (2010) suggests, Nigerian foreign policy should be urgently reviewed and re-packaged in the light of thenew realities of the globalized world order, to make it more efficient, responsive, dynamic and proactive.

**Conclusion**

This discussion rests on the conclusion that Nigerian leadership suffers from extreme moral depravity and attitudinal debauchery which has over the years and at present affected our foreign policy actualization. As argued by Agbor (2011:1-15), the success or failure of any
society depends largely on the manner of its leadership. He adds that the result of poor leadership in Nigeria is embodied as poor governance manifested in consistent political crisis and insecurity, poverty of extreme order among the citizens, and rising unemployment indices. While not exclusive to Nigeria, this work considers corruption to be one of the most chronic macroeconomic problems confronting most African countries like Nigeria today.

It is seen as the root cause of the various economic and political crises that have plagued the African region and continues to aggravate not only the problem of underdevelopment of each country, but also that of abject poverty of the citizenry (Agbor, 2011:15). For example, political corruption is the cause of sit-tight political leaders, especially in Africa, with constitutional amendments making them eligible to contest presidential elections as long as they wish. The ability to continue to control state power enables them to allocate national resources as they wish. This promotes unruly, suboptimal allocation of national resources and the ensuing macroeconomic mismanagement which results in persistent economic upheaval. Although not a Nigerian phenomenon, the spectre of corruption seems to haunt the nation and has permeated the entire fabric of the state. And finally some of the ways through which corruption has affected Nigeria’s external relations: Nigeria’s image is being dented in the world through corrupt practices, it has given Nigeria a bad name, it is affecting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as investors are being afraid of putting their money in a deal that fetches lower than what is expected at the end due to mismanagement and corrupt practices that pervade the system. The incompetence of Nigeria in addressing the issue of corruption has made Nigeria ridiculed around the world.

**Recommendations**

1. The anti-corruption bodies must be given the legal latitudes they require to operate unhindered to redeem the image of the country among the comity of nations.

2. Government must seriously address the issues about the salaries, wages, pensions, and gratuities of public officers. These should be paid appropriately to make citizens resist corrupt practices, and all allegations of corrupt practices of the past should be duly investigated and affected by public officers made to face the wrath of the law. Redeeming the image and destiny of Nigeria should become the concern of all Nigerians.

3. Recruitment and promotion of public service officials should be based on a merit system as opposed to a spoils system. This is because the enthronement of the federal character principle of recruitment and other spoils system techniques, have sacrificed efficiency and effectiveness in the Nigerian public service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

4. There is a need to punish corrupt state officials however mighty their position in the governance hierarchy, there is a need to strengthen the institutions in place and place them above personal and ethnic considerations.

**References**


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