

NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA: THE POLITICS OF CONTINENTAL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The evolving trend of globalization in the international political economy is leading to the emergence of a new regime of close cooperation between many states that were formerly strong competitors. Two of such States are Nigeria and South Africa.

This paper seeks to account for the transformation of the bilateral relations of the two countries from a configuration of competition to one of mutual cooperation.

In doing so, the paper has relied on the concept of national interest which has been considered somewhat obsolescent by some analysts, as the basis of our explanation.

This is because in spite of the apparent vagueness of the concept, the dual character of the content of national interest in terms of fixed or core elements and the variable elements makes the concept a useful instrument for the study of the changing character of the relationship between States.

This utility derives from the fact that the differential understanding, interpretation and pursuit of the variable components of national interest by the leaders of different States accounts for the oscillation of the relations of countries between conflict and cooperation.

In this paper, we have shown that the evolution in and interpretation of the national interests of both Nigeria and South Africa combined with their strategy of continental leadership in Africa to account for the transformation of their bilateral relationship from one of competition to that of mutual cooperation.

The paper however, reached two important conclusions with respect to the evolving close cooperation between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of South which have both a practical and theoretical import.

At a practical or policy level the paper came to the unfortunate conclusion that given the extensive domination of the productive sectors of the economies of both countries by the local branches of foreign multinational corporations, these global enterprises are likely to be the ultimate beneficiaries of the growing cooperation between the two countries.

At the theoretical level, the paper pointed to the limiting effect which differences in interval class structures of the domestic ruling class of the two cooperating States are likely to place on the capacity of both countries to institute a regime of comprehensive political, economic, strategic and commercial cooperation.

Consequent upon these limitations on the extent of cooperation between the two states, it is doubtful whether both countries can respond effectively to the challenges of globalization.

KeyWords: Globalization, Nigeria, South Africa, Co-operation, economy.

INTRODUCTON

If in the second half of the 1980s Robert GILPIN could be justified in writing that "throughout the Third World, many societies have established the political stability, social discipline

and efficient markets that are the pre-requisites for economic development" (GILPIN 1987:304), on the bases of the evidence from some countries in Asia and Latin America, this was far from correct for most of sub Saharan Africa. Here we had besides the far reaching economic crises that

were facing most of the countries (ASANTE 1991), the two most prominent countries on the continent were not only confronted with severe internal political instability, they were also locked in a bitter politico-diplomatic rivalry with far reaching consequence. We refer here to Nigeria and South Africa that were internally divided by the system of Apartheid in the case of South Africa, and prolonged military rule in the case of Nigeria. With such domestic political crises neither of these two states could have qualified for the description offered by GILPIN above

However, what further contributed to the inability of the two countries to carry out the necessary political, social and economic reforms was the diversion of useful resources by the two States into the non productive area of military and nuclear arms build up as part of their competition for political and diplomatic leadership on the African continent.

As noted by one observer, since South Africa was considered to be Nigeria's arch-enemy, if the Republic became a nuclear power, "Nigeria must not be seen to be inferior in any way, so she must match her military strength" (OCHOCHÉ 1987:124). Thus there is some justification in characterizing Nigeria's relations with South Africa in the period 1960 leading to the adoption of majority rule in 1994 largely in terms of competition and rivalry rather than in cooperative terms.

However, ever since the adoption of majority rule in South Africa, there has been a significant increase both in the number and quality of cooperative economic, commercial and technical ventures between the two countries. This close cooperation has been recorded in Nigeria's telecommunications sector, the prospecting, survey and development of Nigeria's solid minerals as well as brick production for the construction industry, and especially the prospect of a full blown military alliance between the two countries, as announced by the Naval Chiefs of both countries. (See the *Guardian* Lagos Wednesday November 21, 2001 and Monday December 10, 2001).

This development we must emphasize constitutes a major transformation in the

relationship between the two most important State actors on the African continent and is in line with the suggestion that even though "examples of conflict are more note-worthy" in international relations, "cooperation is more common than conflict" (PALMER and PERKINS 1985)

Thus this political evolution in Nigeria's relations with South Africa rather than constitute an exception is part of the normal oscillation of international relations along the cooperation conflict spectrum.

A key explanation in this turn around in the relationship between the two countries can be located in the permanency of the interests of states in their relationship one with another or the concept of national interest.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

If we accept this short definition of a theory as "a set of related propositions that help to explain why events occur the way they do". (KNUTSEN 1992:1), then we become automatically embedded in the current tradition of social science research which argues that facts in themselves have no research or social significance unless they are illuminated by a theory or theoretical framework as suggested by KNUTSEN above. Evan LUARD (1976) had even outlined five specific functions which a theory performs in the process of research, while DEUTSCH (1972) has suggested a large number of ways in which a theory or theories can come to the aid of researchers in the Social Sciences and especially Political Science.

However, recognizing the usefulness of theories in general does not absolve us from the responsibility of identifying a specific one for the study of our problem. For as was aptly pointed out in a volume on the theory of International relations that came out four decades ago: "While theories are useful, they may be put to a variety of uses, and different uses require a different type of theory" (KNORR and VERBA 1961:2)

Notwithstanding the large number of contending theories and theoretical frameworks that are available for the study of our current problem (DOUGHERTHY and PFALTZARAFF

1971), we have chosen to employ the concept of the national interest as the conceptual framework for our analysis of Nigeria's changing relationship with South Africa.

We agree with the contention that "this concept... is generally admitted to be an elusive one, having both a fixed and variable content". (DOUGHERTHY and PFALTZGRAFF 1971:321) However, while many analysts have criticized this coexistence of a fixed content and a variable content in the concept of national interest as rendering it of little value in the empirical analysis of the foreign policies of States, (ROSENAU 1968) we consider this duality in the content of national interest to be of major interest in the study and interpretation of the foreign relations of different countries. For as noted by ROSENAU (1968:39) "while the national interest has little future as an analytic concept, its use in politics will long continue to be a datum requiring analysis".

Essentially we argue that since the fixed content of the national interest of States changes only very slowly if at all, it is only by focusing on the evolution of the variable content of national interest over time that we can explain how the policies pursued by states change.

The fixed and irreducible content of the idea of national interest includes the preservation of the nation as an independent political community, capable of maintaining the integrity of its territory and population and of safeguarding the autonomy and development of its institutions.

These components of the national interest are variously defined as "core interests", "vital interests", or the irrevocable national interests, which if seriously threatened most states would go to war to defend. But since these interests are usually virtually the same for most States, and they constitute the basic interests which modern International Organization has evolved to defend (see preamble to the charter of the United Nations), most international conflicts tend to arise over differences in State perception and interpretation of the variable content of the national interest. These variable interests include the following elements, which can also be considered non vital components of national

interest namely: the traditional or national myths and ideals which are widely held in a community, the personality of political leaders, the differing philosophies patronized by different political parties and groupings, prevalent trends of public opinion and available technology.

We must admit that while each of these factors plays a part in the definition of the variable content of the national interest, it is usually the traditional myths and beliefs of a community combined with the ideological persuasion and personalities of key political leaders that eventually exert the most important impact on how the variable elements are employed to pursue the vital or core interests of States

However we must avoid a Cartesian view that insists on the permanent separation of vital and non vital or fixed and variable components of the national interest. Rather we should envisage that popular myths and widely held beliefs in a political community may be so promoted by strong political leaders that they may become transformed into virtual components of the fixed elements of the national interest. It is this interpenetration of the variable into the fixed component of the national interest that makes it both a powerful analytical instrument and a useful framework for the study of the foreign policies of two or more states.

We must however note that the concept of national interest whether employed in the restrictive sense of the core or fixed interest of a State or in the more variable and vague sense, has meaning only in the sense that it helps States to situate themselves within the wider context of international relations. For it appears that the classification of States into super powers, major powers, regional powers etc, depends not so much on their vital national interests as upon the differential way in which the leadership of a variety of States define, rationalize and subjectively pursue their objectives or core national interests.

Thus whereas the evolution in the definition and interpretation of the variable content of the national interest of both Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa studied in this paper could significantly account for variations in the quality of their relationship, it is only within the

wider context of the international system that such an evolution acquires all its significance. For it seems to us that the emergence of a unipolar international system has made the competitive continental policies of Nigeria and South Africa anachronistic, and counter productive while making a policy of continental cooperation more fruitful and beneficial to both parties.

If we accept the suggestion of Aforka NWEKE that "national interest includes national ideology" (NWEKE 1987:), and could thus be narrowly or broadly defined, we discover that the broader concept of national interest enables us to appreciate both the necessity for conflict and cooperation in the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa. According to the author under reference, the concept of national interest:

Can be broadly defined to include, in addition to preservation of state independence, moral, religious and altruistic considerations that constitute the value system of the national community. (NWEKE 1987: 132-3).

There is no doubt that such a broad conception of national interest is both helpful and problematic. This broad conception of national interest helps us to appreciate why for a long period in the second half of the 20th century the white minority in Southern Africa was willing to pursue a policy of white domination that put the whole of the sub region in a prolonged crisis, so long as it could be justified on the ground that it was in the national interest of white South Africa or white dominated Rhodesia.

Similarly, all key decision makers in Nigeria considered it a legitimate foreign policy objective to oppose the white minority regimes in South Africa in so far as their domestic and foreign policies were in serious contradiction with the objectives, principles and aspirations which Nigeria stood for. Thus purely on the basis of national interest the policy of apartheid in South Africa and Nigeria's ideals of decolonization and the elimination of racial discrimination could by themselves account for the long conflict between the two countries. Majority rule and the formal

abrogation of racial discrimination or apartheid could then be considered a significant change in the national interest of South Africa especially the variable content of its national interest that paved the way for closer cooperation with Nigeria.

The difficulty with the broad conception of national interest as comprising not just the independence of the state but including the moral, religious and altruistic considerations that constitute the value system of

the national community is that it leaves several important questions unanswered. In a multinational and multi-religious and multi linguistic country such as South Africa or Nigeria, whose moral or altruistic considerations need to be taken into account in the definition of the national interest? Could the views of a self appointed minority such as was the Nationalist Party in South Africa or some other elite group in Nigeria, constitute the basis of a viable national interest that needs to be defended with the totality of a nation's human and other resources? Obviously differential interpretations of what constitutes the core and variable interests of one country or another and changes in such conceptions are the foundations of the dynamic changes in the relations of states between conflict and collaboration or cooperation.

Thus even on the basis of this evolution in the definition and application of the concept of national interest between Nigeria and South Africa, the changing character of the relationship between the two countries since the 1960s needs to be carefully studied.

NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA: CONTINENTAL LEADERS.

But there are more compelling reasons for a study of Nigeria's relationship with South Africa. Both countries could be considered to occupy a special place on the African continent. Where as Nigeria has been described as "the ninth most populous nation in the world and by far the most populous of black nation's (sic). One out of every five Africans, and one out of every six black persons in the world is a Nigerian, a fact which naturally throws the country into a leadership position in the black and African world". (FMEA

1991:17) This demographic factor even though of variable developmental implications when combined with the country's mineral potentials makes the evaluation of Nigeria's external relations a matter of major academic interest in its own right.

On the other hand South Africa has been variously described as the industrial power house of Africa or an out "post of monopoly capitalism" (SEIDMAN and MAKGETLA 1980) because of the fact that for a long time the major Western multinationals invested heavily in the country's mining, industrial, financial and other sectors to make the country an African regional centre. (P.57ff). Thus we can postulate that if Nigeria's rich human and material resource endowments are taken together with South Africa's domineering share of the world's strategic minerals as well as her industrial capacity, the future of Africa in the global economy in the twenty first century could only be reasonably discussed in terms of a strategic cooperation between Nigeria and South Africa. Our position is not oblivious of the assertion that there have been "major changes in the factors of production, particularly in the rising importance of high quality labour and the diminished effect of physical resource endowments" in world commerce.(BERRY et al. 1993:424).

This is because whereas technological innovations and quality labour could be developed in the short to medium term, natural resource endowments might impose short term constraints that are difficult to overcome for many states.

On the basis of the fore-going observation, it can be postulated that the intensification of economic, political and diplomatic transactions between Nigeria and South Africa is both the expression of an interdependence and mutual need of two of Africa's most significant political and economic actors that could properly be described in terms of middle powers" not so much because of their military capabilities, but rather in view of the fact that on the African continent, "they possess influence ... which is comparable to the influence which the great powers have in the world..." (BERRIDGE 1992:18)

By describing Nigeria and South Africa in these terms, we in no way seek to exaggerate the autonomy or independence of the two actors under reference in a global, system that is characterized more or less by United States economic, political and strategic domination (AKINYEMI 1993:43), but simply to underscore the fact that when the two States operate under rulers and policies that are acceptable to the major powers, they have been largely permitted to carry out the functions of regional stabilization such as Nigeria in West Africa and South Africa in central and Eastern Africa. It was in the perspective of such regional leadership and stabilization that Nigeria under ABACHA could intervene militarily in Liberia and Sierra Leone to promote democracy even though the regime maintained a strongly repressive political order at home. What is very significant is the fact that the United States government, and the United Nations even provided financial assistance for this venture. As one observer has noted, Nigeria's action in Liberia especially was motivated by the country's "desire to play a leadership role (by showing an) ability to initiate and manage the security and developments in Africa in general and West Africa in particular" (OKOOSI 1997:29). While it may be possible to point out the acute economic and social burden which the leadership role in Africa incident on Nigeria's status of a middle power has inflicted on the people of Nigeria, it is difficult to discount such middle power calculations in the country's external relations especially in her foreign policy towards South Africa.

Yet it may be necessary to emphasize that whereas much of Nigeria's opposition to apartheid South Africa could have been accounted for by the in-human nature of the apartheid system as we shall show presently, such antagonism was also largely due to the fact that the presence on the African continent of a white minority regime with extensive ties with the key Western countries was a serious threat to the actualization of Nigeria's leadership role in Africa whereas a South African Republic led by a Black African president would be logically inclined to cooperate with Nigeria in the spirit of African solidarity.

This felt need for Nigeria and South Africa to cooperate with each other could be put in the perspective of restoring the glory of Africa not just in terms of bestowing freedom on the Africans, but also in the perspective of making "the upliftment, the happiness, prosperity and comfort of her child", necessary complements of that freedom. MANDELA 1998, quoted by OLADIKPO, emphasis added)

This necessity for Nigeria and South Africa to cooperate with one another has been demonstrated over the years by the leaders of both countries: Nigeria was Nelson Mandrel's first port of call after his release from prison in 1990, South Africa was the first foreign country general Abdusalam ABUBAKAR visited on coming to power in 1998. Both presidents Olusegun OBASANJO and TABO MBEKI of South Africa have made reciprocal visits to the two countries. And even former president De KLERK, the last advocate and defender of apartheid has become a regular guest speaker in Nigeria's diplomatic circuit.

These recent development should however not lead us to overlook the fact that the road to Nigeria's cooperation with South Africa was long and tedious. In order therefore to put this new partnership in its proper perspective we need to briefly review what the essence of the Apartheid policy of the Dutch descendants in South Africa really was, the role Nigeria played in the eradication of apartheid as the basis of the new found cooperation between the two countries.

Ultimately we may seek to pose the question:

Who will be the ultimate beneficiaries of Nigeria's economic, political and strategic cooperation with South Africa?

NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA: THE SOURCES OF RIVALRY AND COMPETITION

The expulsion of the Republic of South Africa from the Common wealth of Nations at the Lagos Conference of Prime Ministers and Heads of Government of the organization in 1961 could be taken as the high point of the rivalry and

competition between Nigeria and south Africa on the African continent.

The main issue in contention between the two countries was the policy of "apartheid" meaning "separate but unequal development of the different racial groups in South Africa" adopted by the Nationalist Party of the Dutch descendants, better known as the Afrikaaners in 1948. In order to appreciate the full impact of the first tenure of the Nationalist party on South Africa's race relations, we need to note that the party had contested the 1948 general election on a purported campaign platform to "Purify our state and public services ... from the black sea of South Africa's Non white groups the Natives, Coloured and Asians" (HEARD 1974:33). With such a diabolical platform, one is not surprised to read this devastating assessment of the Nationalist first term in office by the same author.

During their first term in office the Nationalists disdained to disguise the character of their regime. They proceeded to strengthen and to add to the existing segregationist structures in South Africa and in doing so to transform them into a system which justified the distinguishing new name of apartheid (Idem P.47.)

It is not important to inquire as to whether the policy of apartheid as introduced by the nationalist party was novel or a modern manifestation of the Dutch historical vacillation between assimilation and apartheid, what needs to be highlighted is the fact that the Dutch "belief that the white men whether merchant, mariner or settler, should stand "above and apart" from the coloured among whom they lived" (BOXER 1965:215), produced far reaching negative consequences for the Black Majority in South Africa. For in actual practice the policy of apartheid translated into the assignment of the Black majority who constituted about 70% of the total population of South Africa into a number of impoverished dry and non productive home lands which added to about 30% of the land mass of South Africa. The strategic vision of the apartheid regime was that eventually each of the

homelands would become self-governing.

At the same time the policy of separate development reserved the choicest lands in South Africa endowed with most of the minerals to the white population that constituted less than 30% of the total population of the Republic.

Thus in addition to the inequality in the allocation of land between the races, there were the inequalities in the separate housing, transport, recreational and sporting facilities provided for the Black Majority in contrast with the superb facilities enjoyed by the white minority

The full impact of the apartheid system was to seriously expose the black population to economic exploitation by the white minority as noted by (MONAMMED1982), as well as stir up frequent black protest against the obnoxious aspects of the system such as the pass laws or the attempt to introduce Afrikaans as the official language in Soweto in 1976.

The essence of apartheid as a policy was the sharp and nauseating contrast between the Black Majority and the affluence it generated for the white minority. On the basis of this dehumanizing effect of the apartheid system on the black population, it not only split the Black majority into those who wanted to work within the system such as the Coloureds and Indians (HUGO1978), it also led to the total rejection of the system by others who argued that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it black and white" and that "government could only justify its claim of authority on the will of all the people." (MELI 1988:210). It was basically in support of this latter claim that Nigeria and several other countries intervened in favour of the anti-apartheid struggle.

A related source of conflict between Nigeria and South Africa which strengthened the competition between the two States was the perception among Nigerian leaders that the illegal regime in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe relied on support from South Africa and that without such support Ian SMITH would have not even declared his (UDI) unilateral declaration of independence in 1965. It is not important to examine in detail here whether the support or assistance extended to the illegal regime in Zimbabwe was done willingly

or out of the force of circumstance. What is really important is the fact that the psychological security which the illegal regime derived from a knowledge that the West was unwilling to take military action that would jeopardize its own investments, and that the South African prime Minister "Could not refuse assistance to a state which was a valuable buffer and the South African electorate was highly sympathetic to the plight of fellow whites across the Limpopo" (BULLIER 1977:90), were central to sustaining the illegal regime for more than fourteen years. To the extent that the apartheid system served as the basis for the sustaining of racial domination both within South Africa itself and in Zimbabwe - Rhodesia, the eradication of apartheid became an integral part of the politics of decolonisation for Nigeria

It must however be emphasized that what contributed most to heightening the competition between Nigeria and South Africa was the decision by the South African government to defend itself from the pressure of the nationalist movements in the country by adopting a policy that came to be known as "total strategy". Essentially this policy which combined an internal element of "white-washing" the policy of apartheid hoping thereby to make it more acceptable to the black majority, had an external component of massive destabilization of South Africa's neighbours which provided sanctuaries and logistic support to the freedom fighters. An observer who assessed this new policy at the early stage of its implementation summed up the whole strategy as follows:

Total strategy, it must be emphasized, is not directly concerned with liberalization. Its central purpose is to rationalize apartheid and to convert what is in many ways an incoherent system of control into a smooth running machine of domination. (FRANKEL 1980: 284)

Despite the fact that the international community and the Black majority in South Africa read beyond the ploy of total strategy, this in no way prevented the policy from destroying many countries as a result of the massive military incursions into neighboring States such as

Angola, Mozambique, Botswana and Swaziland, the assassination and maiming of prominent (ANC) leaders in Lusaka, Zambia, Maputo and Dares Salaam, as well as the financing of rival armed movements to contend with legitimate governments in those countries. (DAVIES and OMEARA 1985). One of the long lasting effects of the policy of total strategy adopted by the apartheid regime was the severe destruction and devastation of the industrial, agricultural and infrastructural facilities of the countries affected by the policy. RENAMO in Mozambique³ and UNITA in Angola were the major beneficiaries of the South African government's policy of destabilization which has left those two countries in permanent economic and humanitarian distress.

For example, in June 1987 the Anglican clergyman and Nobel Peace Laureate had to openly condemn his own government for supporting the rebels in Mozambique whom he correctly described as bandits:

Tutu today accused South Africa of being responsible for atrocities committed by the armed bandits in Mozambique. Visits to hospitals and orphanages in the (two) provinces (showed) children who were mutilated, malnourished and suffering from other effects of the war being waged by the armed bandits. (Quoted from FBIS 1987, DI emphasis added)

Such incidents were not confined only to Mozambique and Angola but, other neighbours like Botswana, were equally affected by terrorist attacks, bomb explosions in the urban centres and negative propaganda (Idem D3).

It may be necessary to stress the long term damage and the destructive effect which the total strategy adopted by the South African government had on the neighbouring countries. For Angola in particular, a foreign observer noted that:

By the end of 1987, UN Sources estimate 690,000 peasants had been forced to flee their homes because of the war between UNITA (Supported by South Africa and the United states) and the Angolan state." As such, "domestic cereal production can barely satisfy half

of the population's needs (WISNER 1988:279).

The same observation could be made in relation to several of South Africa's neighbours in the late 1970s and all through the 1980s; creating a situation whereby peace was considered "a necessary prerequisite for development" in many communities. (Idem). If we had given quite some space to a discussion of the wide ranging impact of the regional policy of South Africa during the dying days of apartheid politics in the Republic, this is to better prepare us to appreciate why the Nigerian government prior to 1991 considered the struggle against apartheid the most central element in the country's foreign policy.

NIGERIA'S ROLE IN THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE

Nigeria's role in the struggle to eradicate apartheid took several forms and pervaded all facets and ramification of the country's foreign policy.

The confrontation at the Heads of Government meeting and the masterminding of the expulsion of the Republic of South Africa from the Commonwealth and the eventual severance of diplomatic relations with the Republic constituted the genesis of the long drawn struggle. According to a government source: "Regarding the fight against apartheid Nigeria has adopted a multiple track approach". (MEA1991:45) However, over time new strategies were evolved that included a wide array of specific activities and combination of activities.

The first approach in the struggle consisted in raising the complex problems of apartheid, racial discrimination and domination to the status of standing principles of the organization of African Unity (OAU). This feat was accomplished in 1963 when the Charter of the Organization of African Unity declared as one of its purposes: "to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa" (Article 2(1) of the charter).

Among the various forms of colonialism then extant on the African continent were namely:

- a) Portuguese colonial rule in Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique;
- b) The white minority regimes in Zimbabwe Rhodesia, and South Africa of two variants: Institutionalized white domination in South Africa and an illegal regime in Rhodesia and Namibia.

To further stigmatize the illegal and minority regimes in Southern Africa, the continental body (the O.A.U) under Nigeria's impulsion, retained as one of its governing principles: "Absolute dedication to the total emancipation of African territories that are still dependent" (Article 3 (6) of the Charter of the O.A.U).

Professor ADEKUNLE AJALA (1986) has already enumerated some of the key elements in Nigeria's long struggle against apartheid. These included the measures of isolation of South Africa from international fora as we have alluded to earlier, massive support for the nationalist, liberation movements fighting in the region as a whole, as well as the use of international conferences in Nigeria to canvass for positive international action against South Africa. The timely nationalization of the assets of British Petroleum paved the way for the independence of Zimbabwe in 1979. Thus, Professor AJALA could be justified in affirming that Nigeria's policy in Southern Africa, "has fared fairly well" (1986:206). For purposes of emphasis, it may be useful to point out how the necessity of the liberation struggle led to the institutional evolution of the organization of African Unity. (OAU). This institutional development took the form of the creation of the OAU Liberation Committee which even though not provided for in the charter, had to be created uniquely for the purpose of promoting the liberation struggle in the Southern African sub-region. Many OAU members contributed funds, military hardware, supplies and other equipment to enhance the effectiveness of the struggle for liberation. However, the greatest contributor to the coffers of the OAU Liberation Committee was Nigeria which even though physically removed from the sub-region became an honorary member of the group of Frontline states that shared land frontiers with South Africa

and were often exposed to destabilization measures as well as military assaults. The Nigerian Government even went ahead to institute a public contribution in 1977 for the purpose not only of raising funds for the liberation movements but also for raising public awareness on the problems of apartheid. The South African Relief Fund SARF became a major source of funds and materials for the ANC and other nationalist movements fighting inside the apartheid enclave.

It may be interesting to note how the Nigerian commitment to honour its obligations to the Liberation Committee was not allowed to suffer from the economic crises that engulfed the country from 1982 onwards. Even in the thick of domestic difficulties in 1985, General BUHARI ordered the payment of the country's assessed dues of 854,000 us dollars for 1984/85. (Nigerian News Bulletin February, 1985,4).

In my own study of Nigerian foreign policy, I have shown how Nigeria's participation in the Lome process (which refers to the negotiations prior to the signature of each of the four conventions and the consultations that were incident upon the application of each treaty) enabled the Nigerian government to progressively bring the European Community and the individual member states to adopt a common policy on the liberation of Southern Africa, the need to abolish apartheid, and the use of the severance of sporting links, and ultimately, economic sanctions worked to compel the South African government to change its apartheid policy and accept black majority rule. Eventually such a common ACP-EEC joint position was presented to the United Nations for global action with positive results. (ODOCK 1989:357 ff).

The impact of Nigeria's anti-apartheid foreign policy was particularly hurtful to the various apartheid regimes in South Africa. A South African researcher in the apartheid era who in 1983 undertook the study of Nigeria's foreign policy had no alternative than to focus on the country's anti-apartheid policy and conclude that the policy was that of "paranoia" (SINCLAIR 1983). The import of that designation was no doubt to underscore the far reaching negative

impact which Nigeria's foreign policy had on the fortunes of the racist regime.

MAJORITY RULE AND THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

The release from prison and the eventual election of NELSON MANDELA, the longest serving political prisoner of Africa (1964-1991) as the first Black president of the Republic of South Africa closed the dark pages of South Africa as a pariah state and opened the way for closer cooperation between two of Africa's most prominent states. Such closer cooperation is in line with the suggestion made by some Nigerians that the country needed to prepare itself for a post-apartheid policy in which "Nigeria's search for an international role (will not be) reduced to championing the interests of the African man and those of African descent ... The evolving international system imposes the necessity on Nigeria to become more coordinated internally. With such a sound domestic base, Nigeria can pursue a credible African Policy ..." (ADELUSI 1984:30). As part of the requirement for becoming internally coordinated, ADELUSI listed the "building up of an internally strong domestic economy". It is the need to build up a strong domestic economy that makes the promotion of close economic cooperation between Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa an important dimension of Nigeria's post-apartheid policy. Such close cooperation can be found on a number of grounds: sentimental, historical, linguistic and solid economic interests. The sentimental and emotional foundations for cooperation between Nigeria and South Africa are easy to locate. Apart from a few countries in the frontline that were directly contiguous with the white minority regimes in Southern Africa, Nigeria made the greatest diplomatic, financial and political contributions to the liberation of South Africa and the eradication of apartheid.

One could recall here how the timely nationalization of the assets of British Petroleum (BP) by the government of General OBASANJO on July, 31, 1979 helped to ensure the success of the negotiations for the independence of Zimbabwe. What needs to be stressed here is the

fact that the independence of Zimbabwe exposed the apartheid regime to the full impact of the nationalist liberation movements in the Republic which now had an additional sanctuary for their operations. If Nigeria's policies effectively paved the way for the eradication of apartheid, the need for the post apartheid regime, in South Africa to cultivate friendly relations with Nigeria was seen as a natural means of expressing gratitude to the government and people of Nigeria. However, the authoritarian policy of the ABACHA administration in Nigeria in the mid 1990s made such a rapprochement between the two countries virtually impossible.

From a related perspective, it is necessary to highlight the linguistic and cultural ties between Nigeria and South Africa that date back to the 19th century when both countries were British colonies. It is remarkable that both South Africa and Nigeria have English as their official language or "Lingua Franca". In this respect we may mention the fact that even though the Nigerian government has indicated the desire to promote three of the country's several indigenous languages, none of them has been able to threaten the official position of the English language. Similarly in the Republic of South Africa the attempt by the racist government of the 1970s to superimpose Afrikaans upon the African Youths was at the roof of the widespread SOWETO riots of 1976. (DUGARD 1977: XI - XIV). Thus, in spite of everything, Nigerians and South Africans can communicate in the English language. This fact must no doubt have accounted for the influx of several Nigerians to South Africa since the advent of majority rule in the Republic.

But perhaps, it is the thick layer of shared and potential economic interest that best explains the imperative of a Nigeria - South Africa Cooperation. Our basic postulate is that Nigeria and South Africa are two of the richest countries on the African continent, which taken together with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), could lay the foundation for the emergence of Africa as a prosperous continent in the 21st century.

As we have shown previously, Nigeria's

strategic location, demographic profile, petroleum resources give the country an extensive internal market and a great potential for industrial development. The relevance of industrial cooperation with South Africa is that it could help to remedy some defects in Nigeria's automobile and other manufacturing industries which have been recognized as facing "a variety of problems". Consequently they are seen as requiring new skills such as "automotive design, forging and founding, precision and the like" (AKINBINU 1997:32). Thus, Nigeria's cooperation with South Africa in the industrial sector could help to overcome some of the negative effects of the structural adjustment programme in Nigeria. In this regard we should not lose sight of the fact that some of the consequences of apartheid in South Africa included the use of state power to enforce the accumulation of profits by the trans-national corporations operating in the country. Thus, in the 1970s and 1980s South Africa became the African relay station or regional African headquarters of several multinational corporations.

As noted by two scholars:

After World War II, trans-national corporate finance capital focused its expansion in Africa on, above all, South Africa. Firms from all the core capitalist countries played a complex role in transforming South Africa's mineral-based economy into a modern, industrial, increasingly militarized state. The forms their penetration took varied, combining direct investment, mobilization of international credit, provision of technologies and managerial assistance" Three times as much foreign capital was invested in South Africa in the first two decades after world war II as in the entire pre-war era. Foreign investment totaled R 9163 million in 1973-more than three times the 1956 total of R2757 million. (SEIDMAN and MAKGETLA 1980:57)

Given such a huge infusion of foreign investment, it is no surprise that at the turn of the century, the South African industrial

establishments have become leaders in all the key sectors on the African continent. Thus when we envisage a Nigerian - South African cooperation we should bear in mind that this will be mediated by the local branches of the multi-national corporations and all the implications involved for host countries

Finally, an important area of economic cooperation between Nigeria and South African is in the field of Solid minerals. It may be worth our while to note that since 1995 the Nigerian government has set up a Ministry of Solid Minerals to explore and, exploit Nigeria's solid minerals such as iron ore, coal, gold, tin, lead, zinc etc.

Now, solid minerals have been and continue to form the bed-rock and foundation of the South African economy. The two authors quoted above noted this with respect to South Africa's special mineral endowment:

"South Africa (has) the largest and most varied known mineral resources of any region in the world. ... In addition to gold and diamonds, it exploited copper, nickel, tin, manganese, asbestos and zinc. It possessed a third of the worlds known reserves of uranium, the largest known deposits of chrome and vanadium; antimony, fluorspar, titanium and vermiculite, and produced over 80 percent of the Western worlds platinum". (Idem p. 92).

Thus it could be stated from the foregoing that the current cooperation in the field of prospecting, production and development of Nigeria's solid minerals with enterprises from South Africa is a policy that is well founded in so far it is based on more than a century of South Africa's mining experience, even if the benefits of this long process of mineral exploitation has been more to the benefit of the giant mining corporations particularly Anglo-American (INNES 1984), rather than the ordinary South Africans.

On the basis of the fore-going, one can look up to a fruitful Nigeria - South Africa economic alliance. There is however a strategic dimension in the passage quoted. Given South Africa's possession of a lion's share of the world's known reserves of uranium, their cooperation could easily spill over from the purely economic to

the strategic field if Nigeria is to actualize her ambition of becoming a nuclear power deserving of a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations. Such cooperation in the strategic area of the exploitation and use of uranium will definitely project Nigeria into the politics of uranium which is a subject of major importance and interest in itself. (MOSS 1981).

One clear indicator of the close correlation between the changing pattern of Nigeria's political relations with South Africa and the level of economic transactions between the two countries is the fact that a major study of Nigeria's economic relations had no positive mention of any exchanges between the two countries. Rather we have this general negative affirmation on relations between the two countries:

Prohibition of imports from and exports to South Africa and mandatory economic sanction, faithful campaigning and support for international economic action, particularly against South Africa have since independence characterized Nigeria's foreign policy towards the Pretoria government. (AKINDELE 1988:144 – 145)

This official policy was demonstrated in several ways, one very interesting one being the absence of any official statistics on economic transactions between the two countries up to 1992. The official journal of the Federal Office of Statistics reports imports and exports between the two countries beginning from 1993, as shown in this table.

We must appreciate the fact that 1993 was the year before the democratic elections that brought Nelson MANDELA to power. In concrete terms trade relations between Nigeria and South Africa have evolved strictly in tandem with the resolution of the political conflict over apartheid. Nigeria exports to South Africa consist mainly of crude petroleum of which the Republic imported 107,148,342 barrels in 1998 for a total value of 28,582,856 million naira. The next item is natural rubber which South Africa took about 19,842 kg in 1998. Light manufactures and books and a few other items make up the balance. Nigerian imports from South Africa vary widely in range from chemical products, organic and inorganic compounds, vitamins and pharmaceutical products, electrical circuits, and appliances, hydraulic pumps and stationery (Federal Office of Statistics (1990 passion).

TABLE: Level of commercial exchanges between Nigeria and South Africa 1990 - 1998

Year	Imports	Exports
1990	-	-
1991	-	-
1992	-	-
1993	3,309,099	2,897,597
1994	193,227,111	18435,215
1995	3,345,860,982	568,879,169
1996	798560	161178,800
1997	-	-
1998	3,696,917	1,648,122

SOURCE: Nigeria Foreign Trade Summary Jan.- Dec., Abuja Federal office of statistics, Annual romances from 1990 to 1998

WHO BENEFITS: THE STATES, THE PEOPLE OR THE MULTINATIONALS?

In this regard, there are three possible hypotheses that can be advanced:

(1) Nigeria's cooperation with South Africa will be to the ultimate benefit of the two states as actors in their quest to master their political and economic environment in the African sub-region. This first hypothesis has some points to command it.

In view of the prolonged international crises that the global economy has undergone in the past two and a half decades most under developed countries have become so encumbered and burdened by odious debts (ADAMS 1991), that none of them can independently and single handedly pursue an autonomous development path. It is perhaps in this perspective that President OBASANJO emphasized the ongoing cooperation between Nigeria and South Africa in his 2001 Patrons Dinner Lecture to the NIIA. Speaking on the theme: "Challenges to Nigeria's Leadership in a Rapidly Globalising World" the President stated that "For Nigeria, the fundamental connection between domestic economic capacity and the projection of leadership in foreign policy is a recurring dilemma..." OBASANJO 2001: *The Guardian* Wednesday December 12, 61.)

To the average Nigerian the nature of this dilemma is quite evident: you need a strong economic base to be able to pursue a leadership role in regional and global affairs. Where your economic base is weak and uncoordinated, few inter-locutors will be willing to give heed to your exhortations no matter how well meaning. It is in this regard that the President went further to inform his audience that "the motivation of the idea of strategic partnership ensures that Nigeria is able to share the resource burden and responsibility of regional leadership in addressing common critical concerns including in those areas that will yield clear benefits for its own citizens and economy. Thus the various joint projects executed with South Africa and Ghana". (Idem)

It may be necessary to note that this conception of a strategic partnership with South Africa for example is both a reflection of the changes in the national interests of the two states from a position of antagonism and conflict as we have earlier noted, but it also confirms the new global context of interdependence and the reduced capacity of states to pursue independent development strategies at national and regional levels, hence the need to work in partnerships.

However the President's suggestion that such cooperation might "yield clear benefits for its own citizens" might be more far fetched than might appear at first sight. It requires us to examine the second hypothesis of our study namely:

(2) the individual citizens of Nigeria and South Africa would be the ultimate beneficiaries of the strategic cooperation or partnership between their two countries.

This second hypothesis requires us to carry out a detailed analysis of the level, structure and patterns of commercial and other transactions between Nigeria and South Africa on the one hand and on the other a review of the labour and industrial relation practices in both countries. With the NLC in Nigeria spitting fire over alleged unwillingness of the Federal and State Governments to honour their pledge of a 25% wage increase for workers in the year 2002 the welfare of the ordinary Nigerian might not be the top priority of the government. Besides the dispute over the non implementation of the planned wage increase, the President has gone ahead to announce that the Government will withdraw subsidies on social services such as the cost of fuel, water supply and several others. (*The Guardian*, Wednesday December 5, 2001, p.96)

In the case of South Africa, there is every reason to believe that the ordinary citizens of the Republic, especially black South Africans, are not likely to be the ultimate beneficiaries of the strategic partnership with Nigeria even though their lot in other areas, especially in education has improved since the era of apartheid was brought to an end.

According to information published in the *Sunday Guardian* of 16 December 2001, the

number of blacks who have earned University degrees and diplomas has increased by 173% between 1991 and 1998. This means that the number of black University graduates passed from 14,798 in 1991 to 40,333 in 1998. There is no reason why we should expect that this impressive record could be equalled in other sectors such as employment, wages and health care because of the more dominant role played by the multinationals in the area of employment and wage determination. In this regard the historical antecedents are not a source of optimism with respect to the conditions of black workers in South Africa. In a study of the role of the working class in underdeveloped countries, [SANDBROOK and COHEN 1975:3], had this to say about the exploitation of black workers in the Republic:

Black cash earnings in 1969 were no higher and possibly lower in real terms than they had been in 1911, whereas the real cash earnings of white miners increased by 70 percent over the same period.

Such a pathetic situation must have worsened rather than improved during the run up to majority rule. For the prospects of black majority rule tended to harden white attitudes rather than soften them.

Unfortunately, an observer who has studied the business ethics of the multinational corporations in South Africa has pointed out the need to develop the spirit of "UBUNTU" or humaneness which not only implies a basic respect for human nature but also a willingness to share with others what one possesses. (TEFFO1998). Against the ideals of Ubuntu, the author painted the picture of business ethics in South Africa characterized by the prevalence of "the strong perception... that one should get as large a share as possible of the profits to be made in business" (P. 242). We know that where such a world view prevails and obtains, only the strong and the powerful will be the beneficiaries whereas the weak and the power less will remain losers or at the receiving end.

This is perhaps more likely to be so in a

racially segregated society such as South Africa. It is perhaps in view of this reality that TEFFO concluded his paper with a passionate plea for reform "For the South African economy to flourish to its full potential, black people should be drawn into the main stream of the economy" (P 250). Does this not have a familiar ring especially in relation to the operations of the multinational oil corporations in Nigeria? What is evident from the above survey is that neither in Nigeria nor in South Africa can the ordinary citizens of those two countries be considered the ultimate beneficiaries of the strategic partnership between the two states. From all indications, the ultimate beneficiaries are likely to be the multinational corporations operating in the two countries as a result of their peculiar relations with host governments (AKINSANYA 1984 :20; DURU 1999.)

CONCLUSION

This paper has carried out an analytical review of the evolving close cooperation between Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa based on the ever changing character of the national interests of both countries. The paper highlighted the fact that the transition of both countries to democratic governance based on majority rule removed the central point of conflict in their relationship and projected the need for closer cooperation between the two countries.

In the light of the two fold challenges which the on going processes of globalization pose for all under developed countries namely: how to overcome both marginalization and peripheralization from the global system (AKIINDLE 1995:102 – 103) and, ensure that each under developed country derives some benefit for its own citizens, in an international context where it has been observed that there is a "lack of tangible benefits to most developing countries from opening their economies" (KHOR, 2000:1).

This situation led the author to advance a number of general conclusions and proposals including the need for "like minded countries of the South... to start or strengthen centres of

research and coordination that can help them in their preparations for negotiations as well as strategic thinking and long term planning". Such arrangements the author suggests should include "those (Institutions and organizations) that are independent or private" (Ibid, P. 101, emphasis added). Even though this problem is not immediately a central concern of our paper, it appears to us useful to note here that the recommendation made above is generally in line with many of the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly for greater cooperation among the countries of the South. Interestingly, the same recommendations often acknowledge the huge gap between previous policy recommendations and the paucity of positive action taken so far. The explanation for lack of progress in the area of effective South-South Cooperation has sometimes been couched in terms of the lack of political will. However such an explanation appears to us as both unsatisfactory and tautological. What needs to be highlighted with respect to the policy-performance gap is the unique character of social formations and how this uniqueness affects the prospects of cooperation between different nation states. Admitted that the collapse of the soviet Union has severely limited the prestige of Marxist and conflict related analytical frameworks, an essential point made by Samir AMIN more than two decades ago needs to be reiterated.

Since the major expression of class divisions in the contemporary world takes the form of the territorial State, the interests of different states representing different dominant classes do not necessarily coincide but more often conflict with each other (AMIN: 1980:19 FF.)

This conflict of interests between different nation states on the basis of the domestic character of the ruling class goes far beyond the appearances put up at diplomatic gatherings and press conferences. More importantly this internal character of the domestic ruling classes in different countries is very instrumental in explaining both the extent and the limits of close cooperation between different nation states having radically different internal structures.

An interesting area of research which the

growing cooperation between Nigeria and South Africa raises is to determine the extent to which the internal class characteristics of both countries' ruling groups will allow them to embark on a full regime of close cooperation in the areas highlighted in our paper. The response to this interrogation is beyond the scope of this paper.

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