CHAPTER - V

NIGERIA AND THE CASE OF NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE

Introduction

This chapter examines Nigeria’s role in effecting the early independence of Namibia. The overall context of this chapter is centred on the lapsing of the South African trusteeship authority over Namibia. Though the case was instituted in the ICJ by Liberia and Ethiopia they did so with the backing of Nigeria and other OAU member nations. The bone of contention and of much interest to this study as reflected in this chapter is the continuous illegal occupation of the Namibian territory by South Africa. This is however, in spite of the termination of trusteeship authority by the UN General Assembly. It is on the basis of this that Nigeria and other OAU member nations have been making relentless efforts aimed at effecting early independence for Namibia in accordance with UN resolution 435 of 1978.

SOUTH WEST AFRICA (NAMIBIA) AS A MANDATED TERRITORY OF UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

South West Africa (Namibia) was a German Colony until 1919 just as Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Togoland
and Cameroun were German Colonies. The mandate System was established after Germany had been defeated by the victorious allied powers marking the end of 1st World war. Following this, the Colonial territories belonging to Germany were mandated to some countries among the allied powers. The administration of South West Africa was given to the white minority Government in South Africa. Thus South West Africa became a class "C" Mandated Territory under the supervision of the union of South Africa.

After the end of World war II every mandated territory except South West Africa was converted into a trusteeship territory and has subsequently gained independence. But South West Africa has not been given a similar treatment. The Union of South Africa on her part had persistently refused to live up to the expectations, in honouring the international obligation it accepted in 1919. Instead it has increasingly applied to South-West Africa the inhuman doctrine and organization of apartheid.

Understandably the precedent of the mandate System laid down by the League of Nations was followed by the United Nations Charter with the introduction of the trusteeship system. It is ironical therefore,
that, a League of Nation's mandated territory could not become a trust territory. The trusteeship system is no doubt the successor of the League of Nation's mandate system though with certain modifications and changes. The principles are essentially the same excepting the Organization, functions and powers where there may be differences. For instance Article 22nd of the League Covenant stated that the best method of giving practical effect to the principles of aiding the underdeveloped areas was to entrust their tutelage to advanced nations. The advanced nations on their part were expected to use their manifold resources and experience for the development of these territories. On the other hand, Article 76 of the UN charter introduced a trusteeship system which is broader than the League's mandate system the objectives of which are as follows:

1) The furtherance of international peace and security.

2) The promotion of the political, economic social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories and their progressive development towards self government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each
territory and its people and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned.

3) The encouragement of respect for human rights and for fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and the recognition of independence of the peoples of the world.

4) The ensuring of equal treatment in Social and Commercial matters for all members of the UN and their nationals and the equal treatment for the latter in the administration of justice.

In contrast to the above conditions laid down by both the League covenant and the UN charter, South Africa has not administered South West Africa in accordance with the League and UN. For instance when General Smuts attended the April 1945 San Francisco conference that set up the UN, he was expected to find a reasonable and just solution to the question of South West Africa. But he belied these expectations and displayed his imperial tendencies in ample measure. He tried to gain recognition for the incorporation of South West Africa into the Union of South Africa. With this in mind he conducted
an opinion poll among the chiefs of South West Africa
and their board members. He started by asking them to
state that they supported the Union's rule and desired
incorporation of South West Africa into the union of
South Africa.

Though most of them did so, the validity of such a
referendum was questionable and the General Assembly
rejected it outright. The General Assembly, on its
part, insisted that South West Africa should be brought
under a United Nations trusteeship agreement like all
the other territories which had been allocated under a
League of Nations mandate. Again in 1946 Mr. Forsyth
a representative of the Union of South Africa told
members of the UN General Assembly that, the people
of South West Africa desired incorporation into the
Union. This information was not accepted by the Assem-
bly on the grounds that the people were not yet politi-
cally mature. The Assembly agreed to place South West
Africa under the trusteeship of the Union. This view
of the Assembly was conceded to by the South African
Government in order to maintain the status quo of the
League's mandate-system in 1947. From then on the
Union started giving reports regarding the territory
to the UN upto 1948.
When Malan came to power in 1948, he told the UN General Assembly that South West Africa mandate had lapsed and announced its intention to stop sending courtesy reports. In 1949 South African Government gave South West Africa representation in the Union parliament. It rejected an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1950 that the South African Government was obliged to submit to the United Nations supervision and proposed instead that it would negotiate a new agreement with the three remaining principal allied powers, United States, United Kingdom and France. This was not acceptable to the UN which continued to receive reports about the territory from Rev. Michael Scott. To further aggravate the situation in 1954, the Union Native Affairs Department was given direct control over South West Africa Native Affairs.
Nigeria gained her independence at a time when the international community was up in arms against colonialism. Besides, decolonization forces were fast spreading in every nook and corner of the continent. It was a period that saw a remarkable increase in the independence of most dependent and colonial territories.

Therefore, it was but natural that Nigeria had to join hands with other independent African countries meeting in Addis Ababa in June, 1960 to institute proceedings against South Africa in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The case was presented before the International Court of Justice by Liberia and Ethiopia, the only independent Countries at the time of the League's mandate. Liberia and Ethiopia stood as the plaintiffs on behalf of other African Countries.

Inspite of the protests from the South African Government, the (ICJ) decided in 1962 that it has jurisdiction to try the case. The ICJ rejected the
South African Contention that Ethiopia and Liberia has no legal interest in the case. The ICJ turned on the South African administration record. The case of the plaintiff was made to rest on the Union Government's restriction of the franchise to whites, its failure to provide adequate educational facilities, introduction of travel passes, its ban on political party membership by blacks, its exclusion on non-white people from the right to landed property and a host of others.

Quite surprisingly, when judgement was given in 1966, without properly examining the substance of the plaintiff's case, the ICJ accepted the South African Contention that the plaintiffs had no locus standi. Despite of the ICJ's ruling that Ethiopia and Liberia lacks a legal interest to state that South Africa has violated its obligations under the mandate agreement the international character of the dispute over South West Africa remains unquestionable.

It is therefore, not surprising that Nigeria's foreign policy being centred on Africa was from the outset directed against this stubborn form of Colonialism. Nigeria's Minister of External Affairs Mr. Jaja
Wachuku not only identified "the total eradication of all forms of racial discrimination as one of the pillars of Nigerian foreign policy but went on to declare that, our second objective in Africa is the liberation of the whole of the African continent from foreign domination. There can be no going back on that colonialism in all its manifestations anywhere in Africa must be ended. We would be failing in our duty if we did not use our full resources mental, moral and material in the struggle for the emancipation of the rest of the continent. 3

But in the field of decolonization Nigeria's action was not as decisive as it was on apartheid. Two basic reasons are responsible for this, the first centred on the fact that Nigeria herself took the evolutionary path to independence and therefore, believed that there was need for a thorough preparation of any colony before it should be granted independence. Secondly, Nigeria for fear of offending the West by taking measures that would not be in consonance with western policy, allowed extreme caution to guide her in her attitude towards the decolonization process in Namibia. That was why Nigeria allowed an exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two countries.
It was also for this reason that Nigeria allowed Portugal to maintain a diplomatic post in Lagos even after the OAU member nations had agreed to break off diplomatic and consular relations with Portugal and South Africa in view of the policies of the two countries in Southern Africa. For instance, although the Government donated generously to the OAU Liberation Fund, Nigeria’s policy over Rhodesia immediately after Ian Smith unilaterally declared independence was a clear demonstration of doing everything possible to appease and not to offend the former colonial masters.

Why was it that the Nigerian Government at the independence era was very passive to decolonization process in Namibia? Does it mean this attitude of the Nigerian leaders within this period was because they were victims of circumstances they do not properly understand? Otherwise why should this have been the case? This is quite contrary to earlier expectations all over the World of what Nigeria’s performance should be on the decolonization issue in Namibia all over the world. She was expected to play a pivotal role in view of her manifold resources when compared to other African Countries even within her immediate
sub-region for instance Ghana. Ghana’s actions of training freedom fighters was a clear rebuff to the Western Countries whose activities in Namibia were geared toward protecting their neocolonial interests.

It is quite pathetic as indicated earlier that Mr. Jaja Wachuku the Nigerian External Affairs Minister proposed in the UN General Assembly that all colonial territories should attain independence by 1970 which was against the overall African consideration of 1963 as the deadline for all colonial territories to gain independence in accordance with the declaration of the all African people’s conference that took place in Accra, Ghana in 1958. What is actually the basis of this Nigeria’s stand over the so called evolutionary process to attainment of independence ? After all as Larry Cowan stated “Nigeria’s appearance in the world scene was very rude and sudden”.

As such Nigeria’s independence which was a little bit later than that of say Ghana was not an evolutionary process in the true sense of the term. It was not an evolutionary process per se but the leaders ignorance and inexperience in international politics. Besides, they may not have been aware that this advocacy of theirs aims at protecting the neocolonial interests of the Western Countries.
Between 1960 and 1965 Prime Minister Alhaji Tafawa Balewa and Foreign Minister Jaja Wachuku implemented Nigeria's foreign policy. As stated earlier, like any other African Country Nigeria's foreign policy was shaped by many factors, the nature and structure of Government and the state of the economy. Between 1960 and 1965 the newly independent country was interested mainly in consolidating its independence in achieving unity and stability and developing its economy. The Prime Minister saw independence as an instrument for a better and more prosperous life for the people. The country’s foreign policy was therefore, conducted in such a way as to achieve the stated objective.

Within this period of early independence though Nigeria committed itself to the eradication of colonialism it was clear that the commitment held only in so far as it did not obstruct the achievement of the primary objective of economic development. Even though Nigeria had voted for the Soviet sponsored declaration on the granting of independence to Colonial Countries and people in 1960 she could not provide facilities for the military training of freedom fighters as Ghana was doing. According to Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi, "the policy of the Government at this time was governed by the belief that the chaos that followed Congolese independence was due to inadequate preparation of the Congolese for independence."
In 1963 the population of Nigeria was 20% of that of all Africa. It remained economically and militarily underdeveloped and dependent on the export of agricultural products, primarily to the British market. Furthermore, Nigeria possessed no characteristic, dynamic leadership, and at a time when leadership in Africa was measured in terms of personalized extrovert recalcitrance, the apparent conservatism in Nigeria's pre-civil war foreign policy is understandable.

A reference to a statement made by Prime Minister Balewa rightly attests for this mood of the country's foreign policy at the time. He said, "We base our policy on our internal cohesion, it is influenced by the necessity to consolidate our independence and freedom, develop our national economy and maintain unity and stability. These are our national objectives which are translated into national interests on the international scene as Nigeria's total commitment to African solidarity, cooperation in economic, social and cultural fields, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, opposition to colonialism and the desire for peace, security and prosperity in the World. In pursuing these national interests Nigeria has declared that it has no territorial ambition or any intention to dominate or impose its leadership upon any other country."
It is widely recognised that, on its own South African Minority Government in confrontation with the black states in the early phase of the decolonisation movement could not survive. Its resilience has been due to the support of Western nations which has been unwavering. This is because strategically the sea lanes around the Cape are of tremendous importance to the Western World. About 240 million tons of oil is shipped round the Cape sea route annually 90% of which is destined for Europe. Vast quantities of other East-West trade also go round the Cape each year. As a South African Official said "for years now, South Africa has been watching with concern the growing Russian presence in the Indian Ocean and around her Southern Sea Way. In the event of a global clash with the West the Communists would regard gaining control of the Cape sea route as a valuable prize. The communists threat to Africa goes hand in glove with red expansionism in the Indian Ocean area. Strategists in Europe and the United States have repeatedly called for joint actions to secure the lanes of the Indian Ocean and the Cape as they are their main trade life lines. Such action by the West is the only way of ensuring that Russia will not obtain a strangle hold on the shipping lanes at the Southern tip of the African Continent. The security of the Cape sea route and the Southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans are vital
not only for the safety of South Africa, but other countries as well. Individual Western nations concerned must make their efforts to blockade Soviet entry into this area which is of strategic importance to them. In support to the claim made by South Africa, Lord Chalfont of Britain said in an article in which he branded, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, along with Somalia, Libya, Algeria, Tanzania and Nigeria as Communists and warned: "If the mineral resources of Southern Africa or the oil routes around the Cape can be effectively denied to the West, the global balance of military and economic power will have undergone a fundamental and dangerous shift."

Thus, the low tempoed foreign policy of Nigeria in the early sixties which was purported to be in keeping with the nation's national interests was in actual sense protecting the Western colonial masters. It is often contended among the Nigerian official circles that this posture of the Nigerian foreign policy in the early sixties was to enable the country to gain more foreign aid from the Western Countries with whom they have had long standing relationship. Naturally the aid did flow in but not without strings and this lukewarm attitude to decolonization in Namibia can be said to have been the price being paid for the so called aid that was
given to the country. That the tense global situation at
the time was one such reason for this foreign policy
attitude may be justified to some extent. On the other
hand the non-alignment stand of the Government was a
laudable achievement. But to what extent has it enabled
the Government to pursue an independent foreign policy
on issues such as decolonization in Namibia free from
the pangs and unencumbered by the trappings of neoco-
lonialism is yet another.

Obviously speaking her so called evolutionary path
to the attainment of independence in itself gave room
for the external oriented economy to be fully matured,
and by the time of independence it could not get along
properly without external aid. Therefore, the Balewa
regime in seeking Western aid for the sake of economic
development pursued external policies that were inextri-
cably tied to the apronstrings of the Western imperi-
alist countries.

On the basis of this, it could be said that, how-
ever, well intentioned such policies were, they ran
counter to the overall revolutionary spirit towards
decolonization in Namibia within the continent, and as
such Nigeria was objectively working on the side of the
Western imperialist countries. For the early independence
of Namibia which is so strategically located along the
cape sea endowed with a lot of mineral resources to gain early independence would jeopardise economic interests of the Western Countries who are only interested in tapping the mineral resources of Namibia for their own selfish ends. If Nigeria had given off certain misgivings with her traditional rival Nkrumah's Ghana to forge a common front for the attainment of rapid decolonization in the continent in accordance with the original tenets of Pan Africanism, which is one of the main objectives of her foreign policy. Namibian independence would not have been stalled on flimsy excuses by the South African Government. Besides, South Africa would not have got the chance of building up arms to the extent of her present status of near self-sufficiency in arms production, leave alone the signs of her having acquired a nuclear capability which is being used to destabilise neighbouring frontline states.
While addressing the first OAU Summit after the civil war, General Yakubu Gowon gave a hint of Nigeria's likely posture on Namibian independence. He expressed that, "Nigerians were aware that in opposing colonialism in Namibia we are serving the cause of our own freedom and independence. He later stated that, the vivid affront which the white minority Government in South Africa constitute to our political independence and security is as real as it is intolerable. Let this be known to friends and foe that the historical tide in Africa is irreversible. From now on we can only move forward. We must be prepared to jettison anything association or relationship that stand over our own freedom and independence. First those African territories still under the control of foreign powers must be liberated. The question has become very serious one. It is my strong conviction that it has come to a time when we should liberate at least one colonial territory within the next three years."

Nigeria was able to learn around 1967-70 that, the first bomb dropped in Lagos by the rebels was made in South Africa. Thus her approach to the issue of white
minority rule in South Africa was compounded by a security threat posed on her by the racist minority regime.

In the Gowon era Nigeria persistently provided material military and other assistance to SWAPO. There are at least two basic reasons why Nigeria was very vocal and contributed immensely to the decolonisation process in Namibia. It is a known fact that, with the increase in oil prices by the OPEC Countries Nigeria by virtue of being a member of this organization has an increasing net return. Whereas in 1972-73 Nigeria's current revenue was N1,277.9 million this had improved in 1973-74 to N1,614 million. By 1974-75 when the effect of oil price increase began to show, current revenue more than doubled to N3,121.8 million. By 1975-76 this had increased to N5,252.2 million and in 1976-77 it had increased further to N6,500 million. In 1977-78 it was expected that this amount will be about N7,600 million.

This favourable turn of the economy after the civil war and an increasing US dependence on Nigeria's oil made her (US) vulnerable to Nigeria's pressures on the issue of Namibian independence. This magnanimity of Nigeria after the civil war enabled her to play a pivotal role through OAU collective African efforts in
decolonization. This was, no doubt, equally a way of showing her gratitude to the OAU for its efforts in averting the country's dismemberment. This was accentuated when Gowon became the OAU Chairman in 1973.

Equally of importance was the stability and peaceful harmony that resulted after the civil war in all sections of Nigerian society. The leaders were no doubt engaged in the rehabilitation of the war affected areas. But still, this notwithstanding they still have ample time to engage themselves in continental affairs. Within this period the Head of the State General Gowon travelled extensively to various parts of Africa including Southern Africa as the Chairman of the OAU. As Prof. Olaide Aluko stated in African Affairs (Vol.72 (287) April 1973), "With peace, stability and unity at home it has become more possible than ever before for the Federal Government to concentrate on important African issues".

It must also be borne in mind that the effective foreign policy of a country grows out of its economic power. We find that Nigeria has been playing more and more positive role in African affairs, more particularly on Namibian independence issue almost in direct proportion to the growth in her economic power since early seventies. It can be said that the lesson of Biafran Civil War, the
all round economic development, the substantial increase in foreign exchange reserves and her growing military strength has together brought Nigeria out in the open and has forced her to abandon the low profile in foreign policy that characterized the earlier period.

This is in itself an indication that with a sound economic base the African Countries would be less vulnerable to outside pressures on issues bordering on overall African interests such as Namibian independence. It is imperative then that for the African countries to pursue a vigorous and assertive foreign policy they should put their economies on the sound footing.

Nigeria played a dominant role in drawing up the Lusaka Manifesto. This manifesto is an extension of the decolonization clause of the OAU charter. Both the OAU charter and the Lusaka Manifesto gave priority to peaceful solutions over those which result in bloodshed. The OAU charter in this context provides that in order to eradicate all forms of colonialism from the continent of Africa the member states would resort to peaceful settlement of all disputes by negotiations, mediation, conciliation and arbitration. "On the objective of liberation as defined thus we can neither surrender nor compromise. We have always preferred and will still prefer to achieve it without physical violence."
From this period onwards, Nigeria started galvanising collective African efforts through the OAU in settling the Namibian independence issue. This was born out of the experience of the collective African efforts through the OAU that averted Nigeria's dismemberment during the civil war. This was quite contrary to the efforts of some Western countries notably France which clandestinely supplied arms through the neighbouring countries to secessionist Biafra. This is because as a Nigerian scholar puts it, "OAU is at least the only cock that crows for Africa". That any issue concerning overall African interests such as that of Namibian independence be tackled outside the purview of the OAU is unthinkable. As such this Nigerian reliance on the OAU in solving African problems is in keeping with Nigeria's national interests as a founding member and a signatory to the OAU charter. General Joseph Garba, Nigeria's one time External Affairs Commissioner, and current Nigerian representative in the UN, said, "In playing dominant role on issues such as apartheid in South Africa and decolonization in Namibia, Nigeria is fulfilling its obligations under the OAU charter."

Above anything else, Nigeria's pioneering efforts in establishing the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS) in 1975 is a very laudable achievement.
This stem from the fact that it helped to usher in collective efforts in the economic development of the francophone West African countries. Their excessive dependence on France makes them vulnerable to the influence of France on vital issues that require collective African front such as decolonization in Namibia. This very context of the external orientation of the colonial economic structures were the cause of Nigeria's inability to be forceful in her foreign policy during the period of Sir Abubaker Tafawa Balewa's regime.

Samir Amin in his book Neocolonialism in West Africa 1973 examines the economic dependence on France of her former colonies. Amin sees it as a problem of outward directed growth, that is growth based on external demands and external financing. He says "the speeding up of colonial exploitation after the second world war accentuated the structural characteristics of underdevelopment in this part of Africa. It transformed the area from the stage of being a primitive reserve virtually outside the world mainstream into that of a true underdeveloped economy, dominated by and integrated into the world market, and with a dualistic appearance characterised by an increasing inequality in the distribution of growth between the various sectors and
of the per capita product. The outward directed character became more marked and there was an increasing dependence on the centre which stimulated and maintained this growth from the outside. Sekou Touré's Statement in (Minogue and Molley, "Africa's future and World" page 221-3) affirms Samir Amin's contention, that "Colonialism's greatest misdeed was to have tried to strip us of our responsibility in conducting our own affairs and to convince us that our civilization was nothing less than savagery, thus giving us complexes which led to our being branded as irresponsible and lacking in self confidence. He further said that, it is a high time the African countries use their independence as a means of breaking the colonial or neocolonial system."

This very context of the outward orientedness of the colonial economic structures is better explained in the words of two British and French Colonial authorities, "British trade is a magnificent superstructure of American Commerce and Naval power on an African foundation, (Malachi Postthetwayt). "If you were to lose each year more than 200 million lives that you now get from your colonies, if you had not the exclusive trade with your colonies to feed your manufactures, to maintain your navy, to keep your agriculture going, to repay for imports, to provide for
your luxury needs to advantageously balance your trade with Europe and Asia then, I say it clearly the kingdom would be irretrievably lost" (Bishop Maury of France)⁴²².

The significance of this Nigerian efforts in bringing the West African states together is that, her role in the decolonization movement in Namibia, spectacular as it may be was in most cases thwarted in the midway. A careful examination of such situations reveals France playing a behind the scene game. Take for instance the dialogue issue, but for the bold and steadfast stand of Nigeria and other OAU member nations, France through her West African laches notably Ivory Coast would have made it possible for the so called "dialogue to take place between South Africa and the OAU member nations over Namibian independence. This would have been a self betrayal on the part of the African nations. It may seem as if the millions of black population in South Africa and Namibia were commodities subject to bargaining. Thus Nigeria thought, if the Francophone West African Countries are less dependent on France she can make them understand the naivete and anachronism of the so called dialogue with the racist Pretoria regime.
SECTION - C

FOREIGN POLICY DURING MURTALA / OBASANJO REGIME
(1975 - 1979)

This Government came to power in a coup de état that ousted General Gowon's Government in 1975. The tone of General Murtala Muhammad in his broadcast to the nation shortly after the overthrow of the incumbent regime was a clear testimony that, the Government was not ready to accept fools gladly. He said, this Government will not condone indiscipline and insubordination and anybody found wanting would be dealt with drastically. It was, therefore, no surprise that this Government took very drastic steps on the decolonization problem in Namibia. The belief of this Government was that, a combination of diplomatic, military and economic measures would be necessary to force the racists to abandon their hold on the Namibian territory. Following the defeat of South Africa's policy in Angola, the way seemed open for greater activity by SWAPO, which had been operating with difficulty from Southern Angola and to help it establish a firmer footing in its new base.

This policy assumes that, armed struggle against South Africa for the liberation of Namibia will be on the rise if it continues to display intransigence on Namibian independence. A crucial aspect of the armed
struggle and an alternative to conventional warfare and open confrontation is guerrilla resistance. If this strategy is efficiently co-ordinated and given adequate support, tremendous impact could be made from within the South African domestic front. The primary objective would be to change the system from within.

A highly organised intelligence machinery would be set up in co-operation with the frontline states, essentially utilising their manpower, but with substantial technical and financial assistance from Nigeria to monitor closely the activities of the enemy. Neither the frontline states nor Nigeria can afford to relax their guard over an enemy that increasingly seeks to weaken the moral of the freedom fighters by military raids and incursions. This approach while providing an essential support for the freedom fighters would keep the physical involvement of Nigerian troops to a minimum.

The victory of the militant forces in Angola in January 1976 had led to the collapse not just of the South African Government’s policy of building "detente" with its northern neighbours but also a collapse of Henry Kissinger’s policy in Southern Africa. This was to a great extent a booster to SWAPO which started operating in Southern Angola. This was the main reason why political disagreements between Nigeria and the United States
remained deep on important African issues such as Namibian independence and the role of SWAPO. This was particularly true during Nixon era.

Thus rescinding a long standing Nigerian Government Policy, the Government decided to allow SWAPO to open an information office in Lagos, capital of Nigeria, the first by any liberation movement. Nigeria has since then been providing adequate materials such as military and other essential assistance and support to SWAPO. Nigeria has since the independence of Zimbabwe stepped up assistance to the movements, in arms and relief materials, drugs and food are supplied to SWAPO on regular basis by Nigerian military transport planes from Lagos through Rwanda.

The Southern African problem has always been at the heart of Nigeria's diplomacy. Indeed, Nigeria's general policy toward Southern Africa derives from its commitment to help achieve accelerated decolonization in Africa and to uphold the dignity of the blackman. To achieve rapid decolonization in Africa, Nigeria has adopted two strategies. One has been to work through the UN and other global agencies for collective international action featuring in particular the mobilization of global pressures on the colonial powers, and the call for economic sanctions, trade boycotts and termination of foreign investments against the white minority Government in South Africa.
Within the framework of the OAU the second strategy has evolved the endorsement of and total support for armed confrontation by the liberation movements against the colonial and white minority regime with political, economic, and material assistance from African countries. An offshoot of this anti-colonial policy is the anti-foreign intervention theme in Nigeria's African Policy Posture. This could be better explained by the address to the OAU Assembly by General Oluemgun Obasanjo the Nigerian Head of State, "To the Western powers I say that they should act in such a way that we are not led to believe that they have different concepts of independence and sovereignty for Africa and for Europe. A new Berlin type conference is not the appropriate response to the kind of issues thrown up by recent unfortunate episode. Paratroop drops in the twentieth century are no more acceptable to us than the gunboats of the last century were to our ancestors. . . .

The détente which the Western nations seek with the Soviets in Europe cannot be effective without extending it to include Africa as well. The Western nations primary interest in Africa is our raw materials. But they should begin to see what the market offers to their manufactured goods as even more important, since they can develop substitutes for raw materials, but not for markets. If they saw Africa primarily as a market rather than a source
of raw materials they would realize the importance of ensuring that they do not disturb our peace and stability.\(^\text{19}\)

The Federal Government itself began to adopt a firmer posture on the Southern African problems and indeed demonstrated an explicit dedication to its commitment. For example, General Murtala Mohammed broke through the relative conservatism and caution of his predecessors and admitted the liberation movements, opened its doors to refugees and exiles from Southern Africa as a whole, admitted their displaced students into higher schools and universities and embarked on manpower educational programmes for citizens of the conflict torn areas who could benefit from such technical training.

A significant channel for promoting the freedom of movement of Namibians was created. The Federal Military Government concluded an arrangement with the UN Council for Namibia on the question of recognizing the international status of documents issued to Namibians by the UN Council for Namibia. By this action Nigeria became the first west African Country to honour Namibian travel documents. Standing on the premise of the June 1981 ICJ decision terminating South Africa's mandate over Namibia, Nigeria sought for all possible means to ensure that the ICJ decision was practicalised.
In addition, in financial terms, Nigeria's contribution so far to Namibian independence fund has amounted to about $666.6 million. The solution to the Southern African problem still remains a cardinal tenet in Nigeria's foreign policy.

Besides, Nigerian leaders do not miss an opportunity in making statements in various international fora in which the leaders of the liberation movements are invited on observer status. This has contributed considerable strength to the forces of liberation in Africa. Addressing the OAU Summit at Libreville Gabon on 3rd July 1977, the Nigerian Head of the state General Obasanjo said, "The fight against apartheid and racism is one facet of the liberation struggle in Africa. Another facet, the one whose successful conclusion is relatively nearer at hand, is the struggle for the liberation of Namibia which is no less urgent and important than the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe and South Africa. For it is there in Namibia that the external enemies of Africa's interests in South Africa are making a last ditch stand to frustrate Africa's will to freedom. Nigeria stand solidly behind the heroic peoples of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO. I called upon you all dear colleagues to extend to SWAPO and the people of
Namibia the same diplomatic financial and military support that I have suggested for the nationalists of Zimbabwe and South Africa. 20

One point of fact worth noting is that, while Nixon through his advisers had been very unwilling to take a positive stand on Namibian independence in keeping with overall African thinking reverse was the case on Carter administration's stand over this issue. No doubt the benign attitude of the Nixon administration towards this issue contributed to Gowon regimes impressive but inadequate role on the Namibian independence. Carter's policy on Southern Africa, Winston Nagan says, was successful in neutralizing South Africa on the question of withdrawal from South West Africa (Namibia) 21. This is in view of the US positive and co-operative attitude toward the freedom fighters within this period. But still Donald McHenry's negotiations on Namibia did not produce any result and Vorster announced that he would retain control on Walvis Bay. Besides it was a time when the Vorster regime became more intransigent and stubbornly carried out its apartheid policy within South Africa and equally extended it to Namibia. For instance it was within this period that it massacred school children
who were rioting over certain segregational laws and also killed Steve Biko in prison allegedly on brain damage.

The changes which Carter seemed to bring were (1) reaffirmation of American support for majority rule in the region, (2) recognition of liberation movements in Namibia, (3) rejection of the Kissinger South African Rhodesian/Namibian formula by which South Africa's aid to Rhodesia and some movements in Namibia was to be regarded with the presentation of the status quo in South Africa itself. Instead the Carter formula encourages America's increased activism in collaboration with Britain in the resolution over the Namibian question and increased pressure on South Africa itself for internal change, (4) declared intention to see the Namibian issue in terms of the interests of Africans themselves rather than viewing them as in Kissinger's case only in terms of global East-West Superpower strategies, (5) growing recognition that long term economic interests in black Africa are more important than those in South Africa, (6) a beginning to understand the general dynamics of black Africa's political and social traditions, particularly with regard to the dominant ideologies of capitalism and communism.
Under pressures from Africa and particularly Nigeria and with the cooperation of the Asian group, the communist countries and a few enlightened Western nations, South Africa's control over Namibia was declared void and illegal. Since then, the UN has tried to establish direct control of the territory with a view to passing that control over to the Namibian people themselves. With South Africa's rejection of the action and her subsequent refusal to abandon control, the UN set up the Namibian Institute in Zambia which helps to coordinate the UN resolution that pertains to the future of the territory.

Besides, in the UN General Assembly the African countries had succeeded in influencing majority of the members to take certain drastic measures against the Pretoria regime some of which are the following:

1) Under African pressure, the majority of the UN members have refused to have political, economic or military links with Pretoria. The only countries that have rejected a mandatory economic and military embargo against South Africa are the so-called great liberal democracies, the US, Britain, France, West Germany and Japan on whom most African countries also have economic relationship of one sort or the other,
2) the UN has generally given succour and aid (though not military) to the liberation movements.

3) the UN has granted refugees from those territories refugee status which enabled them to travel and have contact with the rest of the world.

4) the UN has also made financial grants to these refugees to pursue their education if they so wish in the outside world.

5) the International Labour Organization has generally given aid to exiled black labour Unions such as COSATU.

At the continental level, i.e. within the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Nigeria along with other member nations has participated actively on this issue in different ways and capacities some of which are the following:

1) The OAU's economic, military and moral support for the liberation has had great results. 2) The changed political and military chemistry of the region has forced the West particularly the US and Britain to be more involved in attempts to resolve the Namibian issue, the Kissinger shuttle and the Western Nation's Contact Group (NATO) pressure on Vorster over Namibian independence are examples. 3) The OAU support for the Namibian guerrilla forces has so strengthened their position that Vorster have been forced to recon
seriously with them to the point of giving serious consideration to a re-examination of their continuous illegal presence in Namibia. (4) the OAU sanctions against South-Africa have been generally successful except for some violations by few black led states and by a few others whose long historical and economic association with the South African monetary system has made it impossible to break away completely. The OAU has thus created a situation of isolation for South Africa.

The independence of Namibia has come closer as a result of the presence of black ruled nations all along the periphery of the minority regime, as it enabled the nationalist forces to operate with ease across the borders. The greatest worry of the West is that the influence of the Soviet Union in the area has increased considerably as a result of the liberation of Mozambique and Angola. The involvement of the Western nations in the affairs of Southern Africa is one factor militating against the independence of Namibia. The power of the Western nations over events in Namibia was seen to be pervasive since they controlled the economic and in some cases even the political lifelines. Over the years these Western nations, particularly Britain and France, have exploited these regions.
Not only have they used the fruits of their economic exploitation of black Africa as the source of further investment in South Africa, but they have called on old political and economic ties to make most of black Africa acquiesce in a so-called Western solution to the problems of Southern Africa. By this we mean to say the neocolonial involvement of these Western countries through their Transnational Corporations.

Among the Western nations such as West Germany, France, British involvement in South Africa is so deep rooted that a special mention need to be made of it, particularly the deep exploitative involvement of her Transnational corporations and her military involvement. Her military collaboration with South Africa is in fact very extensive. In 1974 a flotilla of the Royal Navy the largest force to visit South Africa in peace time, undertook joint manoeuvres with the South African Navy in Simon’s town. This is further compounded by the very fact that Britain has enormous economic involvement in a number of black African States for example in 1977 Britain’s exports to Nigeria alone amounted to about US$1.33 billion exceeding her exports to South Africa. Although black Africa’s share of British imports slipped from 4% to 3% in 1976, Britain’s dominance of economic
activities especially in her former colonial territories e.g. Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Sierra, Leon, and Tanzania is still very strong. This is an indication that Britain's factories are being fed by African raw materials.

Besides, in 1975 during the European economic crisis, Nigeria had so much huge foreign exchange in pound sterling that, if she (Nigeria) decided to convert this currency the British economy would have faced a serious economic problem. All these shows that, British economic interests in black Africa particularly in Nigeria can make her vulnerable to African pressures if they have the will to launch reprisals against her. On the other hand though French economic involvement in South Africa when compared to Britain is minimal but the most disquieting aspect of her involvement is on the military sphere. Perhaps one could say that this low economic involvement that stood at R 60,1 million in French exports to South Africa was because of her dictatorial economic ties with her former colonies in West/Central Africa. The military involvement between France and South Africa which has gained notoriety is not only in one facet say her supply of military equipment such as mirage F-1 fighters helicopters, armoured weapons and submarines, but she
has more than other nations sold her military technology to South Africa which has made the facist regime to be nearly self sufficient in arms production.

It is rather surprising to see France being so involved in South Africa the way she did. For it is a known fact that France has more stake in black Africa particularly in her former colonies. A dependence on her former clients could make her more vulnerable to reprisals than Britain. Way is it that the Arabs have been able to influence France on the Middle East problem and the African nations have not been able to do so on South Africa.? It is because of the consideration of France and Britain over their former colonial territories. Both countries during the heyday of their Empires argued that in exploiting the continent they were in fact doing the Africans a favour by giving them employment and the chance to sample the fruits of an all embracing Empire.

Perhaps it is necessary to use some of Rodney’s words in this context, “It has now become common knowledge that one of the principal reasons why genuine industrialization cannot easily be realised in Africa today is that the market for manufactured goods in any single African country is too small and there is no integration of the markets across large areas of Africa. The kind of relationship which Africa has had with Europe from the beginning has worked in direction opposit to integration of local economies”23.
Colonization and feudalism involves a deep and exploitative social stratification founded on the ownership of land. These according to Nigeria's one time External Affairs Commissioner General Joseph Garba are some of the reasons for Nigeria's inability to pursue the Namibian independence issue as vigorously as it is supposed to. General Garba said in his speech at the University of Ibadan on foreign policy and the problems of economic development that, "It is perfectly legitimate for you to pose the question as to the relationship between foreign policy and the national objective of rapid and judicious economic and social progress. I would first of all say with all conviction that I can muster that no nation can effectively pursue a dynamic and independent foreign policy with a weak and dependent economy. Indeed I would go as far as to declare that Nigeria's ability to succeed in her diplomatic endeavours will to a large extent depend on her economic strength. Now where does she begin to learn her lessons? The first is obviously in the area of the distribution of her wealth. Distribution of course is a scarce word among Nigerians as it suggests to them the hydra of communism or socialism. But it should suggest neither this nor the robbing of Peter to pay Paul as long as Peter had not robbed Paul in the first place. Here we are concerned about equality of opportunity for all and a clear satisfaction for all that the country's wealth is visibly transforming all citizen's lives and not merely those of the distant them."
From the former External Affairs Commissioner's speech we find that Nigeria cannot build herself in a way that would enable her to play her expected role on the Namibian independence struggle under the prevailing economic circumstances. Under Nigerian economic system a handful of people in connection with certain external interests exclusively own and control the means of production and distribution to the perpetual detriment of the majority. That will certainly create conflicts which will sooner or later disrupt economic and social welfare of the people. There is therefore, the need to take an even handed treatment and welfare of the majority of the population which constitutes the bulk of her national work force. She also need to rededicate herself anew to the task of reducing the mental and material hardship brought to fellow Nigerians by artificial scarcity, poor means of distribution, greed, selfishness and minority control of resources belonging rightly to the society. Unless this home work is properly done her foreign policy objectives on Namibian independence spectacular as it may be, would not yield the desired results.

It has been a long time Africa and the world have been watching with great interest the mechanics and modalities of creating an appropriate climate for conducting free and fair elections in Namibia under the
since the content of the Ahtisari report was made known, the South African regime has complained about the size of the military and civilian personnel of the United Nations as well as the duration of their exercise. In order to obstruct and delay independence Mr. Vorster while singing his swan song announced that South Africa would unilaterally call elections in Namibia. This step in essence was aimed at delaying the process leading to self determination and independence of the territory. After the debacle of the Congo the UN has another opportunity to prove its efficiency as an organ capable of interpreting the political will of the world. It is hoped that South Africa would avoid characteristic double dealing and blind intransigence which can only lead to further bloodshed and eventually to the ruin of the overall expectations on the issue.

There is every indication that Nigeria on her part will continue to give full support to SWAPO as she has been doing so far. That is the reason why she rejected any attempt to impose on Namibia a minority illegal regime which does not enjoy the support of SWAPO the authentic representative of the people of Namibia.
FOREIGN POLICY DURING PRESIDENT SHEHU SHAGARI'S REGIME

(1979 - 1983)

President Shehu Shagari came to power in 1979 as the first civilian president of the Country after 13 years of military interregnum. As could be seen this was a regime whose legitimacy was based on a popular election in which five political parties, the NPN, NPP, UPN, GNP and PRP contested. Shehu Shagari the presidential candidate of the National party of Nigeria NPN Swept the poll and thus became the first executive president of the Country a la United States pattern.

Soon after assuming office president Shehu Shagari summed up his administration’s foreign policy objectives for the 1980s as follows:

"Africa remains the cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy. My administration is committed to the cause of the total liberation of Africa. We shall neither relax nor relent until all Africans and all black men are free. It should be understood that political freedom is not complete without economic and cultural freedom. My administration's domestic policy for peace, unity and stability in Nigeria has been translated within the region into being good neighbours because Nigeria stands for African Unity."25
In another statement the President said that,
"In Namibia we are encouraged to note the positive role which the United States of America is playing in collaboration with other Western Powers to usher in an era of independence and to end South Africa's illegal military occupation. We stand firmly by SWAPO in its struggle for the freedom of their father land and we pledge to work ceaselessly to see that peace and justice return to that part of our continent. As a matter of fact, the mode of policy projection in a democratically elected Government is quite different from a military Government whose source of legitimacy is based on the barrels of a gun. This points to the fact that, President Shagari in his foreign policy assertions carry the whole nation along with him.

However, Shagari regime's stand over the Cuban withdrawal from Angola as already stated being connected to the independence of Namibia, was against the overall stand of the African nations. President Shagari was said to have requested for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops and to be replaced by an African high command. This Nigerian stand was in keeping with the American stand which runs counter to the stand of the majority of the OAU member nations. Shagari on his part has to clear the air by saying that his statement was misconstrued by the press. Perhaps a quotation from his counter statement
might be useful in this context. He said "In the past two weeks, attempts have been made to misrepresent the views of this administration as regards ways of bringing about changes in Southern Africa. I want to make it abundantly clear, we are committed to armed struggle to liberate Namibia."

Nigeria has by 1981 donated more than US $1.91 billion to the OAU special fund for the independence of Namibia. SWAPO's satisfaction with Nigeria's assistance was expressed by the President of the movement Sam Nujoma, at the end of his visit to Nigeria in 1981. In keeping with the stand of the Government over Namibian independence President Shagari launched a serious diplomatic offensive against the Pretoria regime in various international fora. While attending a commonwealth conference in Melbourne (Australia) connected with the vexed issue of Namibia independence he made a very strong speech, "One aspect of this new situation which is not yet sufficiently addressed is the impact of a long drawn out armed conflict on the future and survival of the Namibian people. Given South Africa's determination to wage war and the unanimous support which SWAPO enjoys among the population the effect of South Africa's military operations against supporters of SWAPO is increasingly assuming genocidal proportions. The current policies of South Africa of increasing oppression and
repression at home, unprovoked aggression against neighbouring states of continued illegal occupation of Namibia, and arrogant defiance of the entire international community and the United Nations, may well lead to a tragedy of monumental proportions. Firstly, we cannot leave matters in the hands of the racists in South Africa even if we were to believe that they hold the key to a settlement.

Secondly, we cannot afford to abandon the international consensus embodied in the security council resolution 435 of 1978. We should welcome the principled stand of the European Economic Community on this issue. I am also glad that even the Americans now realise that resolution 435 must form the basis of any internationally acceptable settlement of the Namibian question. Thirdly we cannot afford to wait indefinitely for independence to come to Namibia otherwise Africa would be engulfed in an East-West global power struggle. A definite time table must be fixed for Namibia to become free and independent at the latest by the middle of 1982. We must also seek to translate into action both the Singapore Declaration of 1971 and the Lusaka Declaration of 1979. The idea of according legitimacy to minority grouping in Namibia to the detriment of SWAPO which is recognised by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations as the sole legitimate representative of the people of Namibia
is entirely unacceptable. Years ago the United Nations affirmed that any election in Namibia, involving the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) and other internal groups and conducted without the permission of the United Nations were illegal null and void. South Africa is afraid that the struggle for the demise of apartheid will peak after the independence of Namibia. I believe that this is our wish and expectation. But our immediate concern is the independence of Namibia. In the words of the 1978 Declaration of the Kingston Conference the Commonwealth Heads of State and Government stated and I quote we look to the time when the Government and people of Namibia might be welcomed into the Commonwealth.

The significance of this tough diplomatic offensive launched against the Pretoria regime by President Shehu Shagari can be hardly over emphasised. Early in 1981 Dick Mudge Chairman of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), the South African inspired alternative to the South West African peoples organization (SWAPO) visited Washington DC and was given a sympathetic hearing in the state department. This confirmed the new administration's aversion for SWAPO and Nigeria foresaw a gloomy period for US African relation if this persists.

With the independence of Zimbabwe it was expected that the major Southern African issue which the Reagan administration would have to tackle was that of Namibian
independence. During the Carter period Donald McHenry had led the United Nations contact group of five European Countries, Britain, Canada, France, the United States and West Germany to negotiate with South Africa in order to find a formula, for the independence of the UN Mandated Territory of Namibia. By 1980 the UN plan for holding elections in Namibia under resolution 435 had been concluded. This was earlier endorsed by South Africa. But with the election of Reagan into Office, South Africa started backing out of the agreement, complaining of UN partiality towards SWAPO.

At this time the task of finding an acceptable solution to the Namibian problem was assigned to Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Chester Crocker made a brief visit to Africa after his appointment and Nigeria was among the countries he visited to sell his country's stand to African countries to break the Namibian deadlock. His initial strategy was to link Namibian independence to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Besides, P.K. Botha South African Foreign Minister was assured by the US in 1981 that they will pursue the policy of constructive engagement and not of supporting an offensive on the Namibian issue.

The US attempt to link the question of withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola to the issue of Namibian independence was acceptable neither to the OAU nor to
the members of the contact group of five "Western nations". Nigeria's President Shehu Shagari condemned the link as unjust and incomprehensible and reiterated Angola's willingness to dispose of the Cuban troops as soon as the threat of aggression from South Africa was removed. In support of the Nigerian stand, West Germany, France under socialist Mitterand and even Britain criticised Crocker's attempt to make the exit of the Cuban troops from Angola a precondition for Namibian independence and refused to join the US in vetoing the UN Security council resolution of 1981.

Nigeria became increasingly involved in drawing up long range plans with the frontline states such as Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, Botswana and Zimbabwe. This concern for the future of Southern Africa has been marked by a resolutely firm and especially on the status of Walvis Bay as Namibian territory and especially on the conduct of fair and free elections in Namibia. Almost all pronouncements of the Nigerian leaders on the Namibian issue tend to reinforce the Country's Commitment in ensuring Namibian independence.
In fact, Nigeria is now not leaving any room for Western manoeuvres or the kind of pressures that Great Britain attempted to exert on the patriotic Front during the Lancaster negotiations. Nigeria's Vice President Dr. Alex Ekwueme stated quite succinctly the limits, "Nigeria will accept either the proportional representation system of voting or the single constituency system in respect of independence for Namibia because both systems have been well tested." 

It was in this spirit that the United States launched its plan to bring the contact group back to life and reopened negotiations on the Namibian issue. Between October and November 1981 a delegation of the contact group toured African capitals seeking agreement from the frontline states, from Nigeria, from South Africa, from SWAPO and other Namibian leaders. The new approach achieved a breakthrough with the US obtaining the agreements of South Africa to a direct link to the Cubans in Angola which provided for negotiations on constitutional principles as an element in the revised plan. As soon as constitutional principles are agreed upon, the way would be open for detailed discussions on modalities leading to the beginning of the implementation of resolution 435 in 1982.
The Shagari administration spent only eight months in office before it experienced the now familiar glut in the oil market. The country's oil production, which averaged 2.1 million barrels a day in January 1980 dropped to 1.3 million barrels a day in July, by September it was just 500,000 barrels a day. So visibly shaken was the country's economy that the government announced a series of austerity measures designed to cut public expenditure and save foreign exchange. A third of the funds of about US $108 billion for the fourth plan was withheld. The Nigerians look up to the United States for a sizeable contribution to the realization of the objectives of the fourth plan. The need to secure the co-operation of the United States has tended to limit the extent to which Nigeria could go in opposing the United States in Namibia.

The Nigerian leaders generally treat the whole Southern African issue in a manner quite different from, and totally unrelated to, the country's economic policy. The present leaders separate the Namibian issue from the country's external economic relations with the major Western powers. Perhaps a glaring instance of the tendency to separate the Southern African issue from the country's economic policy is
afforded by the issue of the South African raid into Angola in 1981. After the United States vetoed a security Council resolution designed to condemn the raid, leaders of the frontline states came to Lagos to deliberate on the steps needed to strengthen Angola's defence. Resolutions condemning South Africa and the United States were adopted, and detailed plans for military and economic aid to Angola were made. The Nigerian media had nothing but harsh words for South Africa and the Reagan Government. At that time, however, Nigeria's vice President, Dr. Alex Ekwueme was meeting his US counterpart George Bush in Washington DC for the sixth of a series of annual economic meeting between the two countries. Nigeria sent two technical accounts educators for training in the United States and for providing assistance to Nigeria in projects such as public health, food, drugs, nursing and disease control. Other areas of co-operation were also discussed. The Nigerian Vice President urged US investors to participate in Nigeria's fourth national development plan. To encourage this he said, US business men would be issued multipletry visas.

The atmosphere in which the talks were held contrasted sharply with the strong anti US rhetoric that rent the air in Lagos in that same week. In his
visit the only reference vice president Ekwueme made to Southern African issue was to express concern over the South African raid into Angola and to appeal to the United States to bring its leverage to bear on Namibian independence. US officials realised Nigeria's need for technical assistance and its possible effects on Nigeria's policies. Chester Crocker acknowledged Nigeria as an important economic and political partner. He, however, went on to stress that inspite of its oil resources Nigeria was still a country of great poverty and that the United states would help in solving its problems. He mentioned the Nigerian - US joint Agricultural Consultative Committee, which was a major effort to bring US agro-business skills to bear on Nigeria's food problems. It is such reliance on the Western Countries and the acceptance of what is regarded as a pervasive client mentality based on assumed powerlessness to socio-economic growth without external investment and technical assistance that has tended to make foreign journalist and commentators to describe Nigeria's occasional strong condemnations of the attitude of the Western World on Southern Africa as statements made for home consumption.

The Nigerian Government has a valid reason to be optimistic about current US negotiations on Namibia
and hence retain good relations with the Reagan administration. Nigeria was consulted at the initial stage of the formation of proposals. Moreover, if the plan seems to be acceptable to the frontline states and to SWAPO whose leader Sam Nujoma has stated that his party is prepared to give guarantees and safeguards to the white settlers in Namibia, Nigeria has no reason not to support the plan. The frontline states and the SWAPO are obviously not happy with the cordiality that existed between Nigeria and the US within this period. Because they know that there can be no disputing fact that the South African attitude is the key to the outcome of the negotiations on Namibia.
SECTION - E

FOREIGN POLICY DURING MAJOR GENERAL MUHAMMADU Buhari's Regime (1983-85)

This Government came into power in a coup d'etat that ousted President Shehu Shagari's regime which marked Nigeria's second experiment in a democratic Government. In fact, it was a period that engendered the same tenacious situation at the time of the First Republic. This resulted into a situation when the country's existence as a sovereign nation was being threatened. Take for instance the killing of five Nigerian soldiers at the Nigeria - Cameroun borders by the Camerounian Gendarmes. On top of it they went scotfree without any stern action from the Nigerian Government. It was this threat perception on Nigerian national security that made the military personnel to overthrow Shagari's civil administration by the military under the leadership of Major General Muhammadu Buhari.

It was therefore, not surprising that Buhari Government gave immediate concern and priority to forge the existing ties with her neighbours with a view to obliterate certain misgivings at the time. It became apparent that far too long Nigeria overestimated the love between Nigeria and her neighbours. From all indications it does not appear that Nigeria put into full
use such neighbours such as Chad, Cameroun and even Benin Republic. Before Nigeria can make considerable impact on issues such as Namibian independence it is only sensible that she ensure the security of her land. As the international firmament is always in the process of change with interests of nations following the same circle of change, friction is virtually inevitable or even expected among the best of friends. Cultural similarity, ideological identity and mutual compatibility of economic systems could bring two states closer than in the case of two other neighbouring states in which these factors are absent.

As Bernard Shaw once said, "The British and Americans are two peoples separated by common language."

In the case of Nigeria she happen to be surrounded by neighbours with vast differences in ideology, wealth, interest and style. Inspite of the efforts made by Nigeria it was only recently that some sister African countries started to give cognisance to Nigeria. As Dr. Gambari once said, "Some sister African states have come to accord grudging recognition of our dominant position, even though we have been successful in winning acceptance of our points of view from them on all issues. I would like to argue that such recognition and acceptance of our points of views often come more readily from outside our subregion and sometimes even outside the
Afrloaa TOntineat# « constituency that does not include West Europe and the USA with whom we often have competitive interests."

It is only sensible then that she reach a new understanding with them. Because the recent experiences first with Cameroun in 1981 and later Chad in 1983 when border clashes with them almost degenerated into an all out confrontation is a faithful reminder of possible neglect of the most vulnerable point in her foreign policy.

Before the emergence of the Reagan administration in the United States in January 1981 the racists were generally on the defensive. The sudden collapse of the Portuguese Colonial Empire exposed the futility of erecting the so called impregnable defences around their citadels in South Africa. When Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde became independent in 1975 followed by Zimbabwe, it was clear that, Namibian independence which appeared to be a bleak prospect decades away, suddenly became achievable when the security council adopted resolution 435 in 1978 on Namibian independence. This resolution is geared toward effecting early independence for Namibia. In this regard all the processes involved toward the achievement of independence has to be under the neutral supervision of the UN. The
rationale behind this was to avoid double dealing and imposition of puppets on the people of Namibia against their wish, which might aggravate the situation and create further confusion in Namibia.

But after 1981, things began to change and for the worse. The Reagan administration coincided with a global recession which affected third world countries quite adversely. For Nigeria, the oil glut which adversely affected Nigeria's traditional earnings from her oil resources meant a corresponding reduction in the income available for foreign policy pursuits. The frontline states were buffeted by other economic ailments. This was in addition to the global battle with the grinding hardships posed by the problems of drought, famine and floods on top of all these, there was no let up in the tempo and intensity of South Africa's relentless and criminal attacks and the flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the frontline states.

No discussion of Nigeria's foreign policy aimed at affecting early independence in Namibia can be said to be complete if it does not contain some examination of Nigeria's role in the sphere of international economic co-operation. Nigerian leaders have watched with understandable anxiety and apprehension the serious economic and financial crises which have threatened the real
foundations of the world order she is accustomed to.
A global recession triggered off by a combination of factors, namely, high interest rate, protectionism and restrictive fiscal and monetary policies has itself brought greater woe and misery to the developing world in other ways. For it is the same recession which has imported inflation into her domestic markets and a collapse in commodity prices. This situation adversely affects the export earnings of third world countries, disruption in national development plans and a precipitous fall in the standard of living of peoples in the Third World.

It is for this reason that Nigeria has extended co-operation in the international field to all like minded countries in working for the revival and stimulation of the world economy. This has been through the promotion of international co-operation in the relevant financial and trade organizations. The primary objective is to ensure an expansion of world trade production and investment for the benefit of all nations and peoples. The fact that there has been no major breakthrough in the ensuing global negotiations can certainly not be ascribed as a lack of effort on the part of the third world countries. But the depressing fact is that major industrial nations are yet to demonstrate the political will that will make structural changes possible in the prevailing unjust international economic and monetary system.
All the same, she must not relent in her drive to impress upon the advanced nations that the much talked about economic recovery in their half of the world will be shortlived if not accompanied by a simultaneous resuscitation of the national economies in the third world. The industrialized nations must be made to realize that their achievement of economic growth depends increasingly on the performance of others. They cannot prosper or even improve their situation on a more lasting basis unless, there is a viable basis for a corresponding prosperity in the developing world.

She focus attention essentially on her region i.e. West Africa, which is a natural thing to do. That is why Nigeria gave full support to ECOWAS. She has in all cases shown her determination to make ECOWAS a success irrespective of the problems that have to be surmounted, for it is only by achieving viable regional economic Unions capped by an African Common Market that Africa will be able to breakthrough the vicious net of under-development and achieve economic progress and security. Moreover, a successful West African Economic Region is vital to the role laid on her as the largest black African nation.

In the prevailing climate of rapidly deteriorating economic conditions in Africa it is not surprising that
the American Government seems to have succeeded in promoting the idea of a so called constructive engagement with South Africa. Angola has signed a troop withdrawal agreement with South Africa while Mozambique has since signed non-aggression pacts with Pretoria out of sheer desperation. It has gone to the extent that SWAPO sanctuaries in Angola lie in serious jeopardy. This situation constitutes a serious setback to the liberation movement within the region.

Thus, Buhari’s administration on coming into power thought that, Nigeria’s foreign policy aiming at an early independence for Namibia cannot yield the desired results without necessary improvements in her economy. It is for these reasons that Buhari’s Government has to extend co-operation in the international field to all like minded countries in working for the revival and stimulation of the world economy.

Though genuine progress on Namibia had been elusive, Nigeria had not relented efforts towards genuine independence. These efforts revolve round political and diplomatic support for SWAPO, putting pressures on Nigeria’s friends notably, USA, Britain, France and West Germany who contribute in sustaining South Africa’s role in Namibia, keeping up the pressure on South Africa itself through mobilising world opinion. As Dr Ibrahim Gambari, External Affairs Minister in Buhari administration,
said, "Now this administration said it will have Africa as the centre piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. By that is meant that Africa being the primary environment of our activity, it is still going to be our priority. But I think that from what we have been trying to do, it will be possible to see that our actions constitute definition of Nigerian foreign policy, that while the focus is still Africa as a centre piece, we are developing a focus within a focus. And that is concentrating within the African context on two sets of related issues the one being the outstanding decolonization issue of Namibia and apartheid in South Africa."

No doubt several economic problems which confronted the nation at this time affected the country's foreign policy. But still this administration's contribution on Namibian independence was quite impressive. This could be seen from the statement made by the Head of State Major General Muhammadu Buhari in his foreign policy speech at a dinner in the Nigerian institute of international affairs. "It is six years since the United Nation's Security Council came close to resolving the problem of Namibia's independence in a peaceful process embodied in resolution 435 of 1978. In all these years the prospects of Namibia's independence have receded as
a result of South Africa's arrogant intransigence. This arrogance appears to have been directly or indirectly encouraged by perhaps the good intentioned but misguided policy of "Constructive engagement" which has been pursued for four years by the United States Government. During this period South Africa has occupied Southern Angola sowing death and destruction along path without the so called contact group lifting a finger. During this period, South Africa has violated with impunity the territorial integrity of several neighbouring African States and finally coerced Mozambique into signing the so-called NKOMATI accords and the Pretoria's declarations. Nigeria welcomes the reelection of President Reagan in the hope that his administration will reapprise its policy on constructive engagement and work with African countries within the context of the UN security council resolution 435 for a speedy realization of Namibian independence.35.

Nigeria's deep involvement in South African problem as indicated by the speech of the Head of State has gone to such an extent that it may be given the status of a frontline state. No doubt this Nigerian deep involvement in this issue is in accordance with the original tenets of the Country's foreign policy. But one inhibiting factor among others is that the issue falls outside its subregion. It is feared at times that, Nigeria's
activity in this regard might offend the interests of the frontline states. Though genuine progress on Namibia had been elusive, Nigeria had persistently continued its efforts towards this objective.
The Babangida administration like the previous government has indicated that it is vehemently opposed to South Africa's continuous illegal occupation of Namibia. On the basis of this stand Nigerian Government opposed the setting up of puppet Government by South Africa in Namibia. The Government's opposition to this South African move could be indicated by a statement made by the Director General of Nigerian Institute of International Affairs in a lecture he delivered at the Polish Institute of International Affairs. He said, "the setting up of a puppet Government by the apartheid South Africa is as fancical as it is tragic and demonstrates the intransigence of that Government as well as its complete disregard of World opinion. The UN should not tolerate this flagrant violation. To do so is to weaken respect for it. I will like at this stage to commend your country and other socialist countries for your strong and unwavering support for the African stand on Namibia. That support as earlier stated is needed much more now than ever before in order to put an end to colonialism in Namibia. The issue of Namibian independence, is also tied up with that of international
capitalism which is a barrier to the development of third world countries and which equally constitutes a threat to World peace.36

According to the Namibian support committee (NSC) Barclays Bank and standard chartered control over 80 percent of the banking sector in Namibia. Rio Tinto Zinc controls the rousing Uranium mine, Namibia's largest single enterprise in value. Consolidated Goldfields which via its South African subsidiary controls nearly all Namibia's base mineral operations and is the territory's largest single employer. The central selling organization the British arm of the De Beers Cartel controls the gem industry and shell supplies Namibia's petroleum and petrochemicals needs including those used by the army of occupation.

The sapping of the Namibian minerals and economy by these companies notwithstanding, a particular disquieting aspect is that Consolidated Goldfields has allowed the police to make frequent raids on the mine's black compounds. Thus when the entire black work force of 560 came out on strike at the Oji base mine in April 1983 against a newly introduced work regulation demanding the sacking of the white supervisor who introduced it, management called in the police to stand by while negotiations took place. After 40 hours the regulations
were withdrawn but the white supervisor retained his job at the expense of 112 black workers who were said to have resigned.

It has to be reiterated as stated earlier that, underdevelopment and dependence must be viewed as an important countervailing features of the African environment. This is a sine qua non in appropriating the prospects of an expansive regional leadership by Nigeria. On the one hand, the process of decolonization has in the last 25 years pushed both the United States and the Soviet Union along with their imperial rivalry into the periphery of political developments on the continent. The significance of this post colonial phenomenon is two fold. It signifies a corresponding decline in the dominant power position of the ex-colonial nations on the continent and it creates fluid circumstances for a realignment of political forces thereby making it possible for a few well endowed indigenous states to play a relatively dominant role in the regional system less encumbered by neocolonial trappings.

This was amply indicated by President Babangida's foreign policy speech at the Nigerian institute of international affairs when he said, "In the past 25 years we have supported the United Nations' efforts to ensure that all the remaining pockets of colonialism all over the world are eliminated in no distant future. And here in Africa we expect the UN to find ways to overcome the
artificial obstacles and expedites actions towards Namibian independence as soon as possible. It is unfortunate that South Africa and her supporters continue to obstruct the road to independence for the Namibian peoples. It is hard to believe that South Africa has consistently been allowed to disregard all UN resolutions calling for Namibian independence. In this connection, this administration wants to state our opposition to those who link Namibian independence to the Cuban troops in Angola. The Republic of Angola is a sovereign and independent nation. And as such has the inalienable right to call for the assistance of any friendly nation to assist it in its efforts to ensure its territorial integrity and safeguard its political independence. We therefore, condemn the dangerous linkage of Namibian independence to Cuban troops in Angola. On our part, we will continue to render support to SWAPO, the only authentic and authoritative representative of the Namibian peoples in their legitimate struggle for their independence."

In a broadcast on the voice of Namibia situated in Angola the President of SWAPO and Commander in Chief of the people's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) Sam Nujoma outlined some of the achievements of SWAPO on the recisist Pretoria regime. He said that "South Africa's northern, north eastern parts as well as the Western parts of Namibia have been attacked and destroyed by PLAN forces."
The enemy has sustained a loss of 406 soldiers killed more than 373 wounded and 52 military-basis destroyed. He, however, concluded his announcement by giving special thanks to some African Countries notably Nigeria for their continuous assistance to SWAPO."
Concluding Observations

From the foregoing discussion we are made to understand the evolution of Nigerian foreign policy on Namibian independence. Right from the very beginning, the foreign policy has been Afro centric. Though implicitly this foreign policy posture tend to be in accordance with the original tenets of the country's foreign policy, there does not seem to be much substance. Because this policy posture when weighed against the background of the country's potentialities is not commensurate.

This vague and non dynamic posture of the country's foreign policy was more glaring at the time of the First Republic immediately after independence. This was ostensibly due to certain unavoidable circumstances of the time. For instance, the process through which Nigeria attained sovereign and independent statehood was more or less a constructive bargaining between the nationalist elites and the imperial power. In fact, Nigerian independence does not entail any amount of violence. In other words, independence came to Nigeria on a silver platter. Besides, the inheritance by the national elites after independence of the Colonial Governmental and economic structures was a major inhibitive factor.
With the above mentioned factors, it is not surprising that, the country’s foreign policy on Namibian independence was far below earlier wide spread expectations all over the world.

That the national leadership at the time was preoccupied with the problems of internal stability and economic development is an understandable fact. Besides, the international scene was also tense with the super powers and their blocs involved in constant cold war rhetorics of ideological war-far. This situation does not favour the newly independent countries in their external relations.

This does not mean that nothing was done, all we are saying is that it is not commensurate when weighed against the background of the country’s ample resource base. However, as time went on, this vague and non-dynamic posture of the country’s foreign policy changed for the better i.e. an active, dynamic and assertive foreign policy emerged. This was predominantly starting from the seventies onwards. Perhaps the oil boom resulting to rousing economy with a lot of petro Naira in the country’s coffers was the reason for this dynamism in the seventies. But with the glut in the oil market in the late seventies and the early eighties, the oil induced foreign policy has to die a natural death and a low tempoed foreign policy reappeared. This was more glaring during Nigeria’s second experiment in democratic Government.
In any case, the current policy posture of the Babangida regime despite of economic predicaments is an indication that the leaders have learnt their lessons well. In sum it could be said that there has been a continuity in the country's foreign policy over the years. There has been no departure from the Afrocentric posture of the country's foreign policy being in tune with the original tenets of Pan Africanism. But the differences that arise from one regime to the other is in most cases due to their economic problems and an ever uncertain international scene which affects the policy makers in different ways.


8. Ibid., page 52.


12. Outcome of a personal discussion with a scholar on Nigerian Foreign Policy at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs Lagos in June 1987.


15. Ibid., page 13.

16. Ibid., page 4.


20. Ibid., page 528.


23. Ibid., page 4.

24. Ibid., page 22.


27. Ibid., page 553.

28. Ibid., page 204.


32. Address by Dr. Ibrahim Gambari Honourable Minister of External Affairs on "Review of Nigeria's Foreign Policy" at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, July 26, 1984, page 4.
33. Ibid., page 4.


36. The Enduring Aspects of Nigeria's Foreign Policy lecture Delivered to the Polish Institute of International Affairs on November 18, 1985, page 9.
