Re-Visiting Nigeria's African Centre Piece Foreign Policy Debt Amidst South African Xenophobic Attacks

By
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Abstract

Nigeria's African Centre Piece Foreign Policy gave the country a big name across the globe. South Africans xenophobic attack is a direct consequence and reactions from the apartheid experience. This implies that the big brother role of Nigeria in Africa should be revisited and strengthened more in the current tide of modern diplomacy. Is it suicidal for Nigeria to drop the policy that gave her a global reckoning among the comity of states? Then there are more debts to be paid on the African Centre Piece Foreign

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Policy in this modern era. Game theory and Rational choice theories are used to explain how Nigeria can overcome the repercussions of diplomatic fallouts.

Introduction

Nigeria's African Centre Piece Foreign Policy gave the country a big name across the globe. It positioned the country on the platform of peace and unity lover in the world. This status quo became very unique that every African country likes to associate with Nigeria especially when they are in economic, political or severe social crises. Nigeria on the other hand does not hesitate to help such fellow African country to overcome their challenges. Trillion of Naira had been expended by Nigeria on Africa affairs. Nigeria had embarked on several peace keeping, peace building and peace enforcement missions across Africa. This had not only gulped up Nigeria's financial and material resources but also human lives. Another crucial aspect of Nigeria's mission included the struggle to rescue Africa from colonialism and Apartheid.

The Apartheid regime in South Africa became a major concern to Nigerian government in the late 1980s. The aftermath commitment and reactions of Nigeria successfully ended the Apartheid regime. The offshoot of apartheid in South Africa is xenophobic violence[2]. That is to say, xenophobic attack is a direct consequence and reactions from the apartheid socioeconomic, political and psychological experiences. Many citizens of other African countries especially Nigerians were molested and killed in the post apartheid South Africa.

This implies that the big brother role played by Nigeria in Africa should be revisited and strengthened or re-strategized in the current tide of modern diplomacy. Nigeria had invested so

much in Africa's development and freedom. The fact that there are new realities in the global world order or regional developmental levels does not shift the ground that Nigeria's effort in Africa is negligible. The terror against Nigerians in South Africa is the indication of the extent of recent developments in the diplomatic weakness that existed between Nigeria and South Africa. Revisiting the Africa Centre Piece foreign policy agenda is meant to step up the policy to be more vitalised, possess a dynamic status and to be able to curtail modern international realities[3]. Not a stereotype donation or intervention without adequate strategising on the pros and cons on the homeland country.

Therefore, in lieu of the donation or intervention of Nigeria in Africa affairs, will it not be a suicidal attempt for Nigeria to drop the Africa centre piece policy that gave her a global reckoning among the comity of states? Then there are more debts to be paid on the African Centre Piece Foreign Policy in this modern era. Game theory is used to explain the dynamics of the international diplomacy while rational choice theory is employed to explain how Nigeria can overcome the repercussions of diplomatic flaws in international relations such as the xenophobic violence in South Africa. However, in other to understand xenophobia as a concept in South Africa's content, the root course which is apartheid needs to be understood.

Conceptualising Apartheid
The Encyclopaedia Britannica[4] posited that apartheid—'apartness', connote a policy that governed relations between South Africa's white minority and non-white majority. It also involved sanctioned racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against nonwhites. The implementation of apartheid policy is often called "separate development". This took effect since the 1960s and it derived it powers from the Population

Registration Act of 1950. This act classified all South Africans as either Bantu (all black Africans), Coloured (those of mixed race), or white. A fourth category was later added which is the Asian (Indian and Pakistani).

The National Party, which gained office extended the policy and gave it the name apartheid. The Group Areas Act of 1950 established residential and business sections in urban areas for each race, and members of other races were barred from living, operating businesses, or owning land in them. The end result was to set aside more than 80 percent of South Africa's land for the white minority. To help enforce the segregation of the races and prevent blacks from encroaching on white areas, the government strengthened the existing "pass" laws, which required nonwhites to carry documents authorizing their presence in restricted areas. Pass laws and apartheid policies prohibited black people from entering urban areas. It was illegal for a black person not to carry a passbook. Black people could not marry white people[5]. They could not set up businesses in white areas. Everywhere from hospitals to beaches was segregated. Education was restricted.

However, after series of riots by the non-white, some white politicians called for the relaxation of minor restrictions, this was referred to as "petty apartheid," or for the establishment of racial equality. At the end of apartheid, white South Africans (who made up some 10% of the population of the country) owned roughly 90% of South Africa's land as a result of a series of Land Acts. More than 3.5 million black South Africans were forced to live on arbitrary reservations called Bantustans, depriving them of political power and pushing them into poverty. Apartheid henceforth received international censure. South Africa was forced to withdraw from the Commonwealth in 1961 due to its unaccepted racial policies.

After persistent pressures from Africa (Nigeria) and other

international scenes, South African president F.W. de Klerk in 1990–91 repealed most of the social legislation that provided the legal basis for apartheid, including the Population Registration Act. However, systematic racial segregation remained deeply entrenched in South African society, this continued on a de facto basis. A new constitution that enfranchised blacks and other racial groups was adopted in 1993 and took effect in 1994. All-race national elections, also in 1994, produced a coalition government with a black majority led by antiapartheid activist Nelson Mandela, the country's first black president. These developments marked the end of legislated apartheid, though not of its entrenched social and economic effects. A remarkable repercussion is xenophobic violence against perceived Africans engaging in economic activities in their homeland.

Theoretical Analysis of Game and Rational Choice Theories On Xenophobic Attacks
A game is as well referred to any social political or economic situation that involves two or more participants. Specifically a game theory has three components; first the participants are called players. Depending on the circumstance a player may be a consumer or even diplomat representing a country at the United Nations general assembly. Second, we also need to be explicit about what every player can conceivably do. There capability and extent of threat they can foment against other players. Third, the payoff function for each agent that specifies how each player evaluates every strategic profile. The tradeoffs or payoff includes what an actor losses to gain another thing.

In world politics, game theory operates as either sequential games or simultaneous games. In a sequential game, actors reacts base on the information they have at hand over the other party in question. In this case, Nigerians are engaging freely in various

economic activities in South Africa due to the legacy of the big brother role played to secure a free South Africa. South Africans on the other hand are acting on the information of domination of their economy by foreigners especially Nigerians and they have the notion that it may lead to economy apartheid therefore they engaged in xenophobic attack.

The simultaneous game on the other hand involves the quick decision making because there is not necessarily any last move. Actors cannot look ahead and reason back, since neither decision is made first. This therefore calls for rational choice or decision making. No doubt, xenophobic attacks had killed several Nigerians and their economic endeavours are destroyed. Rapid response is needed by both countries in the wake of global realities so as to salvage the interest of Africa. Simultaneous rational choice from both countries that will prevent escalation of the violence and hatred is expedient. Rational decision that will further deepen the diplomatic ties include a rapid response in protecting the foreign nationals and their legal business endeavours. The perpetuators of the violent attack must be brought to book and the reoccurrence nip in the bud. Another rational choice will be to rapidly enhance economic empowerment of the citizens and further development of the various homelands so as to reduce the extent of migration.

Re-Visiting Nigeria's African Centre Piece Foreign Policy and Xenophobia in South Africa

In different surveys in 1998, it was found that eighty seven per cent (87%) of South Africans felt that the country was letting in too many foreigners. Twenty five per cent (25%) of South Africans nationally favour a total ban on immigration and migration, considerably more than in other countries in the region[6]. Twenty per cent (20%) of South Africans feel that everyone from neighbouring countries living in South Africa (legally or not) should

be sent home[7]. In a Wits University survey of residents in inner city Johannesburg (2004), sixty five per cent (64.8%) of South Africans thought it would be a positive thing if most of the African refugees and immigrants left the country. By contrast, few see ridding off the country of its white population as a priority.

In 2008, around a third of people would be willing to take action against foreign nationals in the country, thirty two per cent (32%) would be willing to take action to prevent foreign nationals from moving into their neighbourhood, thirty six per cent (36%) from operating a business in their area, thirty two per cent (32%) from sitting in class with their children and thirty one per cent (31%) from becoming co-workers. This same survey showed a general increase in xenophobia in recent times[8].

A 2011 survey by the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA) confirms that negative attitudes towards foreign nationals and particularly migrants from other African countries are still as strong and pervasive as they have always been: "South Africans who are opposed to immigrants exhibit various forms of xenophobia citing that immigrants weaken society and threaten the health of the nation"[9]. Another 2014 survey by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) revealed that "levels of xenophobia and intolerance of foreigners are increasing in Gauteng", as thirty-five per cent (35%) of all respondents said we should send all foreigners home now. [10]

The figure I shows the number of threats, attacks and killings against foreigners in South Africa. It revealed that since 2006 to 2018, the xenophobic violence is a reoccurring incidence. The highest incidents were recorded in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2018. It is noteworthy to say that since 2008 till date, there had been over ten xenophobic attacks on the average per year and maximum of one hundred and ten attacks per year. This implies that the death and destruction rate of migrants due to xenophobic

violence is a daily affair. This shows that it is more than political negotiations but a psychological feeling due to the precedence of apartheid rule.

Threats, attacks and killings against foreigners in South Africa
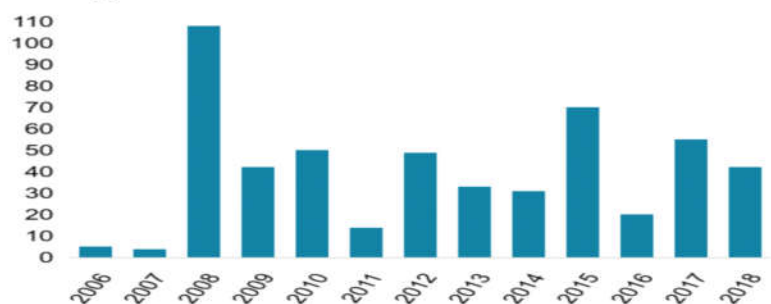
Source: Xenowatch, African Centre for Migration & Society   B B C

Figure I: Threats, attacks and killings against foreigners in South Africa, Source: Xenowatch (2019)

The table I as well shows the danger zones where the acts of xenophobic violence are most prevalent in South Africa. It is important to say that all the nine provinces are noted for xenophobic violence since 1994 till 2018. More frequent and notorious is Gauteng and Western Cape which have a record of above a hundred (100) xenophobic violence[11]. KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Eastern Cape have above thirty (30) recorded cases of xenophobic violence. Mpumalanga, North West and Free State are in the neighbourhood of twenty (20) recorded cases of xenophobic violence. The lowest province with the least record of xenophobic violence is Northern Cape. It has less than ten (10) recorded violent cases from a period of about twenty-four (24) years, 1994-2018.

South Africa attacks	
Xenophobic violence incidents by Province, 1994-2018	
Gauteng	212
Western Cape	111
KwaZulu-Natal	67
Limpopo	40
Eastern Cape	33
Mpumalanga	22
North West	20
Free State	19
Northern Cape	5
Source: Xenowatch, African Centre for Migration & Society	B B C

Table I: South Africa Xenophobic Violence Incidents by Province, 1994-2018 Source: Xenowatch (2019)

The data presentation in table I show that xenophobia is a serious post apartheid aftermath effect. It is as if the political, economic, social and diplomatic investment of Nigeria in Africa is quickly been eroded in the post apartheid South Africa and generally in this present political dispensation in Africa and global politics[12]. There is a need for an urgent re-visiting of Nigeria's Africa's centre piece foreign policy. There is a need for declaration and publishing of Nigeria's exploit in Africa by investing in more educational driven projects that can enlightens the new generation of politicians across Africa about what Nigeria had done for their respective countries. Awareness should be created on what potential gains other African countries stand to gain from the African Centre Piece policy if such African country cooperate and align with Nigeria and her citizens residing in their homeland.

In a conclusion, the economic potentials of the large market for African goods in Nigeria is an impetus that can expand the nexus of cooperation between Nigeria and South Africa or other countries if harmonious relationship is maintained between the citizens of the two countries. The reverse may be the threat. That is, a potential severing of economic ties with such country in cases

of unresolved impunity or violence against Nigerians residing in their home land[13]. Therefore, Nigeria should emphasise on her economic soft power using the Africa's centre piece foreign policy so as to ensure compliance to terms of partnership in the game of international diplomacy, rational choice and decision making processes.

This will ensure compliance at all cost and Nigeria can be well reference in the international politics within and outside Africa. The Nigeria's Africa's centre piece foreign policy is a well crafted international dictum which Nigeria should sustain in dealing with other African states. However, the calculations and permutations in international games are imperative so that Nigeria will prevent avoidable wastages from her scarce economic resources. Informed rational decisions from the actors of Nigeria's foreign policy are not negotiable for the security of Nigeria in the global politics.

Endnotes

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