RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE CHARACTER OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICIES FROM 1960-1999: CONTINUITY OR DISCONTINUITY IN POLICY AND LEADERSHIP APPROACHES.

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This paper delivers a general background study of Nigeria's foreign and defence policies from 1960-1999. The paper argues that, the focus of Nigeria's foreign and defence policies from 1960 to 1999 was dictated and conditioned by the prevalent internal and external threats to national security and the urge to be Africa's security guarantor. Promoting democratic governance was not a major feature of policy since, immediately after independence, Nigeria was strongly focused on supporting the decolonisation of the African states through the instrumentality of the OAU. While most African countries were still under colonial rule, Nigeria's strategic interests were primarily to support peace, decolonisation and economic development in Africa. The paper also notes that, over four decades of its external relations before the return to civilian rule in May 1999, the most visible employment of Nigeria's armed forces in pursuit of the country's foreign policy objectives was in support of various UN peacekeeping missions within the African continent and around the world. In addition to this, it is also argued that a central goal of Nigerian foreign and defence policies from 1966 to 1999, was to fulfil its 'manifest destiny' as a regional leader in sub-Saharan Africa, but not to promoting the democratisation of the African states. However, this paper makes use of a descriptive and historical approaches to analyse the salient characteristics of Nigerian foreign and defence policies before the return to the civilian government in 1999.

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Introduction:-

A salient challenge faced by the Nigerian state upon independence on the 1st October 1960, was how to devise and direct its new diplomacy and international relations to address national security and developmental issues. As a sovereign state, the analysis of the conduct and direction of Nigeria's foreign policy architectures cannot be divorced from its defence policy during the period from 1960-1999. Defence policy is an instrument of a state's foreign policy, statecraft, the preservation of sovereignty and independence (Omede, 2012: 294). Nigerian defence policy objectives include the 'security and stability in the West African sub-region through collective security' (Bello, quoted in Haastrup, and Lucia, 2014: 1). From 1960-1999, Nigeria's perception of its national security in West Africa, and, in an African context were characterised and orchestrated by three elements: a sense of vulnerability; a strong representation of the connection between national and (sub) regional security; and the perceived necessity to be a guarantor of West Africa's stability, as well as Africa's regional leader (Haastrup, and Lucia, 2014: 1).

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Nigeria's sense of vulnerability became obvious after the first military coup of 25 January 1966 which abruptly ended the First Republic, the killing of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa- Nigeria's Prime Minister, and the eruption of ethnic and political rivalries in civil war (1967-1970). In addition, the negative developments on the continent resulting from the Cold War shattered the naïve optimism of the immediate post-independence period, provoking an unprecedented commitment to a modernisation and augmentation programme that encompassed all segments of Nigeria's military power as an instrument of statecraft (Bassey, 1993: 253). Furthermore, Nigeria's vulnerability after the First Republic was also externally driven. For example, the decisions of Nigeria's traditional allies – Britain and the United States of America – not to supply the Federal Government of Nigeria with weapons to prosecute the civil war in 1967 and the consequent adoption of more activist foreign policy options, as well as the increasing importance of crude oil as the mainstay of the economy from the 1970s, led to a total modernisation of the Nigerian military and a new foreign policy orientation (Fawole, 2008: 98-99). Given this, this paper investigates the character of Nigerian foreign and defence policies before the return to the civilian rule in 1999.

Nigeria's Foreign and Defence Policies in the First Republic, 1960-1966
One of the pre-eminent points in the history of Nigeria's defence policy and foreign relations is the marked re-orientation from a period of conservatism and self-effacement to a more dynamic posture under Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in the First Republic (Bassey, 2011: xxvii). More specifically, after independence, Nigeria inherited a military establishment that was equipped to play an essentially internal security role. It was small relative to the size of the country at the period under examination and was not only immobile but also had an inadequate logistical base (Peters, 197: 76). Nigeria's defence policy was based on the need to maintain internal security and the country's foreign policy interests, which were closely aligned and intertwined with British and Commonwealth interests (Ibid.). The military that Nigeria maintained during the First Republic can, at best, be described as constabulary force, thus the army lacked the operational capacity to operate beyond Nigeria's borders. There was no air force to provide air mobility and ground support, and the navy was virtually and essentially a harbour patrol unit. This is because the Britain had not felt that it needed to establish a strong defence base system in the country before the country was granted independence (Ibid.). In this regard, the British colonial rulers failed to realise that a strong defence system would have helped the newly independent state to strengthen its external relations and to cope with the emerging security challenges which the country might face in its external relations.

Policy Objectives and Principles of the Nigerian First Republic (1960-1966)
In a statement to the House of Representatives in October 1960 the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, laid down the cardinal principles of Nigeria's foreign policy as the promotion of national interest; remaining within the Commonwealth of Nations and non-aligning with any of the power blocs; forging and promoting cultural and socio-economic and political links among the African states; total decolonisation; sovereign equality and non-intervention in each state's internal affairs; joining the United Nations and directing her efforts and resources to championing the cause of the preservation and protection of African dignity (Ajibewa, 1998: 84). These national objectives, and by implication defence policy, remained constant despite Nigeria's momentous and dramatic experiences on the domestic and international fronts. In seeking to realise these objectives, certain instruments became fundamental in shaping the country's defence thinking in relation to both internal and external threats.

Policy Instruments and the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact of the First Republic; 1960-1966
At the time of Nigeria's independence, the civilian regime which governed the Nigerian Federation until it was toppled in 1966 viewed the armed forces as an instrument for maintaining internal order and security and a mere symbol of sovereignty (Dudley, 1973: 89-90). Until the attainment of Nigeria's independence in 1960, federal powers over defence and foreign affairs were the exclusive prerogative of the British government. During the Nigerian Constitutional Conference of 1957, however, it was agreed that British control over Nigeria's armed forces should cease after April 1958 (Gordon, 1970: 227). The Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact was a foreign policy instrument during the Balewa government (Inamete, 2001: 23), floated by the British government to cement the defence and security relationship between Britain and Nigeria (Peters, 1997: 71).

The Defence Pact had both domestic and international implications which aroused approval and opposition across the globe (Orobator, 1985: 88-105). First, Tafawa Balewa had viewed the Anglo-Nigerian Defence arrangement as an image booster and an additional military factor to project Nigeria's ambition of leadership in Africa (Akparu-Aja, 2003: 252). Second, Nigeria was inexperienced in managing the contradictions in its structurally-dependent political economy, coupled with political corruption by politicians and leaders who were very optimistic about the lifespan of

Nigerian democracy. Third, the Nigerian leaders did not perceive their fragile West African neighbours as potential threats and lacked the strategic knowledge and understanding to foil military coups (Ibid.). Fourth, the British government had hoped that the pact would engender and consolidate the political, military and economic system in Nigeria, while helping to reinforce the relationship between Britain and Nigeria in the face of the perceived threat that the Soviet Union might use the withdrawal of the Western European colonial powers to extend its influence in Africa (Friday, 2013: 146). Despite the positive domestic and international implications of the defence pact, it was viewed as contradictory to national sovereignty and an indirect continuation of British domination (Akparu-Aja, 2003: 252), and there was fierce domestic antagonism towards its neo-liberal orientation which led to its abrogation in 1962 (Akparu-Aja, 2003: 253).

It was quite evident in the early years of the Nigerian Federation that the main threats to national security were internal. The political and personality clashes rooted in the primordial and ethnic political orientations of the First Republic's political leaders, drove these threats, which quickly became serious. For instance, on the 29th March 1962, the Federal Parliament passed a motion declaring a state of public emergency in the Western Region (Mackintosh, 1963: 143). The involvement of the military in politics, politicisation of the army and a constitutional crisis involving the President and the Prime Minister before the general elections of 1964 had further heightened tensions and threats to internal security in the First Republic (Dudley, 1973: 98).

Nigerian National Security and Foreign Policy under Military Rule, 1966-1979
Nigerian foreign and defence policies underwent a dramatic transformation during the initial period of military rule from 1966-1979. This period is here discussed in three phases.

The First Phase: The Civil War; 15 January 1966-25 July 1967
Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, the first military Head of State after the coup d'état on January 1966, inherited a weak political system characterised by a chauvinistic political structure, politicisation of the army, a weak defence system and the July 1966 civil war which followed the secession of the former Eastern Region (Dudley, 1973: 101), led by Colonel Odumegu Ojukwu. After six months of Ironsi's reign, a second military coup occurred which led to the death of Ironsi and the installation of Major General Yakubu Gowon as the second military Head of State on 27 July 1967.

The Second Phase: The Civil War and Nigeria's Foreign and Defence Policies, 1967-1975
One of the significant markers and turning point in this period was the significant of the Nigerian armed forces (Abegunrin, 2001: 109). For example, to balance and strengthen the security situation in the country, Gowon increased the size of the Nigerian armed forces to about 200,000 men, compared to the 10,000 mainly ceremonial and policing personnel under Balewa's regime. Balewa's belief that there was no credible threat to Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity had been revealed to be ill-conceived and parochial (Aluko, 1981: 118).

The civil war had both internal and external implications for Nigeria's national security and foreign policy. First, the external dimension underscored the threats to territorial integrity by the armed forces of Nigeria's neighbouring states (in particular Cameroon and Chad); the attempt by foreign mercenaries to overthrow the government of the neighbouring Republic of Benin; the need for military stabilisation through peace-keeping (Tanzania); anti-imperialist struggles in Southern Africa during the Gowon regime (notably in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe), the OAUs' core objective of a Pan-African Force 'against the racist and imperialist domination' of the African continent (Bassey, 2011: xxviii), were all direct threats to Nigeria's security (Aluko, 1981: 119). These were conceived as the threats beyond the country's territorial threshold and the need for a coherent and strong military instrument as an instrument of foreign policy became fundamental after the First Republic.

Second, the internal dimension had four major effects. First, an ongoing domestic economic crisis and ethnic tension. About 30,000 Ibo civilians were killed in a struggle for power with the Hausas and around 1 million refugees fled to the Igbo homeland in the east (The BBC, cited Omede, 2012: 296). Second, after the civil war in 1970 the Nigerian Armed Forces had lost their internal cohesion and Pan-Nigerian outlook and were polarised along ethnic divides (Osunyikanmi, 2011: 61). Third, a general restructuring and expansion of the Nigerian military by Gowon's regime (Bassey, 2011: xxxi). Fourth, the general appreciation and acceptance of the essential need for the military instrument as an imperative parameter within Nigeria's strategic environment to deter internal threats became the guiding foreign policy objectives of Gowon era (Bassey, 2011: xxviii-xxix).

Another strategic reason for a redirection in the national security policy during and after the civil war were the threats posed by the French mercenaries in the French formal colonies (Cote d'Ivoire, Benin Republic and Gabon) against the Nigerian state during the civil war, which underlined Nigeria's vulnerability and the need to mend ties with her neighbours to prevent them being used as a launching pad for external attacks (Cyril, 2008: 188). Similarly, the influence of 'Rhodesia' (now Zimbabwe) and Portugal in giving assistance and encouragement to Biafra was a calculated attempt to balkanise the country (Abegunrin, 2003: 35), and the unwillingness on the side of all Western powers including Britain and the USA (Britain changed her attitude after the Soviet Union had agreed to supply Nigeria with military aircraft in August 1976) to sell ammunition to Nigeria at the inception of the civil war persuaded the Nigerian leaders that their previous pro-Western foreign policy orientations needed urgent review (Aluko, 1981: 119).

The power politics that operated in the international system also informed Gowon that the former imperial powers were motivated by the desire to maintain their economic and strategic dominance in Africa (Bassey, 2011: xxxi). Furthermore, this new approach to security and foreign policy in Gowon's regime became clear in its radical departure from the pro-Western policy of the Balewa's administration concerning the regional defence system in Africa.

Overall, the Gowon regime's foreign and defence policies were more radical than the pro-Western policy during Balewa' government. Although Gowon had realised the need to strengthen the country's defence force to deter both internal and external threats, nurturing democracy across Africa was not the priority of his regime. Of course, promotion of democratisation internally and externally would not have been in the national interest of the Nigerian state, considering its military regime and while most countries in Africa were still under the colonial rule.

Third Phase: Murtala/Obasanjo Regime; 1975-1979
The third phase of Nigeria's foreign and defence policies came under the brief but radical regime of General Murtala Mohammed (Idang, 1989: 6), which brought about a significant redirection and shift in substance and style in the Nigerian foreign and defence policies (Nweke, cited in Johnmar, 2014: 8) between July 1975 and February 1976 (Gambari 2008, 65). The new radical assertiveness in the Gowon administration was undoubtedly reinforced and galvanised by the post-civil war economic prosperity of the oil boom. The increase in national economic power occasioned by the oil revenues increased the confidence and means of the regime to pursue a dynamic, active and effective policy in Africa and to influence the decisions of extra-regional powers (Bassey, 2011: xxxii). Accordingly, Murtala's regime sought to differentiate itself as much as possible from that of his predecessors – Balewa, Ironsi and Gowon. Surprisingly, as part of his regime's reform agenda to purge the military, he retired General Gowon and other generals within the armed forces (Eghosa, 1998: 80) and correctly pointed out and identified the military element as crucial, the most fundamental instrument of foreign policy (Aba, 2013: 80).

Diplomatically, General Murtala Mohammed's radical commitment towards making Africa the cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy cannot be over-emphasised. For example, Nigeria's decision to recognise the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) as the sole legitimate representative of the people of Angola in 1975 and the diplomatic, financial and material support of Nigeria to liberation struggles in Southern Africa underlined its commitment to and support for anti-colonial and anti-racist groups in Africa. Nigeria was instrumental in convincing the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) opinion in favour of recognising the MPLA (Gambari: 2008: 65). General Murtala's unilateral action, to intervene in the internal affairs of the Angolan state in violation of a previously agreed OAU resolution, was in response to the intelligence reports that apartheid South African troops were already engaged in combat inside Angola on the side of the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), one of the three guerrilla factions engaged in the struggle for the total control of the newly independent country (Fawole, 2003: 91).

Accordingly, in a memorable speech to the OAU extraordinary session summit conference at Addis Ababa in January 1976, General Mohammed asserted that "Africa had come of age and did not need foreign councillors to warn Africans against Communism and the alleged Soviet-Cuban threat'' (General Murtala Mohammed, quoted in Gambari, 2008: 8). Nonetheless, General Murtala Mohammed's regime was short-lived in contrast to the previous regimes and his concomitant non-pro-Western foreign policy commitment is no doubt second to none in the history of Nigerian foreign policy in post-independence Nigeria. Nigerian positioning of its foreign policy in the OAU during the General's regime was similar to the previous regime but took a more Afro-centric posture to pursue its national interests. African neo-conservatism was not the core objective, however, but rather self-governance and the

decolonisation of African continent. General Murtala Mohammed was assassinated in an aborted coup in February 1976. Categorically, it was obvious to most observers that, if the Angolan issue was a true pointer, General Murtala Mohammed had made history in his primary foreign policy objective in making Nigeria's foreign policy much more non-aligned than hitherto. He was succeeded by his deputy, General Olusegun Obasanjo (Oye, 1980: 760).

During the Obasanjo regime, Nigeria stepped up its strong position and support for the ZANU/ZAPU Patriotic Front, whose guerrillas were inflaming the war of self-determination in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) when the white minority regime of Ian Smith, a British-born Prime Minister, had unilaterally recognised a selected few local leaders to whom to transfer power unconstitutionally at the expense of the majority groups (Abegunrin, cited in Fawole, 2008: 107). In addition, ECOWAS – the policy instrument of Nigeria's diplomatic and financial endeavours – did not receive much attention from the Obasanjo regime. This discontinuity in policy as compared with the activism of his successor, General Muhammed, however, marked the beginning of economic reliance on erratic and dwindling oil revenues (Gambari, 2008: 65), which potentially affected his commitment to his Afrocentric foreign policy.

In the final analysis, during the last years of his regime, General Obasanjo, possibly due to the temporary rejuvenation in oil revenues, returned to the activist polices of his predecessor (Ibid.). Obasanjo ended up nationalising British Petroleum over the Rhodesian question in which Britain was unbending to a true Rhodesian independence. General Obasanjo's foreign policy in this period was further notable for the leading position of Nigeria against the apartheid regime in South Africa (Tarija, 2014: 292). It was on these historic grounds that Obasanjo handed over power to a democratically elected president Shehu Shagari in October 1979 (Fawole, 2003: 122).

The Second Republic, 1979-1983
The return to a democratically elected civilian government in the Nigerian Second Republic marked the next phase in the development of Nigeria's foreign and defence policies. Based on democratic representation, Shagari assumed power after an election that had seen no fundamental and significant debate on or recognition of foreign policy issues (Gambari, 2008: 66) and the military as an instrument of foreign policy. Although the civilian government under President Shagari witnessed several contradictions, it still pursued an Afro-centric foreign policy objective like his predecessors, albeit with mixed results. For example, Nigeria was operating an American presidential system of government, with the mentality of a parliamentary system. His government appeared to be comfortable with 'coalition politics' which was reminiscent of the naïve and discredited First Republic from 1960 to 1966, with its perpetual political imbroglios that often resulted in policy stalemate and failure (Ibid.). Second, domestically, the administration was under pressure to deliver its electoral promises of revolutionising agriculture, improving and expanding social services; providing employment to a rapidly growing population and maintaining political stability – all which had to be executed in the face of sharply declining oil revenues (Ibid).

As part of his commitment to maintain his predecessors' grand foreign policy objectives, Shagari, in his foreign policy speech during the Joint Session of the National Assembly in March 1980, affirmed that:

"Africa remains the cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy. My administration is committed to the cause of the total liberation of Africa and the abolition of racism in all its ramifications. We shall neither relax nor relent until all Africans and all black men are free'' (Obi, quoted in Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012: 79).

Building on the activist foreign policy of his predecessor, Nigeria therefore took a leading role in the Lancaster House proceedings that led to the independence of Zimbabwe (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012: 79). Indeed, President Shagari, in his efforts to revive the economy, played an imperative part in reforming the Nigerian National Petroleum Oil Corporation (NNPC), utilising the proceeds from the excess crude oil windfall to pay for the inherited debt and amortisation, but this proved futile (Anthony, 2013: 258). Despite the Afrocentric posture of Shagari, the regime was marred by gross administrative inefficiency, mass corruption, persistent high rate of inflation, and food scarcity (Diamond and Falola, cited in Nwokete et al., 2011: 170).

On Southern Africa, for example, the administration's commitment to liberation movements and the pursuit of Namibia's political independence was relatively lukewarm. Shagari's commitment to the OAU was very weak, and his decision – under American pressure and diplomacy – not to attend the OAU's summit in Libya in 1982 was a strong signal of weakness and weariness, as was his low-key foreign policy approach over the Western Sahara self-determination issue (Gambari, 2008: 69).

In terms of defence policy, the invasion and territorial occupation of Nigerian villages around Lake Chad by Chadian gendarmes in 1981 was perceived to be a great threat to national security. Shagari's administration (1979-1983) failed to grasp the national security implications of this invasion. Shagari's ill-conceived response to the threat posed by the Chadian gendarmes was to order a limited military action to contain the attacks – without, however, closing the border for fear of losing bilateral relations between Chad and Nigeria (Fawole, 2008: 101) Shagari's order of limited military action was disregarded by the Nigerian army, better understanding the full implications of the attacks on Nigeria's territorial integrity, which chased the attackers 50 kilometres inside Chad (Ibid.).

In 1983, when the Chadian gendarmes launched another round of border attack on Nigeria, the Nigerian army's Third Armoured Division, headed by General Buhari (who became the head of state in December 1983) (Ibid.) deployed troops to repel the attacks on Lake Chad and entered Chadian territory, thereby closing the borders between Nigeria and Chad. When President Shagari ordered an immediate withdrawal of the military from the Chadian territory, Buhari reneged and argued that the withdrawal of the Nigerian troops would jeopardise the country's security interest. The internal security situation deteriorated when Army Chief of Staff General Inua Wushishi's intervention compelled General Buhari to withdraw the troops from Chad (Iroanya, 2008: 118).

In addition, when considering the internal threats to the Nigerian state during this period, conflicts of elites and political interests were the major internal threats facing the Shagari regime. The political elites who dominated the ruling party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), became engrossed and reckless in plundering the resources of the country, which resulted in the total marginalisation of the narrow interests of the military officers who formed the core of those Nigerian political elites (Tuner and Baker, cited in Iroanya, 2008: 118).

Shagari's regime was shorter than the First Republic, lasting only until 1983 when it was toppled through a military coup. From this analysis, it should be noted that a civilian administration would strengthen the momentum of the foreign policy activism established during the first round of military rule from 1966 to 1979. Things did not turn out as expected during his regime, however. Instead, Shagari became an ineffective leader whose administration draws a sharp comparison with the First Republic (Aka, 2016: 79). It therefore seemed the Nigerian government and the Nigerian army had different perceptions of the threats that Chadian gendarmes and the internal political contradictions posed to the Nigerian state in the Second Republic. Ultimately, the civilian administration of Shagari in the Second Republic (1979-1983) shared the same foreign policy orientations with the first civilian government during the First Republic (1963-1966) of Balewa. For example, the two civilian governments failed to embrace military statecraft as an effective instrument of foreign policy, and promotion of democracy was not the core objective.

General Muhammadu Buhari-Idiagbon Regime, 1983-85

Major General Muhammadu Buhari became a new Head of State in 1984. Buhari's basic justification for the coup that terminated the Nigerian Second Republic (1979-1983) was to change Nigeria's rapidly deteriorating economic situation and improve the well-being of most Nigerians (Ojo, 1993: 119). As an offshoot of Murtala/Obasanjo administration towards Afro-centric foreign, Buhari was not deterred by the realities of the economic situation to articulate an aggressive foreign policy posture. The regime kept Africa as the centrepiece of Nigerian foreign policy and attempted to redress the shifts and weaknesses of the Shagari administration. As usual, it was not deterred in its constructive engagement towards the South Africa's and Namibia's agendas for independence (Ibid.). In addition, the OAU liberation committee, which was banned by Shagari's administration, was promptly restored and Ibrahim Gambari was appointed as Nigeria's Foreign Minister, who vigorously championed the struggles of the Frontline States (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) and asserted Nigeria's commitment to the liberation struggles in Southern Africa (Ibid.). Under his regime, great attention was paid to the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) on November 11, 1984, whose territory had been unjustly overtaken and occupied by Moroccans after the abdication of Spanish government in the country (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012).

On the issue of national security, the regime dealt decisively with threats from Chad and Cameroon by mounting and staging military surveillance along the borders between Cameron and Nigeria (Ojo, 1993: 119). It also upgraded the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) to University status, built an Air Force and Naval academy, created the N30 million armoured personnel carrier in Bauchi, and modernised the military. Under his regime, the hitherto defunct Defence Corporation Industry resumed production of military explosives and arms and a research and development department was established within the Defence Ministry (Ibid.). There were two major factions that constituted threats to the Nigerian state during Buhari's administration, however. These factions include Buhari's faction and

Major General Babangida's faction. Buhari's faction viewed Buhari's decision on ethics and corporal punishment as a choice between applying rough and ready justice and risking public persecution, a possibility which threatened to increase the instability of the regime. The other faction opposed Buhari on the question of political detainees, believing that the detainees should be charged or put on trial, or conditionally released (Ibid.). In fact, Buhari was not able to pursue a vigorous and assertive foreign policy as laid down by Murtala/Obasanjo because of the debt trap, coupled with a sharp decline in oil prices and the inability of OPEC to suggest alternative economic arrangements, due to which Nigeria was forced to devalue its currency (Ibid.).

Consequently, the military junta headed by General Muhammed Buhari was short-lived and widely viewed as repressive as all political activities were banned and there was no specific date for handing over power to a democratically elected government until Gen. Babangida audaciously struck in another military putsch in August 1985 (Emmanuel, 2014: 23).

General Babangida's Regime, 1985-1993
General Babangida's regime shared a similar experience to the regimes of his predecessors- Major General Yakubu Gowon and major General Murtala Mohammed in terms of a strong recognition of the military as an instrument of statecraft and in perception of threats to national security (Fawole, 2008: 107). His defence strategy underscored his confrontational policy posture towards South Africa, while the forceful reaction of Babangida's regime to the expanding presence of South Africa on the island of Bioko (Equatorial Guinea) and Liberian operations suggest the application of this policy direction towards contiguous territories (Bassey, 2011: xxxv). In other words, the strategic position of the island of Bioko in Nigeria's "triangle of survival" (TOS) underscored constant monitoring to prevent infiltration and deterioration in the geography and military status quo as in other neighbouring states, and to secure Nigeria's membership as a signatory of the "Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance of Defence" (PRMAD) of May 1981. Such a defence policy objective was seen by Babangida as a "national interest of the highest order'' (Ibid.).

At the regional level, Nigeria's defence policy received a great boost. For example, the intervention of Nigeria in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars (1990-2000) (Ibid.) led to the formation of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in August 1990. Nigeria spearheaded the formation of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in August, 1990, despite opposition from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and a number of other states in the West African sub-region and, without any financial support from the OAU, the United Nations, or the West, Nigeria organised and spearheaded total military co-ordination between Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Guinea to supply the armed force which intervened in Liberia's crisis (Babawale, 1997: 143). In addition, during the Babangida regime, Nigeria played a leading role in the OAU's observer group in Rwanda (NMOG) in 1993, before the UN dispatched a larger peacekeeping force for intervention in 1994 (Gambari, 2008: 73.). ECOMOG therefore best underscores the immense potential and possibilities of regional leadership for Nigeria in the West African region and the African continent as whole.

Aside from the recognition and perception of threats to Nigeria's security from its neighbours during this period, internal threats constituted one of the greatest challenges in Babangida's era. For example, on April 22, 1990, a group of anti-northern rebel officers launched a bloody abortive coup against Babangida's regime, leading to the arrest of 14 and detention of more than 400 hundred soldiers. After regaining total control of the internal security situation in the country, Babangida made known his plan to overhaul the security system and pressed ahead with his strategic plan to restore civilian order on 1st of October 1992. Before this period, forty-two military rebels were executed by July after sentencing by a special military tribunal, followed by an additional twenty-seven officers that were executed by September (Mathews, 2002: 170). Despite the constructive sub-regional and continental foreign policy approach of Babangida's regime, it failed to return the country to civilian rule since the results of the mostly free and fair election of 12 June 1993 were annulled. This cancellation attracted both the internal external criticisms, international isolation and sanctions from the international community, set the scene for Nigeria's future political uncertainties and internal fragility before the return to democracy in 1999. Though Babangida's decision to bring peace and stability in Liberia through the formation of the ECOMOG in 1990 was underlined by his personal interest to secure Doe's military government against Charles Taylor's insurrections. Nurturing democracy was not the priority, but regime stability and to deter potential external adversaries.

General Sani Abacha, 1993-1998

General Sani Abacha was a key player in the Babangida regime. He shifted the predominant inclinations in Nigeria's defence policy to their logical limits with the continued expansion of war in Sierra Leone and military engagement on the Bakassi Peninsula (Bassey, 2011: xxxvii). His strategic interest in Bakassi was to secure the 'oil-rich' peninsula against all forms of incursion from Cameroon. In sharp contrast to the US isolationism in Liberia, the British government played a more active role in the Sierra Leone peace process but its assistance to ECOMOG was limited due to Tony Blair's government's fierce opposition to the Abacha regime in Nigeria (Kabia, 2009: 173), arising from the regime's ''distinctive pattern of economic mismanagement, including arbitrary change, deficit financing, capital flight and the chronic and unrecorded leakage of funds'' (Amuwo, 2002: 1). Following Abacha's demise in 1998 and his failure to return power as previously predicated in his maiden address to the nation in 1998, General Abubakar took over from him and addressed the nation on his commitment to uphold the October 1998 hand-over schedule to civilian government by Abacha (Dagne, 2005: 2-3).

To prove the readiness and commitment of General Abubakar, in August and September 1998, he embarked on a series of rapid and dramatic economic and political reforms in the country. He replaced Abacha's top security cabinet and immediately dissolved the five main political parties set up by Abacha. General Abubakar made all concerted efforts to appeal to Nigerians in exile, notably Professor Wole Soyinka, to come home and contribute to the democratic transition process. General Abubakar outlined details of the transition dates, with local polls on December 5, 1998, gubernatorial and state polls on January 9, followed by the National Assembly's polls on February 20, 1999, and presidential polls on February 27. Nigeria returned to a democratically elected government in May 29, 1999 (Ibid.), which marks its Fourth Republic.

Conclusion:-

This article has examined the background and character of Nigeria's foreign and defence policies from 1960-1999. According to Martin Mathews (Mathews, 2002: 171.), the dramatic chain of events and instability that spanned and pervaded Nigerian foreign and defence policies from 1960 to 1999 underscored the transience of any description of Nigeria's security apparatus and external relations, therefore a critical analytical comparison of all the regimes (1960-1999) in terms of their approaches to foreign and defence policies illuminate a picture of continuity as well as discontinuity. It must be acknowledged, however, that there has been a remarkable element of continuity in terms of fundamental foreign policy objectives in respect to commitments to Africa's decolonisation, economic development, security, peace and stability; but there was no distinctive element for democracy promotion. The justification for Nigeria's proactive approach to promoting democratisation in African in many parts of 1990-1999 regimes could have been made valid even though when the country itself was not a democratic nation. Therefore, Nigeria was only committed to showcase its foreign policy towards promoting peace and security on the continent. Also, between 1963-1966 and 1979-1983 when Nigeria was running a democracy, its foreign policy direction was not to nurture democracy, but to safeguard integration and promotion peace and security in Africa.

On the appreciation of the military as an effective instrument of foreign policy and judging from the qualitative and quantitative development of Nigeria's defence policy capabilities, however, this paper highlighted the adoption of West Africa and other African states into the exclusive radius of Nigeria's national security. Judging from the direction of its defence and foreign policy architecture, it is valid to argue that three decades after the end of the civil war, the limitation of internal or territorial threshold no longer posed a threat to national security, as was the case in the First Republic (1960-1966). For instance, during the First Republic in Nigeria's democratic era (1960-1966) the armed forces were viewed as an instrument for maintaining internal order and security, and a mere symbol of sovereignty (Dudley, 1973: 89-90). It is also the view of Akparu-Aja, who observed that during the Balewa regime (1960-1966), Nigerian leaders failed to perceive their fragile West African neighbours as potential threats and lacked internalised strategic knowledge and understanding (Akparu-Aja, 2003: 252) of national security issues. On the other hand, contrary to the pro-Western perception of Balewa's defence policy, the general perception and attitude of the Nigerian governments after the civil war has been aptly affirmed by the former Head of State, Major General Gowon. He stressed that "our dynamic foreign policy posture can only be credible if we have a well-equipped and disciplined defence force capable of defending our territorial integrity and national interest'' (Bassey, 2011: xxxi).

The Second Republic under President Shehu Shagari's administration (1979-1983) followed a similar policy approach and orientation in Nigeria's national security and external relations. For instance, the invasion and

territorial occupation of Nigerian villages around Lake Chad by Chadian gendarmes in 1981, was perceived to be a great threat to national security emanating from proximate northern neighbours. Shagari's ill-conceived response to threat posed by the Chadian gendarmes was to order a limited military action to contain the attacks without, however, closing the border for fear of losing bilateral relations between Chad and Nigeria (Fawole, 2008: 107). Arguably, the civilian governments in the Nigerian First and Second Republics failed to employ the military instrument as an essential attribute of statecraft and democracy. The inability of Shagari's regime to showcase its commitment towards a strong and vigorous defence policy in the pursuance of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives underscores a discontinuity in policy direction and defence planning as compared with his predecessors, Yakubu Gowon and Murtala Muhammed/Olusegun Obasanjo. Furthermore, a great deal of vigorous foreign and defence policy was recorded under General Buhari's regime (1983-1985), as compared with his predecessor, President Shehu Shagari.

In addition, General Babangida's regime shares a similar experience with the regimes of his predecessors, Major General Yakubu Gowon and Major General Murtala Mohammed, in terms of a strong recognition of the military as an instrument of statecraft and perception of threats to national security. For example, Fawole observed that the perception of threats to national security and the employment of the military instrument as an instrument of foreign policy was emphatically revealed during Major General Babangida's regime (1985-1993) (Ibid.) and General Sani Abacha's regime. The regime of General Sani Abacha (1993-1998) ultimately built on the existing predominant inclination in Nigeria's defence policy with the continued expansion of war in Sierra Leone and military engagement on the Bakassi Peninsula (Bassey, 2011: xxxvii), thereby continuing commitments to ensuring peace, security and stability in Africa.

While assessing the performance of Nigeria's national security and external relations from post-independence, Babawale (1997: 142.) observed that Nigerian defence policy fared very badly, most notably from the 1980s-1990s. Though efforts were made to lay a technological foundation for the military's establishment, only marginal success in this area has been achieved. As previously argued in this chapter, it became clear in the 1980s that Nigeria's oil wealth was not used to lay a strong foundation for growth and development, capable of transforming the Nigerian armed forces and its foreign relations, thus a weak Nigerian economy during the 1980s significantly weakened the effectiveness of Nigeria's foreign policy and her defence policy (Ibid.).

In the final analysis, however, the evolvement and effective operationalisation of armed forces on which Nigeria's foreign and defence policy architectures partly rested between 1960-1999, called for a profound expansion in the primary economic foundation in the country's military apparatus and technological resources (Bassey, 2011: xxxiii.). While recalling the analysis in this chapter, it is instructive to note that a state's economic resources and strength constitute the basis of a strong foreign and defence policies for that state, and the ability to design an effective, intelligent mechanism to address internal and external threats is indispensable for modern states.

Finally, this paper demonstrates that the unprofessional principles of the men of the Armed Forces, the divisive forces of ethnicity, regionalism and the incessant involvement of the military in politics within the Armed Forces led to the politicisation of the military and its near-abandonment (Babawale, 1997: 144) as an effective instrument of foreign policy from 1960-1999. Democratisation, domestically and most certainly elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa was not a high foreign policy objective for Nigeria's governments during the period 1960-1999.

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