
**NIGERIA AND THE UN SEAT; A DISCUSSION OF OBSTACLES TO NIGERIA'S
AMBITION**

George I.J. Obuoforibo
Department of Political and Administrative Studies
University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt

ABSTRACT

The demand for the reform of the United Nations is due to the evolving international system. The international system has gone through such a rapid transformation to the extent that the UN structures as they were at the time of its establishment is making the UN not to function effectively as expected by majority of its membership. Hence, the argument that the Security Council membership be expended to include major financial contributors and the equitable representation of the regional spread. There is every indication that Nigeria has all it takes to represent Africa in an enlarged Security Council. But considering the vagaries associated with international politics a lot still need to be done by Nigeria to garner overwhelming support from Africa to enable her emerge as a consensus candidate for Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's bid for membership of the UN Security Council on a permanent basis has generated intellectual discuss in several ways. In other words, it has been subjected to divergent scholastic views. The existence of such divergent views is understandable in view of the fact that there are so many factors that need to be taken into consideration when looking at Nigeria's ambition to occupy a permanent seat in the UN. Until recently, the structural imbalance in the UN System which tend to Armstrong the performance of the UN has been overlooked by majority of its membership due to the vagaries associated with interstate relations in the post world war II internationally scene which was characterized by the exigencies of cold war between the two superpowers i.e. the US and the Soviet union. There emergence as sovereign nations in a turbulent bipolarized World necessitated the adoption of a multilateral path in there international relations. This became necessary in view of the embodiment of the concept of sovereign equality of all states big and small alike in the UN Charter. What this implies is that injury to one is injury to all which is the hallmark of the concept of collective security in the UN Charter.

The arguments that informed this structural imbalance may be due to the exigencies of the time it was established. But the truth of the matter is that it has made it impossible for the UN to perform its functions creditably as expected by majority of its membership from the southern hemisphere. It is therefore not surprising that as far back as 1956 the G77 countries of the less Developed World have demanded for the restructuring of the UN with the call for a New World Economic Order. However, due to the clientelist tendencies exhibited by most third World countries, the much expected Unity and solidarity among them fizzled out due to the covert relationship they had with both sides of the divide in the cold war era. Even at that the issue continues to feature in different forms and in the UN itself

particularly in the general Assembly which constitutes its majority membership. The demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a post cold war globalized World gave a new booster to the demand for the reform of the UN. The third World countries became very vocal and steadfast in their consistent demand for the reform due to the existence of new challenges that emanated in the past cold war era. The existence of some level of opening with the toying of the idea of democratization by the third World generally and Africa in particular was some kind of African glasnosts without Perestroika. With the dividends of democracy such as economic empowerment, in the form of employment, the provision of basic amenities and other infrastructures not forthcoming tend to break the bandore box of conflicts across the different parts of Africa and Nigeria was not an exception.

Though several internal factors such as poor governance deliberate exclusion of some ethnic groups, in the political equation, etc. contributed in no small measure to a creeping paralysis of the economy, but the external factors of symmetrical economic relations of the advanced west through the instrumentality of the Breton woods institutions tend to exacerbate the situation. The thinking is that the external factors could easily be taken care of in a reformed United Nations. That is the more reason why the third World countries are more vociferous in the demand for the reform of the United Nations, the core of which is permanent membership of the Security Council. It is in this context that we could understand Nigeria's ambition for a permanent seat in the Security Council. The question is what is the rational behind Nigeria's quest for a permanent membership in the Security Council? Does she have the requisite credentials for that ambition? If she has, are there obstacles that would constitute a stumbling block in her bid for this ambition? The basic concern of this paper is to provide answers to the above questions and many more issues that are involved in understanding Nigeria's quest for the membership of the Security Council on a permanent basis. The paper is divided in to seven sections. The first is the introduction which is followed by an examination of the UN structure as provided in the Charter, which is followed by a look at the call for the reform, the fourth aspect is centered on the rational behind Nigeria's ambition, fifthly we looked at the obstacles to Nigeria's ambition, sixth is on the strategies to overcome the obstacles, the seventh is the conclusion.

The United Nations According to the Charter

The United Nations came into existence after the debilitating catastrophe of the Second World War.(Akindele R.A., 2000, 88) It was established by some far-seeing founding fathers who saw the danger to the World from this risk of international anarchy (Narasinhan C.V., 1988, 5) They therefore strove to eradicate the extremely decentralized nature of the traditional system of International relations. This concern of the founding fathers which is clearly shown in the preamble to the Charter indicates the purposes and principles of the organization.

“We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from scourge of War, which twice in our life time has brought out old sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human

right in dignity and with of the human person, in the equal right of men and women, and of nations large and small and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other services of international law can be maintained”.

The preamble went further,

“to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, to unite our strength, to maintain international peace and security, to ensure that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international Machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples” (Narasurhan C.V. 1988.5-8)

From the preamble it is easily discernible that one major principle of the United Nations is the principle of sovereign equality of all its members which as shown in the preamble is the equal rights of nations large and small, and the obligation on the part of all members to fulfill in good faith the obligations they have assumed under this Charter. What this implies is that they also accepted the limitations on their sovereignty arising from that obligation to settle their international disputes by peaceful means and to refrain in their international relations from threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. This is one of the important provisions of the UN Charter that attracted the newly independent countries of Africa into membership of the UN. This is predicated on the fact that to them membership of the United Nations gives them assurance of their sovereignty. It gave a sense of security. As members of the UN they feel that this particular clause of the Charter in a way insulates them from external aggression. In terms of its structures, the UN is made up of three major organs namely the Security Council, the General Assembly and the General Secretariate. This is in addition to the existence of several other sub-agencies, such as ECOSOC, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, IMF, just to mention a few. It is expected that the purposes of the founding fathers are to be carried out to their logical conclusion through the organs of the World Body.

It is from the context of the powers conferred on these organs particularly the Security Council and the General Assembly by the Charter which is the constitutional blue print of the organization that one would appreciate the efficacy or otherwise of the operational dynamics of the organization. The General Assembly of the UN according to articles 10-14 of the Charter has only the power to make recommendations in political matters either to the parties concerned or to the Security Council with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. In other words, it can debate, investigate and recommend but it cannot act. Even these modest functions have been adversely affected by the provisions of article 12 which precludes the General Assembly from making even recommendations on matters on the agenda of the Security Council. In comparative terms we find that the concurrent jurisdiction of a deciding Assembly and a deciding Council which was the distinguishing feature of the League of Nations is replaced by the alternate jurisdiction of a deciding

Security Council which concerns itself with a matter the General Assembly may still debate but it can no longer even recommend. (Morgenthau, H.J., 1985, 502). It may well be that this is so essentially due to the existence of certain differences in the provisions of the League covenant and that of the UN. In the League, the Council is a standing committee while the members of the UN Security have been conferred with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of International peace and security as provided in article 24 of the Charter. Again the General Assembly of the UN equally has some responsibility with regard to the maintenance of international peace security as well, but this role is at best a secondary role because the primary responsibility rests with the Security Council. (Nazasuham, E.H. 1988, 18).

The Security Council appears as it were as the Holy Alliance of our time. The predominance of the Security Council having thus been established, the Charter went further to establish the predominance of the five permanent members of the Council. In it the five permanent members that are to perform the governmental functions of the United Nation. These limitations of the functions and powers of the General Assembly would not have been a serious matter if it were to be made up of a membership of two or three nations and not the representative body of all the representative body of all nations of the world. This kind of distribution of functions between the Security Council and the General Assembly has amounted to some kind of constitutional monstrosity giving the UN the image of having split personality. In other words, the UN may speak with respect to the same issue with two voices; the General Assembly and the Security Council. (Morgenthau H.J.). Another issue is the problem of unanimity of the five permanent members which is the nucleus of the world federation. The UN's functioning is predicated upon the continuous unity of the five permanent members of the Security Council. It then means that with but one permanent member dissenting there can be no international government of the UN. These constitutional loopholes in the charter have often been made ill-use of by the five permanent members of the Security Council. This has led to some kind of a crippling paralysis of the UN making it to earn the acronym of a toothless bull dog that can bark but cannot bite. It is from this context that we need to understand the growing concern of the majority of its members of the need to restructure the UN to reflect on and be in tandem with the current realities of the world.

The Demand for the Reformation of the UN

The constitutional scheme of the UN was built upon three political assumptions. First, the great powers acting in unison would deal with any threat to peace and security regardless of its source. Secondly, their combined wisdom and strength would be sufficient to meet all such threats without resort to war. Thirdly, no such threat would emanate from one of the great powers themselves. The fact that the great powers cannot act in unison as earlier envisaged has been made possible by developments in the post World War II international scene. We witness within the UN system the existence of duplicity of authority between the Security Council and the General Assembly. With the existence of constitutional crises, we witness the struggle for supremacy between the Security Council and the General Assembly

at the end of which the Security Council reasserted its constitutional authority. What this reassertment resulted to was the excessive usage of the veto power by permanent members. In a situation of this nature the principle of sovereign equality of nations large and small enshrined in the UN Charter does not apply in all situations because there are five permanent members who are more equal than other members. It becomes extremely difficult for the resolutions passed by the General Assembly to see the light of day due to the dissenting votes from the veto wielding members of the Security Council. The issue of implementing resolutions passed became one of the nagging problems of the UN. To overcome this problem requires the reformation of the United Nations to enable it function effectively as envisaged by the founding fathers. What we need to bear in mind is the fact that reformation just cannot be one sided. In other words, there has to be a consensus as to the form in which a reformed UN would be like. But the question is, does it mean that unless such a consensus emerges there would be initiation or efforts geared towards the achievement of that goal? There is no doubt about the fact that the big five world always strive to maintain status quo. Even if they concede to the idea of reform they would certainly want it to be in their favour. That is the more reason why a majority of the UN membership is demanding for a reform of the UN to sooth the realities of the contemporary world challenges. There are however, divergent views as to the pattern the reform should take. One of the major issues is to reconcile the obviously irreconcilable differences of the dominant and weak powers. For the third world, reform is sought in the structure of the Security Council and the Breton Woods system. This became all the more necessary in view of the fact that it is the UN's organ that is constitutionally conferred with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, one alone empowered to determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression and to decide what measure will be taken to maintain or restore international peace and security, the only organ whose decisions all member States have expressly agreed to accept and carryout, the Security Council was clearly conceived to be and today remains unquestionably the power house of the UN mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security (Saliu H.A., 1999, 240,241). It is therefore not surprising why the major victorious allied powers in 1945 sponsored and peremptorily insisted on their being its permanent members, along with the special privilege of veto power attached to it.

Therefore the reform of the security council has logically and quite understandably become the imperative of our time; largely because the international community which it serves and in which it operated has experienced and continue to experience a profound transformation particularly on the membership, the changing distribution of power and influence among the states therein, and the complex and expanding heterogeneity of interest all of which requires adaption, adjustment and accommodation in the institutional structure and processes for the management of the global system. For instance, with respect to its membership, the United Nations of 1945 consisted of 51 sovereign member states, while that of today has a membership of 193 sovereign states. (Akindede, R A, 2000, 92). Another issue that has generated wide spread support by the majority of UN membership is the issue of the relationship between the Security Council and the general assembly. The contention is that,

the expected reform is to focus on areas that can strengthen the relationship between the Council and the Assembly. The weight of opinion is highly in favour of giving more powers to the General Assembly in the areas of security functions and general effectiveness. Composed of all members with equal rights, the Assembly should possess all what it takes to direct global affairs and give more influence to the peoples of the world (Saliu, H.A., 2005, 197). This became necessary in view of the inability of a deadlocked Security Council to perform the security functions conferred on her by the Charter. Implicitly, for the UN to perform its functions creditably as envisaged by the founding fathers and in tandem with conventional realities of a rapidly changing world some security functions ought to be performed by the General Assembly.

This became all the more necessary in view of the fact that keen observers of the UN system have come to the realization that, in recent times only crisis spots that appeal to the veto power wielding states often attract the attention of the council, people have cited the Somali debacle which was once described as the world's forgotten tragedy on which the organization lost a precious time before and later withdrew without accomplishing its objectives. Where political appeal is absent, economic considerations have played a major role in determining where the Council's resolutions go and the necessary actions to enforce that decision are taken. (Saliu, H.A., 2005, 196). It is therefore not surprising that the General Assembly some time rise to the occasion to salvage the situation. One such example is the Korean case of 1950. To show that it is the most active and vibrant branch of the United Nations she resorted to the usage of certain constitutional devices. First of all the control over the activities of the General Assembly which article 12 paragraph 1 of the charter gives to the security council were circumvented by two constitutional devices, (1) a number of cases have been removed from a dead locked security council to the General Assembly by a simple majority vote on the assumption that such removal is a procedural matter that does not require the unanimous votes of all the permanent members according to Article 27, paragraph 3 of the Charter. Furthermore, the General Assembly has interpreted article 12 paragraph 1 literally and has made recommendations with regard to issues that were at the same time on the agenda of the Security Council (Morgenthau H.J 1985 507-508).

The procedure has been justified by the legal argument that the Assembly was dealing with an aspect of the same issue different from that which the Security Council was concerned. It is obvious that this argument tends to emasculate article 12 paragraphs 1 and in consequence opens the door wide for the General Assembly's assumption of unlimited jurisdiction over virtually any issue submitted to it. The General Assembly went further by assuming in a positive way primary and specific responsibility for the preservation of peace and security which according to article 24 paragraph 1, the Security Council is primarily responsible. The Assembly achieved this result through the uniting for peace resolution, which established the collective measures committee and gave it broad advisory functions for the maintenance of peace and security. The collective measures committee owes its existence to the demonstrated inability of the Security Council to act as an agency of

international government on any issue in which divergent interests of the great powers are involved. A substantial majority of the members of the United Nations felt that the United Nations ought to take action with regard to certain matters and that in the absence of a Security Council able to act, the General Assembly ought to do so (Morgenthau, H.A 1985). It may well be that the prevailing circumstances of the time and the kind of majority the General Assembly enjoyed at the time may have contributed to this development. For instance, the majority which carried out the recommendations of the General Assembly until the end of 1956 had as its nucleus, the United States, the nations of Western Europe, most members of the British Commonwealth and Latin American nations amounting to thirty-nine votes. By the logic of political interest, it became a weapon against certain individual aggressors identified as such by their deeds. Thus when in 1953, the Russian delegate to the General Assembly, during the discussion of the report of the collective measurers committee declared that the uniting for peace resolution and the work of the committee were a plot fostered by the United States against the soviet union, he pointed in demagogic language to the fundamental change in the structure and the purpose of the United Nations (Morgenthau H.J., 1985, 570).

However, the massive increase in the membership of the UN by the Afro/Asian block which comprises more than one third of the active UN membership has not been translated into a turn of events in their favour due to lack of unity. If it had voted in unison events would have turned in its favour. Its votes have typically been split, with some members voting with the American or the Soviet bloc was the order of the day during the days of the cold war era. However, in the post cold war era, events seem to have changed with the existence of greater solidarity among the less developed countries of the third World due to their realization of the deliberate usage of the UN Security Council as an instrument of advancing the selfish national interest of the five permanent members and their cronies. This due to the importance they attached to the world body not just as a platform for their international relations but also a body through which problems of the world in the post cold war era has to be solved. The thinking is that it is no longer necessary to continue to rely on old methods that are actually not working for the betterment of the world generally. This is because the problems that emanated in the post cold war globalized world require the existence of a world body that would live up to the desired expectation of generality of the world community. To them the United Nations of the future must be based on the universal values which inspired its creation. The United Nations is expected to provide global leadership and vision in the urgent quest for alternatives to the currently dominant-policies and relationships which generate inequality and sow seeds of turmoil and conflicts. (Gambari, A.A 2005,198)

THE RELATIONAL FOR NIGERIA'S AMBITION

The challenge facing member's nations of the UN such as Nigeria is how to pursue their respective national interest within the organization while strengthening multilateralism as an instrument for addressing global problems (Gambari, A.A 2005,188). That is why from the very beginning Nigeria views the United Nations as an international organization of sovereign States with different social, political and economic system and not an exclusive club of any

power bloc. Hence, from Balewa to the present, Nigeria has had a high stake in a balanced United Nations. (Obiozor, G.A, 1985, V). Nigeria is one of the leading nations of the world, especially of the developing fragment of the international system. Therefore beyond the dialectics of power and symbolism and the use of both attributes Nigerians quest is partly informed by the political realities of the African continent, and the role which she traditionally plays in it- a continent which, to put it plainly is at war with itself as it tackles the challenges of development and change which are rooted partly in the struggle to sustain hard-won- sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and socio-economic development of member states. In this context, the maintenance of peace and security takes the central stage of both national policy and international engagement. (Uhomobihi, M., 2005, 177)

For Nigeria, the logic holds sway that the Security Council should not only be seen as responsible, but also responsive to the needs of its entire membership. Being responsive is defined and understood in this context as enabling developing countries and African countries in particular a voice and a role in the Security Council, which is the primary organ of the United Nations, charged with the responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security and from which flows, development in all its ramifications. It is recognized as a means of encouraging member states to contribute more to international peace and security, the General Assembly would take into account for electing new members, establish practices of regional consultation by giving preference to those States that are among the top three financial contributors in their regional area to the budget, or to the top three troop contributors from there area to the UN peace-keeping mission. That Nigeria is bidding for a permanent seat in a restructured UN system is due to the existence of several positive factors that are in her favour. Nigeria has a nations right from it inception has a lot of regard for international law and as a result as not run foul of the UN charter. There is no record of her interference in the internal affairs of any nation particularly her neighbours, in spite of the existence of eritants along the border with some of her neighbours that often emanate from them. Rather the respect she has for the World body had strengthened her to pursue a good neighbourliness policy through which a number of counties have had course to share with Nigeria her natural endowments as a leading country in Africa (sdimit 2005 203) she always strive to project and protect the image of the continent in the global arena. This resolve has enabled her to carry out several activates that lead to the liberation of several African countries from the shackles of colonialism. Her level of commitment in the liberation of African counties from colonialism and the eradication of Apartheid went to such an extent that she some times stepped on the toes of some powerful countries. Both the campaign for reparations and debt forgiveness have received the deserved international attention because Nigeria has been using all forms available to her to make the two issues more forceful to the point that some positive global reactions have been generated leading to a movement towards consensus especially on the latter. (Saliu H.A. 2005, 204)

Nigeria has been highly committed and involving in the efforts geared towards finding resolution to several crises across the African continent. In virtually all the conflict resolution efforts in the continent Nigeria is not just participating but also playing a leading role. This

could either be in the ivoirian crises, Sudanese war, Liberia, Guinea Bissaun. Togo crises. What this implies is that since the UN itself is created to preserve peace and Nigeria is already a leading country in conflict resolution, both within and outside Africa, the latter is eminently qualified to sit in an enlarged security council to guard the African / Black race which the current shape of the UN is not sufficient in making. (Saliu H.A. 2005, 205). Africa represents the historic roots of black people and it is where largest concentration on earth today, resides. But one in every four black African is a Nigeria. This arithmetical reality confers on Nigeria a burden of special responsibility as the largest single concentration of the Black people on earth. With its 150 million black people, Nigeria has greater credentials to represent and speak for Africa than South Africa, with its approximately 30 million black populations. Egypt is geographically and territorially part of Africa but Egyptians are Arabs and is culturally part of the Middle East. The constitution of Egypt clearly states that the country is an Arab state. (Akindele, R.A. 2000, 94) That is why since its inception as a sovereign nation she has always been very vocal on issues pertaining to blacks generally and Africa in particular. With Africa as the centre piece of its foreign policy Nigeria has played a leadership role in the decolonization of Africa and the eradication apartheid in South Africa. This is in addition to the role she played in strengthening the integration efforts in the West Africa sub-region through ECOWAS and the establishment of a conflict management outfit in the sub-region (Akindele R.A. 2000, 97). No wonder she is seen as the giant of Africa not by her fellow African States but also by other foreign powers. It is therefore not surprising why she is often consulted on regular basis by foreign –powers on African issues.

The United Nations in which she become a member barely seven days after its independent and has held and served in various leadership positions, Nigeria has severed in the Security Council as a non permanent member for three times in the past and currently serving the fourth time. This participation and in the strategic organ of the UN has given her the experience and exposure to carry out the responsibilities associated with the permanent membership. She has participated in the UN peace keeping operations for 14 times. This ranges from UNOC in the Congo, to UNIMOB (1992-95), UNAM (1993) (Akindele R.A. 2000, 95,96). This is in addition to the positions that have been occupied by eminent Nigerians in the United Nation's main organs. Dr. Teslim Elias was president of the international court of justice, and other Daddy Onyeama and Bola Ajibola also served on the ICJ as jurists. General Joseph Garba was president of the 44 session of the General Assembly. The presidency of the Security Council was occupied a number of times by Nigeria's permanent representative to the United Nations and in the secretariats several Nigerians have served as Under Secretary General Godfrey Amachree, Simeon Adebayo Uthman Yola, Adebayo Adedeji and Ibrahim A. Gembari. At least four Nigerians have commanded United Nations peace keeping operations. General Aguiyi Ironsi, (ONUC) Unima, (UNAVEM) Chris Garba, (UNAVEM iior ii) and Rufus Kupolati (UNTSO) (Gembari, 189). Besides that, she established herself as an advocate and defender of Africa's interests and concerns, made to be the chairman of the UN anti-apartheid committee from its inception to the time of the final eradication of apartheid in South Africa. That also earned her the status of frontline State of Southern Africa in spite of the fact that she is geographically not contiguous to southern Africa. It is in the context of

the Security Council reform which entails among other things, the expansion of the membership, including permanent membership of the council that an opportunity exists for Nigeria to fight for a permanent seat on the council, against this background of its activities over the years as an actor in the UN politics. This is in addition to the fact that she is currently a reliable democratic country in which transition from civilian to civilian government has become an established and generally acceded tradition.

OBSTACLES TO NIGERIA'S AMBITION

Looking at Nigeria's position from the context of the above mentioned factors, it could be said that she is eminently qualified to occupy a permanent seat in an enlarged Security Council. However, considering the high level politics involved in this issue due to the prestige, status and enormous powers attached to it, so many factors need to be taken into consideration. In other words, that so many factors are in her favour does not mean that we have to overlook the negative aspects to enable us have a balanced sheet of Nigeria's position on both sides of the spectrum. Nigeria has incurred some unnecessary costs that have given rise to some image problem. This image problem is seen mostly in the negative side and is often being used as a basis of running her down when ever her enormous credentials as a leading nation not just in Africa but the entire World are being made reference to. This can be seen within the context of a movement towards global isolation. The reverses that has trailed Nigerians African policy is also worthy of note. NO more than ever before there are avoidable threats to Nigeria's leadership position in Africa. Although none of the countries has yet come out openly to context the leadership position of Nigeria, a sober review of the Zairian crisis and the qualified enthusiasm that accompanied the sierra-Leonean intervention policy born out of the reluctance of West African counties including Liberia to support the military option, a preferred Nigeria policy are a better illustration of the turn of events for the country's image in Africa (Saliu H.A., 2006, 198).

The way and manner in which the nation's economy has been managed over the years has also contributed in no small measure in giving her a negative image. The World Wide assumption that Nigeria is a corrupt country constitutes a serious dent on the image of the country. It is no doubt considered to be one of the banes of Nigeria's development. It is therefore doubtful as to how a nation with such an image can be an effective participant in the international system; talk less of aspiring to occupy such an elevated position in the world body. This is the more reason why she has not succeeded in attracting foreign investors in the country because corruption remains a central issue to the development of a healthy economy. It could be said that its eradication deserves more attention than it is covertly being given (Saliu, H.A., 2006, 211). There is no doubt about the fact that the massive oil revenue that accrued to the nation during the oil boom period brought along with it a high level of confidence in the pursuit of her African centered foreign-policy. While the outcome of the policy strand tend to soar Nigeria image positively within Africa and beyond, some powerful countries of the world that felt slighted often look for an opportunity to cut Nigeria to size when ever the occasion warrants. The cause of African image is not helped by the collective weakness of African countries, a situation that is traceable to

colonialism. This situation has been exacerbated by the fact that they do not have control over the media of mass communication which goes along with the latest communication gadgets with which to blow its trumpet. The responsibility to project Africa lies with foreign media housing such as CNN, BBC, VOA and other western media organization. This media outfits being the mouth piece of the Western powers are only interested and concerned in beaming to the world only negative aspects such as corps, famine, draught, conflicts etc. It is therefore not surprising that the negative image being associated with Nigeria is borne out of the envy linked with the impressive resource profile of the country. as the most populous mineral endowed country in Africa, the continent exploitatively partitioned by European powers, she instantly walks herself into the envy of her former colonizer and her fellow countries in the west all of which seen to transit a tendency which arguably has been read as embarking on a campaign of columny against Nigeria. (Saliu, H.A., 2006, 203)

This can be seen within the context of Nigeria ability to persuade African counties to ignore Gerald Ford's note to African nations on the issue of a unity government in Angola, ostensibly geared toward giving UNITA an upper hand that would eventually enable her to form government in Luanda. Nigeria's position which was in favor of MILA was given overwhelming support by African nations making it possible for MPLA to form government in Angola. America feeling slighted would certainly look for an opportunity to pay Nigeria back in the same manner. Again her buoyant economy in the 70s after the civil war made her to refuse British offer of assistance in the rehabilitation of the country is also and issue to contend with. Gowon went to the extent of saying that Nigeria has so much that she does not no what to do with it. This no doubt was aimed at rebuffing Britain due to her reluctance to support Nigeria during civil War, can be considered a slight on Britain and a show of arrogance on the part of Nigeria. Also the nationalization of BP to AP by the Obasanjo regime in 1979 over the issue of Rhodesian dependence in which Britain displayed an overt support for Ian Smith's UDI, is also a case in point. Of all the Anglophone countries that are likely to contest for an African representation, they need British and common wealth support. Nigeria has had a long standing relationship with both Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations as an organization (IJB 85, Vol. 7 No. 2, 2000, 53) Though the organization is made up of sovereign nations, the fact still remain that they owe some level of allegiance to Britain as their former colonial master. That is the more reason why Nigeria needs to tread carefully no to incur the displeasure of Britain in her external affaires regardless of the level of temptation and provocation. As such curtains irritants that do occur in Anglo Nigeria relations like that of the face off between the two countries on the Umaru Diko Sagger are avoidable. This is necessary because Britain would certainly take her pound of flesh and cut Nigeria to size when she gets the opportunity. Little wonder that there was tacit if not overt British involvement in the international isolation and astracization of Nigeria under Abacha Military government. The suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth leading to her attainment of a pariah status need to be taken into consideration.

The thinking within some Nigeria circles is that the burden of the quest for membership would be considerably lighter if Nigeria gets Africa's endorsement in Libya, because it would

then go to the General Assembly as a regional candidate. The question is, is it not possible that nations like Britain and America who may have felt slighted by some Nigerian actions may resort to their usual divide and rule tactics to fan the embers of discord between Nigerian and some African countries. British role in the suspension of Nigeria from the commonwealth, the international isolation and the pariah status is a pointer to this fact. Moreover, the sudden appearance of some African countries such as Kenya, who had never been thought of as likely contestant is a clear indication of the spoiler syndrome that is in the making. Unfortunately the country's leadership has not helped matters, in spite of the hostile environment in which they find themselves they left undone those things they ought to do and continue to pursue wrong policies. The question is where we go from here to enable us reach the promise land.

Strategies to overcome the obstacles

To overcome the obstacles that may constitute a stumbling block on the realization of Nigeria's decision makers should be more patriotic and transparent in their handling of public affairs. In other words, all the vices that give the country a negative image both within Africa and the outside world should be completely jettisoned. Number one of such vices is the issue of corruption which has to be tackled with the kind of attention that it deserves. The anticorruption agencies such as the EFCC and the ICPC should be given adequate powers and made to function with all amount of independence, transparency and without undue interference from bureaucratic bottlenecks. In other words, there should be no sacred cows in its dealings with corrupt public office holders. The long period of military interregnum in the governance of Nigeria contributed in no small measure in the international isolation it suffered and the pariah status it incurred is understandable. The international communities generally frown at people from such military background wanting to occupy UN. Positions. The international community's snubbing of our Olusengun Obasanjo and Ayub Khan of Pakistan's bid for UN secretary – generalship in favour of Boutros Boutros Ghali is a clear cut pointer to the fact that as a nation we should do every thing possible to consolidate our present democratic dispensation. In other words, the issues of poor governance and the general tendency on the part of public office holder's assumption that they own the political spaces they occupy has to be done away with completely. Consequently, all aspects that would lead to the exclusion of some sections of the country from political positions and the dividends of democracy which are the major irritants that leads to conflicts should be avoided. In their place a nurturing of democratic culture which would ultimately give rise to the existence of a participant culture where all Nigerian would feel to participate should be encouraged. This is predicated on the fact that, the international community expects that Nigerian should be seen as the democratic benchmark in the continent of Africa. Little wonder the warm reception accorded President Goodluck Jonathan at the White House by President Barack Obama on his way to attend the World summit on HIV/AIDS pandemic at the UN is a clear indication of how the US and the World generally perceives Nigeria from the context of the open and transparent manner in which the recent elections in the country were conducted.

A follow up to the above facts is that the leadership should strive hard to ensure that the economy is well managed to enable Nigeria's teeming Youth graduates, to have gainful employments, provide basic infrastructures such as electricity, good roads and security that would encouraged foreign investors to come and invest in the private sector and also to encourage small scale under entrepreneurship in the country. This would enable people to have jobs and take care of their bread and butter issues, thereby not being idle minds that may end up being the devils advocates of militancy particularly in the oil rich Niger Delta. There is the thinking that of all the likely contenders of a consensus candidacy such as Egypt and South Africa, Nigeria stands a better chance considering her leadership status in the continent. Be that it may, considering the nature of politics more so at the international scene, Nigeria should not rest on her oars and should make frantic efforts to convince African countries why she should be made a consensus candidate to represent the continent in an enlarged security council. It is our position in this paper that Nigeria has all that it takes to convince the African countries in spite of the existence of black legged as is being seen in recent times. To Nigeria this is more or less pay back time considering her enormous contributions to the affairs of the continent in all ramifications. However, in the event that this does not happen the strategy would be for Nigeria to deploy its campaign army's afield, using the United Nations as the springboard and campaign efforts. We must not under estimate the influence and power of the permanent representatives of member States in New York. We should therefore proceed to court them in order to win their support for our candidacy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it could be said that the demand for the reform of the United Nation which would enable the expansion of the Security Council and its permanent membership is justified. This is predicated on the dynamic nature of the evolving international system that has to change in accordance to the vicissitudes of the time. The international system has gone through such a rapid transformation to the extent that the UN Structure as it was as at the time of its establishment is making the UN not function effectively as expected by majority of its membership. Besides, the reactionary tendencies of the five permanents members are really not helping matters. As such the argument that the Security Council membership be expended to include major financial contributors and the equitable representation of the regional spread to enjoy veto wield status or giving more powers to the general assembly for the maintenance of international peace and security in quite germane. However, Nigeria's bid for permanent membership is based on the former. There is every indication that Nigeria has all take to represent Africa in an enlarged security council as a permanent member. But considering the vagaries associated with international politics a lot still need to be done by Nigeria to garner overwhelming support from Africa to enable her emerge as a consensus candidate for Africa. This became all the more necessary in view of the emergence of certain spoilers within Africa. Be that as it may, there is every indication that Nigeria has a good standing within the UN general Assembly as shown by has performance and subsequent election into the non permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the fourth time.

As such she should also take into serious consideration the courting of the five permanent members whose influence has a lot to do with the likely outcome of such a game play. The domestic scene is equally important as some of the measuring yard stick for such a candidature. A country that cannot take care of her numerous domestic problems certainly cannot aspire to attainment of an exalted position in the committee of nations. No doubt the chances are bright but a lot still need to be done.

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