A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NIGERIA'S SUSPENSION FROM THE COMMONWEALTH ORGANISATION

BY

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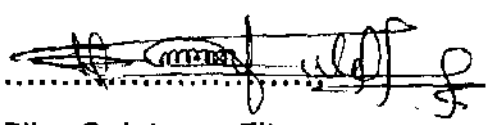
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DECLARATION

I, Ella, Suleiman E., hereby declare that this thesis is a product of my individual research work and has been composed by me. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been presented for any higher degree elsewhere. All quotations in this study are clearly distingushed by quotation marks and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references and notes.



Ella, Suleiman Ella

.04-10-99

Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NIGERIA'S SUSPENSION FROM THE COMMONWEALTH ORGANISATION, by Ella, Suleiman Ella, has been read and approved as meeting the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Science (M.Sc.) Degree of Ahmadu Bello University, and for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

To the memory of My late Father, Mr. Adoi Dan Ella, who lived a selfless life, but did not live long enough to see his sacrifice bear fruit.

and My late brother, Sam Ekwu Ella, who believed so much in my capabilities but was cut short at such a tender age and to all those I have lost along the way. Your exemplary lives continue to be a source of inspiration for me.

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ABSTRACT

Most nations join international organisations with a view of reaping benefits from their membership of such organisations. To a great extent these organisations, though possessing thier own weaknesses, have proved to be a veritable means of international co-operation when viewed against the broad strand of ensuring world order.

Against the backdrop of a renewed global concern for issues such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the Commonwealth, one of such international organisations , suspended Nigeria in its Auckland meeting of 1995. Nigeria's inability to democratise, and the execution of Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni rights activists which was seen as a direct flouting of the redefined Commonwealth Principles enunciated in Harare in 1995 was given as reasons for Nigeria's suspension.

Nigeria gave protection of its national interest and its right as a sovereign nation to carry out its internal affairs as reasons for its action, which culminated into its suspension, accusing the Commomwealth of obstrutive intrusion into its affairs. But Nigeria should have realised that by belonging to international organisations, it cannot act independently or arbitrarily contravene the charter and /or principles of such organisations.

The outcome of Nigeria's suspension can be better appreciated when considering the loss of status Nigeria faced in the international scene after the suspension. Nigeria became a pariah nation and her ability to articulate her policy ideals and conduct her foreign relations on the multi-lateral front of international co-operation was eroded as the Commonwealth used to provide Nigeria a solid platform which it uses to enhance such ideals. Besides the suspension exposed Nigeria to international sanctions which has had a biting effect on her.

No nation can live in Isolation since it must of necessity, interact with other members of the international Community. Nigeria thus has lot to learn from the developments that ensued as a result of its suspension. This are the main issues which will be discussed in the body of this research work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration		i
Certification		ii
Dedication		iii
Acknowledgement		iv
Abstract		v
Table of Contents		vii

CHAPTER ONE:

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Statement of Problem	4
1.1.1	Research Questions	4
1.2	Propositions	5
1.3	Review of Literature	6
1.3.1	Theoretical Framework	30
1.4	Methodology	35
1.5	Scope and Limitations of the Study	36
1.6	Objectives of the Study	37
1.7	Justification of the Study	37

CHAPTER TWO:

2.0	The Commonwealth in International Relations	41
2.1	Nature & Role of International Organisations in International Relations	41
2.2.1	The Concept of International Order	43
2.2.2	Commonwealth & the International Order	47
2.3	The Nature of Contemporary Commonwealth: An Overview	54
2.4	Issues in the Commonwealth Functional Cooperation	60
2.4.1	Political Consultation	61
2.4.2	Economic Cooperation	66
2.4.3	Social Cooperation	70
2.5	The Instrument of the Commonwealth Functional Cooperation	75

2.6	An Assessment of the Contemporary Commonwealth	80
2.7	Summary	84

CHAPTER THREE:

3.0	Nigeria and the Commonwealth	86
3.1	On Nigeria's Membership of the Commonwealth	89
3.2	Nigeria, the Commonwealth and the New Global Order	94
3.3	Nigeia's Membership of the Commonwealth: What Prospects?	108
3.4	Summary	117

CHAPTER FOUR:

4.0	Introduction	121
4.1	Nigerian Foreign Policy: An Overview	121
4.2	The Commonwealth and Nigerian External Relations	128
4.3	Nigeria's National Interest vis-a-vis the Commonwealth	134
4.4	The Role of the Commonwealth in Nigeria's International Isolation	138

CHAPTER FIVE:

5.1	Summary and Conclusion	150
5.2	*Recommendations*	159

Bibliography 163

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Most nations, in joining international bodies or organizations as members do so with expectations of what they will benefit either materially or psychologically from the organizations.

The generality of African nations were eager to join international organizations at the time of their independence as they see their membership of these organizations as an automatic acceptance in the comity of nations. For most young nations, this was a thing of prestige. But while all these benefits are undeniable, often, most African countries do not examine the disadvantages in order to balance them with the benefits, to see whether or not the financial and political price they pay for their membership is worthwhile (Wayas, 1997:110).

At the time of independence in 1960, Nigeria stressed its commitment to world peace and friendship with other countries, while advocating for a non-alignment policy, the Nigerian Prime Minister noted the need for Nigeria to keep her old friends especially Britain and the Western world and to depend on such countries for her successful development. Thus, it was no surprise that Nigeria joined the Commonwealth of nations at independence.

Since then, Nigeria has proved itself to be a very staunch

member of the Commonwealth, attending all meetings and deliberations and contributing positively to the maintenance and development of the organization. However, Nigeria was suspended from the now 53 nation organization at its meeting in November 1995 in Auckland, New Zealand. The suspension from the Club of former British colonies and dominions came about in the wake of the controversial execution of Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and ni ne fellow Ogoni activists for their supposed role in the murder of four prominent Ogoni Chiefs. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) was thereafter mandated to monitor progress by Nigeria and others in the areas of human rights and democratization.

Some analysts contend that the commonwealth members, spearheaded by Britain appear to have a hidden agenda and a mission to discredit Nigeria in the International scene through the manipulation of some issues such as democracy and human rights. These analysts contend that the commonwealth's use of Brazen power in terms of "influence" and "authority" to compel the Nigerian government to comply with their uncomfortable demands negates Nigerian Sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. These are aspects that constitutes the vital national interest of nations.

Several analysts have called Nigeria to pull out of the commonwealth contending that its membership has proven to be of very little benefit to her and that Nigeria has nothing to loose by pulling out of the body. However, Nigeria's suspension has nagative implications which are inimical to Nigeria's position as a responsible international actor. The isolation of Nigeria in the international community deprived Nigeria the means to reach out to other nations and also deprived her of an important forum for articulating its ideas at the international level.

Many authors and researchers have written several books on the commonwealth of nations while other researchers have written about Nigeria's membership of the body. Researchers have also treated extensively, the formulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy. While others have written on the various stages of Nigerian foreign policy, basically its movement right from independence to date- However, it is the intention of this researcher to treat specifically, Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth with a critical evaluation of her suspension from the organization. This and other issues are what will be highlighted in the next section.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Scholars and foreign policy elites have brought renewed interests to bear on the issue of both Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth as well as the relevance of the organization in contemporary international relations.

Running parallel with this concern is also the debate on the benefits of commonwealth membership to Nigeria. These concerns resurfaced in the wake of anti-Nigeria stance of the commonwealth body since the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential elections and more intensely after the execution of the "Ogoni nine" by the Abacha regime. The campaigns, both internally and externally, led principally by the commonwealth organization to isolate Nigeria within the international system had a profound effect on Nigeria's image.

This study seeks to address the implication of Nigeria's membership of the commowealth on her external affairs and to critically evaluate Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth body.

1.1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The motivating problematics in the course of the study revolve around the following questions:-

Why do nations find it pertinent to belong to international organisations?

What is the implication of such membership to the sovereignty/National interest of members nations?

What does Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth body portend for her international image?

What benefits has Nigeria gained or stand to gain from its membership of the commonwealth?

1.2 PROPOSITIONS

International organizations are functional means of interaction among nations which have aspects of cooperation, beneficial to members. By belonging to any international organization a member-country surrenders (part of) its sovereignty for functional cooperation of such an organization. Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth body has got negative implications for her image at the international level. Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth deprives her the opportunity to articulate her ideas as a responsible actor in the international scene.

1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to I.J. Claude et-al (1968:33-38) International organisation is the process by which states establish and develop formal, cotinuing institutional structures for conduct of certain aspects of their relationship with each other. It respresents a reaction to the extreme decentralization of traditional system of international relations and an effort by statesmen to adopt the machanics of that system to the requirement possed by the constantly increasing complexities of the interdependence of states. Particularly, international organisations may be regarded as manifestations of the organising process on the international level.

States must of necessity interact with one another especially as the social and economic life of most nations are interwoven in a mesh of activities that link one nation to the other. International organisations provide the avenue for such cooperation. Sonderman (1979:223) highlights this point when he asserts that international organisations have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to link states and government in a network of contacts and commnication.

International organisations represent an attempt by statesmen to improve the operation of the international system by enhancing the

institutional equipment availuble for conduct of relations among states and by promoting the general acceptance of standards of state behaviour compartible with the minimum requirements of an orderly system.

In order to gain insights into the role of international organisation in relation with/among states it is necessary to highlight on the concept of state. According to Perkins (1985:2), what is variously called the state system, the nation-state system, and the national-state system may be described rather simply: It is the pattern of Political life in which people are variously organised into sovereign states that interact with one another in varying degrees and in varying ways. The heart of the "problem" of the state system lies in the conflict between the theory of legal omnipotence and the fact of unavoidable concession and accomodation. To defend its sovereignty, its national honour and its national power when peaceful persausion is inadequate a state may use more forcible means even to employing, all of its strength in total war. Conflict of interest often do lead to war, and it is natural that they should do so when each state is legally free to set its own course or it is able to do so regardless of legal authority.

At the centre of the state system is the concept of sovereignty which perkins (Ibid) sees as an anachronism in todays world. According to a former united Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold in 1960 "in the transition between institutional systems of international co-existence and constitutional systems of international cooperation. The former emerged from and are quite compartiable with the nation-state system; together with the normal channels of diplomacy, they provide the mechanism through which the nation-states conduct affairs today. Meanwhile inummerable proposals for developing the latter have been prepared but few have advanced beyond the experimental or even blue-print stage. National sovereignty and all that it implies still blocks the way to effective constitutional systems of international cooperation." Much of the systems of international relations today", perkins asserts "can be carried out effectively if only the nation states will accept limitations on their freedoms of action in their own interest as well as in the interest of the world community" (Ibid 745).

As the analysis goes, one cannot help but question the extent to which one should protect one's national sovereignty to a world body or international organsization. In the face-off between Nigeria and

Commonwealth, the latter suspended the former for flouting the principles enunciated in the Harare declarations. These are issues such as violation of human rights, inability to democratize and lack of regard for the rule of law. Nigeria on its own claimed that the issues which led to its suspension at the heel of the execution of the Ogoni nine, was entirely an internal matter, and it had a right to execute actions which are in its (Nigeria's) own national interest.

However, Nigeria, and indeed other nation states would realise that by belonging to an international orgnization, the unilateral way in which it carries out its affairs is now diminished because it would have to consider the principles or charter of whatever organisation it belonged to before carrying out its actions.

Analysts have asserted that execution of the Ogoni nine was a completely internal affair but it also contravenes the commonwealth principles for which Nigeria had pledged support for.

In pointing out the contradiction between sovereignty and international organizations, perkins (1bid) point out that sovereignty has often been regarded as a major stumbling block to hopes and plans for supranational organisation and cooperation the rock on which so many hopes for peace have floundered (P.11)

With the implication of membership on sovereignty and national interest, why do nations, especially third world nations see it pertinent to belong to international organisations at almost any cost? Joseph Wayas (1975:107-110) asserts that poor countries, most of which are in Africa, are eager to become members of international organisations even when the record of their performance has not been encouraging because it confers on the nation legitimacy which also garuantees her sovereignty as a nation at least internationally.

This membership is a ritual of acceptance into the world community of sovereignties. For many African countries at independence, membership of the organisation is both for prestige and a form of advertisement. For a small country difficult to locate on a map, the opportunity to fly her flag over a building in New York and Geneva or for her president or prime minister to address the general assembly can both be mentally rewarding and psychologically invigorating.

International organisations also provide the means whereby nations could articulate their policies on an international level. it is at least, possible to make their inputs as members of international organisations. Besides, nations can also benefit from the various areas

of functional coperation which are geared towards improving and/or developing the international community as a whole. However, Wayas continues that while all these benefits are undeniable, often most African countries do not examine the dis-advantages in order to balance them against the benefits, to see whether or not the financial and political price they pay for their membership is worthwhile.

For years, it has generally been assumed by most African countries that the only way that they could develop is through close association with these international bodies. Therefore the tendency is for each country to become a member in every one of them, without first examining the purposes and objectives of these organisations, how they operate, and their relationship with industrialized countries and their multinational companies and institutions.

Most importantly, however, is whether or not in fact such an organisation might by working against her national interest (Ibid)

The next section of this literature review highlights first, on the commonwealth as an international organisation and secondly, Nigeria's relationship with the organisation.

Kenneth Bradley (1961), W.I. Jennings (1954), Sydney D. Bailey (1951), are mainly writers of British decent who trace the origin of the

Commonwealth from the period of the British Empire down to their point of writing. Though, their work is mainly a replication of history, writing on the Commonwealth body, then the individual history of its members, they glorified the Commonwealth as a thing of general good to all its members. They make Britain appear like a mother caring for her children, being the other members of the Commonwealth.

W.I. Jennings (1954:167) submits that the Commonwealth is not an imperialist superstate at all, the British Empire is not imperialist in the derogatory sense in which that word is now used. The British commonwealth is basically a collection of states in close sympathy with one another, a sympathy based not on the formal protestation of the politicians, but on a sentiment prevailing among the peoples.

Robert Gordon Menzies, writing in H. Duncan Halls famous book, The History of the British Commonwealth asserts that the author (Hall) made a departure from the usual historic writings of other authors by not necessarily including the history of the various member nation and coming up with a few generalizations but by tracing every single facet and writing on them. Duncan Hall writes on the Commonwealth from his peculiar position as an English nobleman. However, his book does not give us an insight as to the position of the Third World nations in

the Commonwealth. He nonetheless glorifies the Commonwealth and sees it as the best thing that has happened in contemporary international relations.

M. Margaret Ball (1971) is however one British/Western author who has taken a neutral position. She submits that as the Commonwealth has developed, it has become increasingly subject to the will of the total membership - not in the sense that some sort of voting can be used to control member action, but rather in the sense that what the Commonwealth is and does, as Commonwealth, reflects the will of the member countries as a whole and not simply of its most powerful member.

As in other organizations, incompatibility of a members national policy with such a consensus can be, and has sometimes been disruptive. When this occurs, the question inevitably arises as to whether or not continued membership is in the national interest of the non-conforming country (Ibid:vii).

Y. Oyewole (1985), Dr. Okechukwu Ubani (1991), A.B. Oyebode (1986), all see the Commonwealth as a neo-colonial creation. According to Y. Oyewole, the Commonwealth is a pseudo-British Empire whose very existence is not based on any valuable shared

ideals of common economy or geo-politics, but on a pathetic legacy of British Colonization.

G.O. Olusanya (1986:83) writing in sympathy of the Commonwealth says there is nothing neo-colonial about the Commonwealth. He sees it as purely a collection of states who for historical reasons desire to come together to form an association that will be beneficial to all, while at the same time, not detracting from their sovereignty.

Whether or not the Commonwealth exists for the good of all its members or for exploitative reasons, it remains clear that most nations, in joining the Commonwealth, do so with a great deal of expectations as to the benefits they will derive from the organization. Using the words of Robert Garner (Commonwealth Foundation 1971:11):

> with the ending of colonial status, many countries were eager to enlarge the scope and increase the tempo of their educational, health and economic programmes. It is clear that the greatest progress will be made where there is the greatest co-operation in a continuing and open-handed exchange of ideas, skills and techniques.

Ofoegbu et al (1980), E.B. Ituen (1971), J. Ugela (1975) also hold this opinion. Ituen, E.B. writes that the Commonwealth of nations developed

from relations between Britain and other dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. As the former British colonies became independent, membership in this organization was opened to these former colonies who wanted to join it. Because of the economic advantage derived from membership, practically all former British African territories who have gained their independence have joined the Commonwealth.

Though Ituen, believes that there are a great deal of advantages to be reaped, in practical terms, from the association with the Commonwealth, this view is countered by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, during the 40th Commonwealth Ministers meeting of October, 1985 in Nassau. he stressed this view when in his speech he said:

> The Commonwealth is not what it was when it started. It is no longer a Club for nations founded by migrants from Europe. It is now a collection of former colonies who have been persuaded to join the Commonwealth through oblique hints that they will benefit from it in the event. They have found the Commonwealth failing to live up to the promise. If the Commonwealth is to be perpetuated, it must achieve tangible and meaningful results for its members. It must give substance to the term Commonwealth particularly for the poorer nations.

Obinna Nosiri, writing in the Nigerian Statesman (24/3/84:3)

further highlights this view when he said that to a very large extent,

the supposed benefits are attractive and enticing to those countries whose developmental problems are numerous especially the third world countries. However, the long time experience within the organization has proved beyond doubts that the association has outlived its usefulness.

Except for shared colonial experience with Britain as their leader, the claim that the organization has existed to maintain a common relationship among its members is characteristic of British diplomacy and has deep rooted exploitative tendencies. Britain has vigorously and remorselessly pursued policies that conflict with the expectations of a great majority of its members. (Ibid).

In furtherance of this research, we shall highlight the foreign policies of countries in the international system. To this effect the contributions of A. Rufai (1995) and R.A. Akindele (1985) are useful.

The foreign policy of any country is, as Northege would say, a product of both internal and external factors. Foreign policy decisions are limitless theoretically, though in practice, it is circumscribed by the range of interest and limitation of power of every single state. (Rufai 1995:62).

Foreign policy are designed to promote, protect, and defend a

nation's vital interests such as the preservation of national sovereignty, the defence of territorial integrity; the promotion of economic, military, strategic and diplomatic interests; the increase and maintenance of prestige and power so as to influence international events; to communicate one's capabilities to both potential and actual allies and advisories and the defence of whatever a state recognizes as its vital interests.

To pursue this, states in the international system whether small or big, rich or poor, strong or weak, democracies or totalitarian systems, within or outside established alliances use various methods and instruments of foreign policy to influence and sometimes even dictate the role, orientations, objectives and actions of other states. In inter-state relations therefore, various instruments of foreign policy are often used with varying results. Thus the diplomatic manouvres, bargaining, negotiations, persuasions, propaganda, moral warfare, blackmail, military coercion and even war are used to achieve foreign policy objectives. (Ibid).

To R.A. Akindele, the international community primarily but not exclusively, a political community of sovereign and independent states. Relations among members of the international community have

Nigeria entered the international scene as a sovereign and independent actor having her own foreign policy from first October 1960. Prior to that date, she had no foreign policy per se, for her foreign relations were mere extensions of the British Colonial Policy. Nigeria therefore entered the scene at a time when important changes were taking place in the world system, such as the proliferation of nation states (A. Okolo quoting Puchalla 1987:61).

The general principles underlying Nigeria's foreign policy was made public by the Prime Minister in his speech to the House of Representatives on August 20, 1960 shortly before independence. In it, (speech) the Prime Minister stated that in the formulation of the nation's foreign policy, it would be the government's primary duty to safeguard and promote the interests of the federation and its citizens. The Prime Minister opted for a non-alignment policy as it saw it wrong to belong to any bloc. However, part of the principles read: "we shall not forget our old friends and we are proud to have been accepted as a member of the Commonwealth".

In fact, even before independence, the Prime Minister made a public statement in London in which he spoke of the importance of the British and Commonwealth connection and the inevitability of Nigeria's

association with it. Excerpts read:

> However tempting it may be to adopt a neutralist position in world affairs, I myself very much doubt whether Nigeria will be wise even to contemplate such a course. She will depend to such an extent for her successful development on the goodwill of the people and government of Great Britain, of the British Commonwealth and the western world.

E.B. Ituen gives two reasons for Nigeria joining the Commonwealth and these are (1) to reap the immense benefit available in membership of the organization since she (Nigeria) was in a great need of development and (2) foreign service was costly and required the best men but Nigeria at this time could not spare enough. In those countries were Nigeria could not be directly represented, she would have the other members of the Commonwealth to look after her citizens for her.

While the two reasons adduced by Ituen to be the philosophy behind Nigeria joining the Commonwealth is credible, it would be noted that another reason which is a very important one was the great influence which Britain had on Nigeria. J. Ugela highlights this position as he opines that Nigeria's belonging to the Commonwealth was as a result of a package deal with Britain prior to independence. This deal

spelt out membership of the Commonwealth and close ties with the West - particularly Britain.

The second reason which Ituen gave for being behind Nigerian joining the Commonwealth, if it were necessary in 1960 is no longer relevant as a factor for Nigeria's continuous membership since Nigeria has opened up diplomatic offices in many countries all over the world. Besides there is no proof that the other nations in the commonwealth take any particular care of Nigeria's citizens living in their country.

Though Ugela's reason for Nigeria's membreship of the commonwealth shows the great influence which Britain had on Nigeria, it is rather speculative and the author does not give any evidence to show where he got his information from.

All nations in the international community, in conducting their international relations and in formulating and implementing their foreign policies, take into consideration their core national interests. Nigeria in joining the commonwealth of nations might have done so out of a desire to use it in achieving some of its foreign policy objectives. In 1960, Nigeria was anxious to leave the world with no doubt as to its statehood, to enjoy the rights and bear the responsibilities of an independent state. Thus, having perceived itself as a responsible

member of the international community, Nigeria decided to adopt correct patterns of behaviour based on international law - Nigeria stressed national interest, world peace, friendship and cooperation because it genuinely believed that these were necessary for an emergent state (Ofeogbu, Opcit: 120, 121).

G.O. Olusanya, a very strong advocate of Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth believes that the organization helps Nigeria to achieve some of its foreign policy objectives. He asserts that Nigeria shares common beliefs with the organization - belief in international peace and order, essential to security and prosperity of mankind and therefore support for the United Nations and attempts at strengthening influence for peace in the world and its efforts to remove causes of war. Belief in liberty of the individual, racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil for society, opposition of all forms of colonial domination and racial oppression and commitment to the dismantling of the inhuman apartheid regime and ending of colonialism in South Africa as one of the enduring aspects of Nigeria's foreign policy. Olusanya further gives an example of Nigeria's role in getting South Africa out of the Commonwealth as a confirmation of this fact. (Ibid: 83, 84).

The positions of A.B. Oyebode (1986), B. Osifeso (1982), K. Alumoma (1981), Yemisi Oyewole (1984) all run counter to Olusanya's submission above. They believe that Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth negates rather than accentuate her foreign policy objectives. Y. Oyewole (Opcit) asserts that due to the self imposed pre-eminence of Britain over other members of the Commonwealth, Nigeria, as other members of the organization found themselves unconsiously toewing the line of Britain which in most cases than not, contradicts their most vital interests. For as a large number of its members are drawn from Africa, it is not too much to expect the body to present a common front to the problem of racism in South Africa. Unfortunately, what we get is Britain's unscrupulous disregard for their concern over the apalling inhuman condictions of the apartheid regime. Examples of this are when in 1975, Britain reneged on the comonwealth resolution to place an arms embargo on South Africa. Another was when it dissociated itself from certain parts of the resolutions of the twenty third commonwealth summit meeting held in New Delhi which had to do with Namibian Independence. This was later achieved through bloodshed. Britain outrightly refused to support black majority rule in this area. (Ibid:9).

Olusanya argues that it was through Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth that made it possible for her to use her oil leverage against Britain in the Zimbabwe case. But it should be noted that Nigeria's membership of the organization has no direct bearing on Nigeria's action at that time since Nigeria could have decided to nationalise British Petroleum with or without its membership of the commonwealth.

Olusanya continues that the basic reason why some Nigerians look at the commonwealth organization as unnecessary and even harmful is that they tend to view Nigeria - Commonwealth relations through the lens of Nigeria - British relationship. Thus, the cry by some Nigerians for Nigeria to quit the commonwealth is always high at a period of crisis with Britain. This researcher however, holds the view that one cannot extricate the commonwealth from British affairs. The commonwealth and Britain is like a hand and glove affair. To add credence to this is the fact that the British foreign affairs office and the commonwealth of nations share the same office.

Olusanya asserts that a realistic assessment does not support the argument that the commonwealth is of no benefit to Nigeria. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of that association to Nigeria. It

is through it that we are able to develop good relationships with other members of the organization. This statement lacks the ability to fully convince the reader when one considers the fact that Nigeria would still have maintained cordial relations with nations of its choice either with or without the commonwealth. If there hadn't been a commonwealth, we would still have maintained a good relationship with other nations who are members of the organization especially if the relationship would be mutually beneficial.

In concluding, Olusanya submits that If Nigeria has not realised her full potentials as a member of the commonwealth, the fault is not with the organization, but with the conduct of our foreign policy as well as the weakness of our diplomacy' (Ibid:85). One question to be asked here is: how many nations in developing countries have really attained the full potentials of its membership of the organization? The Malaysian Prime Minister's speech recounted above at the Nassau meeting of October, 1985 adequately addresses this question. He said that most countries of the commonwealth, the bulk of which are from poor third world nations, joined the commonwealth in the hope of benefitting from it, but these countries have grown increasingly disappointed and frustrated as the commonwealth has been found

wanting having failed to live up to its promise. The preceding section of this work highlight Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth and the issues which were raised such as issues of human rights violation, the rule of law and democratic ideals.

Ken Saro-Wiwa and his other Ogoni rights activities were found guilty of murder, inciting others to riot and killing of four prominent Ogoni citizens at Gikoo in Gorkana Council of Rivers State in May 1994. The Guardian Newspaper (7/11/95) quoted U.S State department spokesman as saying that the United States was concerned by the lack of due process in Nigeria particularly concerning the trial of Obasanjo and others and the continued incaceration of Chief M.K.O. Abiola. He commented that there were concerns over the very slow and languid pace of democratization in Nigeria. He also asserts that the Nigerian government showed great reluctance to commit itself to decency, international standards of humanright, international standard of jurispudence, and to any reasonable notion of democratization.

The Sanfransisco Chronicles and the los Angeles Times also faulted the verdict. They asserted that sentencing Saro-wiwa to death is a grave miscarriage of justice. The chronicle believed that only

international outrage was sufficient enough to stand between Nigerian government and MOSOP leaders from being condemned to death.

The Los Angeles Time believes that what Saro-wiwa was fighting for on behalf of his people was fair. "Certainly giving the ethnic group a share of the oil profit that keep the West African nation *wealthy would seem fair*".

The paper called on the commonwealth of which Nigeria is a member to "consider sanctions if the Nigrerian government refused to commute the sentence. Nigeria is quickly losing any semblance of respectability. If Saro-Wiwa is matyred it can expect to become an international pariah, like South Africa before democracy took root" it added.

Groups such as Amnesty international, Humanright watch, Africa watch and many other Humanrights and environmental organisations called for the commution of the death sentences and immediate release of Saro-Wiwa and his convicted colleagues (The Guardian 7/11/95:P.2).

Despite all the pleas from various quarters all over the world, the federal government of Nigeria still went ahead to execute Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues. This led to Nigeria's suspension from the

commonwealth body amidst cries for further sanction to be placed on her.

The commonwealth insists that Nigeria had flouted issues highligthed in the principles of the commonwealth at Harare but Nigeria seeks justification for its action by claiming that it was performing its function as a sovereign nation through the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and his colleagues. The Nigeria government also claims that the issue was an internal matter that centers around its national interest and saw the commonwealth and the international community's intrution as obtrusive.

As for democratization, Nigeria believes that it respects democratic ideals and pointed out to (then) Abacha's transition programme as evidence of its willingness to democratise. this is despite the fact that analysts from various quarters saw this transistion to civil rule as lacking credibility.

Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth was imminent since the commonwealth organisation demands the rule of law, abhors violation of human right and embraces democratic ideals. These are the major issues stressed in the commonwealth Harare declarartion, and they were also the areas in which Nigeria was found wanting

especially after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Nigeria's defence that it was acting in its own national interest and that the issue was an internal matter is not sufficient enough; this is because most nations by belonging to and fully participating in organisations that most fully examplifies the principles and norms of law and justice in the international system are conditioned to act in conformity with those principles and norms (Perkins:223). This shows that Nigeria's membership of international organisations and as a member of the international community, ties it to norms of international law and as such acting contrary to or independent of such laws is seen as an aberration in the international system.

Of the abundant literature that exists on the role of international organisation in international relations and the relationship of such organisation with states generally, sufficient work has not been done on the impact the membership of such organisations has on the external relations of states. To this effect we intend to lighlight the inpact of the common wealth on Nigeria's foreign relations. The focus of this work is thus on Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth body. To help us in our analysis we have decided to adopt the structural-functionalist framework of analysis. The utility of this

theoritical approach is intensified as it best fits into our scheme of work espcially as it explains our analysis better than other theories which abound in other reviewed literature.

1.3.1 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The simmering down of cold war beligerance which was premised on tight bipolar structure that saw cold war calculations being introduced into any issue of international concern by the (then) East/West power blocs was a potent threat to world peace and security.

The mediating force therefore then was the influence of such regional or neutral bodies as the "non-alligned movement" and the commonwealth of nations.

The collapse of the soviet union and the on-set of a new dispensation removed the specter of a neuclear meltdown and major world conflagration which for a long time hung over the world.

The emergence of a uni-polar world dominated by the united states, has lessened the bickerings by the two main power blocs, which threatened another world war. This is now regarded as a major boost for the objective goal of achieving world peace and security. A study of the place, role and relevance of the commonwealth as an

important actor in international relations would therefore find relevance in the structural functionalist approach as a mode of analysis.

The utility of this framework for our analysis is that it would help set in broad perspectives, the need to understand the role of the commonwealth in Nigeria's external relations and diplomacy, and the benefits of such organisations, generally, to both its members, and in attaining world peace by building international understanding.

The structural-functionalist approach is applied by students of politics. It suggests that there are certain functions assigned every political system (pettman. 1975:134). Functionalism was actually propounded and given its definitive concepts by David Mitrany (1975:ix), in the 1930s and 40s. The approach became applied to the problems of ensuring international order. It was used as a description of practical, political, economic and social problems. The approach deepened and sharpened our understanding of the nature of the international system.

The highpoints of the functionlist thinking is that man can be weaned from his loyalty to the nation state, by the experience of fruitful international cooperation. That international organization, arranged according to the requirement of task could increase welfare,

rewards to individuals beyond levels obtainable within the state if organisations worked where necessary, accross national frontiers which frequently cuts into the organisations working area, individuals, according to mitrany could learn the proceeds of cooperation and be increasingly involved in an international cooperative ethos, creating international interdependences, pushing for further integration and consequently, undermining the notion of nation-states. This would span a kind of irreducible set of "relations among things" (Ibid:p. 37) Functionalism relates basically to the social, economic, development of a working peace system through international understanding. In a nutshell functionalism assumes that the resolution of conflicts, or maintaining peace and security is achieved mainly through the changing attitude of people within an organisation and experiencing their concerns. By so doing "function" and "enmeshment" would prevail and make war less prevalent (Taylor 1971:234-45)

The existing state system in the functionialist canon promotes the subjective allegiances which send men to war. International bodies that focus attention on international loyalty among people at large and counter-act harmful nationalistic attitudes. Similarly, the leaders of nation states-politicians, diplomats, and soldiers are blinded by their

narrow view of their national interests and do not have the proper perspective to encourage international cooperation. Experts working for international organisations will help to create a peaceful international community. (Bock: 1968:534). The functionalists believe that when people are brought together in an organisation, the international institution will use their endeavours in establishing more institutions. This will enhance international peace and security. In which circumstance the world could become united in a network of international cooperation than one of competition and bitter rivalry, if they were in isolation.

However, one common criticism of functionalism is that it is overly idealistic, such as the issue of seperating the non-political problems from the political or the notion that states need surrender their sovereignty to a world body, a willingness on the state that becomes suspect. Inis Claude's criticisms stem from his argument that functionalism recognises a systematic development of transnational transactions which fits into a "peace workshop". But this does not tie states to a unified framework for cooperation (1967:62,69).

Despite these shortcomings, functionlism survives reality and the philosophy of the technical and humanitarian matters (non-political

issues, issues which are at the heart of the commonwealth group.) But because politics is central, functionalism deviates from politics to non-political issues, since economic and social, technical and humanitarian issues help in the resolution of political problems. The main political problems to resolve is the question of war: hence, addressing the non-political problem is indirectly resolving the problems leading to wars. Thus, in solving global problems, nations must unanimously come together and work collectively instead of leaving them peacefully apart. *The problems of our time is not how to keep nations peacefully* apart, but how to bring them actively together.

Eventually, functionalism represents a horizontal approach to solving the problems of war rather than emphasizing the vertical stratification of nations that could lead to war. It is a horizontal approach because it is building those interests which are common, where common and the extent to which they are common. In an attempt to examine the relevance of the Commonwealth as well as the impact of its member's external relations, Functionalism is relevant as it highlights the perspective basis for understanding its place, role and relevance in the new global dispensation.

In international relation, the common issues are conflict and

cooperation, swords and ploughshares, war and peace. Functionalism on its own is mainly concerned with the formation of functional character of any organization.

It is also believed that other international relation models are offshoot of Functionalism with respect to explaining international peace, Security and order. It is therefore Sufficient and relevant in any analysis that borders on building international understanding through constructive or productive Cooperation. Such as the commonwealth Symbolises.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Recent trends in Nigerian government circles and policy statements in the wake of its dispute with the commonwealth will provide us with useful data including speeches of government officials, official memos, interviews et cetera. These sources no doubt coming straight from officials of state will provide rich data which will help us shed light in the direction of government thinking on policy.

To gain useful insights into the nature and problem of this study, we shall draw useful data from secondary sources. Data shall thus be gathered from the rich library which abound with works on Nigeria's Foreign Policy/diplomacy. A careful review of these works by

systematic-content analysis would help us both to concretize our research problematic, and as well as provide a useful test of existing theoritical

postulations. Ideas gleaned from this literature will be very handy in doing our analysis.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is on Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth organization and its recent suspension from the body.

The subject matter raised is the effect this suspension has on Nigeria's international image.

The scope of this study therefore covers the relationship between Nigeria and commonwealth within the ambit of the new global order, especially in a period of renewed global concerns for issues like democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Specifically, the emphasis will be within the period of 1995 *when Nigeria was suspended from the commonwealth body and* sanctions were placed on her to 1998 when there was a partial lifting of sanctions.

However, in attempting to achieve these broad aims of the study, the main constraints envisaged border on the availability of

current and relevant materials. Another area which pose a formidable constraint is fund, and more importantly, time.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is an attempt to understand or give insight into the structure, membership and functioning of the commonwealth in international politics and to appraise the relevance of the organization in contemporary international relations particularly against the backdrop of the emerging contemporary global order.

This means we shall also examine the impact which the commonweatlh as an international organization has on Nigeria's external relations. In this connection, we shall do a cursory analysis of Nigeria's recent suspension from the commonwealth body. Furthermore we shall attempt to analyse what benefits (or otherwise) that Nigeria has gained from its membership of the commonwealth.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Literature abound on Nigeria's external relations especially on Nigeria's foreign policy. However, to this researcher's knowledge, sufficient academic work has not yet been carried out into the area of the impact of Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth on her external relations.

The problematic and issues raised would be of immense benefit in the area of policy orientation and direction in terms of Nigeria's membership of international organizations. This also reflects on how Nigeria's action on the domestic level affects her image at the international level.

To this effect, this work would be of immense benefit to government policy makers and executors, and also students of international politics especially as it would be a useful source of reference material. This work thus contributes to existing knowledge and also provides platform for further research.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE COMMONWEALTH IN INTERNATIONAL RELATION

INTRODUCTION

In this section we shall examine the place of the commonwealth organization in the internaltional system, and the impact of its various functional co-operation activities on the system.

2.1 THE NATURE AND ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN INTRNATIONAL RELATIONS.

The internaltional System or the world System is made up of the nations-states, which must inter-act However, because the resources available are either scarce or finite, there is always the possibility that conflictual situation would arise, as each nation moves to protect its vital interests above those of competing states.

Thus like every human community,there is a need to create a mediating influence or Force to mitigate the conflicts that may arise. This was the basis of the organization of human community under one responsible authority. to ensure the rule of law over anarchy and chaos and thus regulate the diverse self-interests to assure order, peace and security for all.

At the international level or at the level of the relationship among States this was the premise upon which internaltional law was adopted

ie as the objective of its state foreign policy was to assure its objective national interest; which in most Cases may conflict with others' national interest, Internaltional law was to moderate and both co-ordinate state's national interest within the bounds of international norms of morality.

This international co-operative effort gave rise to the phenomenon of internaltional organizations, as the principal medium of organizing nation-states under one umbrella, towards co-operation. But the implication of this development is a surrender of certain aspects of each states sovereignty to the international inter-governmental body. This became the philosophy underpining the establishment of international organizations (Soderman et-al. eds. 1979:2,5)

As Claude (1964) argues, the phenomenon of internaltional organization as institutions has come to be seen as distinctive modern phase of world Politics" (p.5) He asserts further that international organizations are here to stay (Ibid)

Taking up the subject Hinjari (1987) asserts that international organization as social and Political process has come to be a permanent feature of international relations.

This assertiion is justified in view of the fact that the collapse of the league of Nations soon gave way to the first real Supra-national world

government-U.N.O, and later several other important international intergovernmental organisations which perform varying but important functions in world diplomacy.

However, these organizations have not and cannot really be seen as replacing the functioning of the state-system, but to "regulate and harmonise it" For a better conduct of inter-states relations (Ibid)

From the perspective above, international organizations Can be viewed as" new agencies for stimulating and facilitating voluntary co-operation of states and harmonisation of their Policies, improved channels for negotiation and a more adeguately organised framework for diplomacy. International organisations in this respects were meant to assure world peace and security. But beyond this narrow consideration, especially after the second world war the condideration For the establishment of international organisations became extended to Facilitate world peace and Security. (Organski 1968:464)

These international organisations can be argued to be created specifically to maintain some kind of international order.

2.2.1 THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Order(in this case international order) has been defined as a "pattern of regularity in relations... that leads to particular result: an

arrangement of social life such that promotes certain goals or values"(Bull 1974.4)

In the context of inter-state relations, order assumes the preservaton of the status-quo- the state system and the society of states itself, the maintenance of the sovereignty and independ ence of individual states that make up the state system as well as the preservation of peace (Ibid). International order is 'created' and sustained by the nature of the power Configuration in the international system and gives legitimacy by its ideology or value-system. Thus the pattern of relations that govern international order satisfies the goals, aspirations of the dorminant power. The goals of peace for which order is created and manintained does not foreclose The possibility of conflicts but one that spells out, so to speak, the existing relations between states.

This also mean that each new order defines the dominant power, and a change in the order means a challenge to the dominant power. This knowledge gives us insight perhaps into the ascendancy of the united states over Britain after the second world war and the unipolar world system with untramelled US dorminance afer the cold war era. It also informed such conceptual tools /framework as collective security and collective defence, et cetera. However, the security in question is as

elusive as other such problematic concepts as development, democracy etc., This is because of the ideological colorations given to the definition of the term. The function of the concept of collective security in relation to international order, is that it serves to give insight into the relationship between power configuration and the maintenace of world order. For example, over the years, the concept o collective security has been anchored on the concept of balance of power system.

The balance of power model of collective security, in calculations of Hedly Bull (1977) has functioned to stablise international order in the modern states system in three ways Viz:-

(i) The existence of a general balance of power through out the international system as a whole has served to prevent the system from being transformed by conquest into a universial empire.

(ii) The exstence of local balances of power has served to protect the independence of states in particular areas from absorption or domination by a loyally preponderant power

(iii) Both general and local balances of power, where They have existed, have provided the conditions in which other institutions on which international order depends (diplomacy, war, international law, great power management) have been able to operate (cited in Sonderman et al

1979:107-8)

Perhaps, the third function of balance of power towards the goal of attaining mutual security relates directly to the latent growth and emergence of international organisation as these international organisations provide the veritable medium for conducting diplomacy generally, but more importantly for harmonising states' policies and practices.

The commonwealth emerged from efforts undertaken after world war 1 to re-organize the British Empire on the basis of the union of Britain and the Dominions as autonomous countries with equal rights. The commonwealth was a reflection of the changing international system after world war II which saw the ascendancy of united states values and power over Britain. But, over and above its main functional cooperation actvities the broad and laterly specific political goals and principles of the common wealth, serves the function of instilling order in the international system. The commonwealth fitted the objective of the order of the international system which saw its creation.

This brings about, however, the pertinent questions: where does the commonwealth fit into the discussion and analysis of the (New) international order? How does the international order affect the

commonwealth in terms of its principles and goals. We shall find answers to these questions in chapter four of this study. Suffice here to mention that *international organisations do not exist primarily to legitimise and* maintain international order. International organisations exist to also perform two main functions: (i) To help in reducing possibility of conflicts arising and (ii) International organisations provide useful avenue for cooperation and communication, and also for states no matter how small to participate in world politics.

It is on this understanding that we examine next, the nature of functional activities of the contemporary commonwealth organisation.

2.2.2 THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

In its early years of existence, the contemporary commonwealth organization failed to exert its presence as far as ordering the international system is concerned. This is not surprising given the fact that Britain's power suffered considerable depreciation shortly after the scond world war. For instance, in terms of defence responsibilities, the United States emerged as the dominant military power after world war II with Britain itself dependent on the United States for defence in a bipolar world. Thus, successive British governments gradually whittled down overseas defence responsibilities, concentrating military strength in

Europe. This policy reflected not only declining capability, but also declining willingness to retain burdensome overseas commitments. Cases like the Suez Fiasco of 1956 clearly revealed the limits of British power. In consequence therefore, African and Caribbean countries began to diversify their external relations rather than remain closely tied to Britain whose rule they had shaken off. This, to a large extent also affected the position of member states of the Commonwealth in its early years of existence.

However, in spite of the above limitations of the Commonwealth, the association has gradually assumed an important role in the international system. The expansion of the Commonwealth membership changed the character of the association, which in some respect could be considered as a microcosm of the United Nations (UN) though without giving prominence to major powers. Many problems which confront the UN also confronts the Commonwealth. Issues like fear of nuclear war, economic plight of the developing world, global democratization, human rights, etcetera are cases in point. Generally, the Commonwealth offers a unique set of official linkages which span the globe and the North-South divide. It must be noted that unanimity of decisions reached by the Commonwealth on issues is usually a result of prior free agreement

reached by members and not as a result of a decision of one central governing authority.

In promoting global democratization, a key commonwealth objective is preparation and groundwork for elections and improving the management and organisation of such elections. In recent times, series of international workshops has taken place for senior officials of election management bodies in commonwealth countries. For instance, the commonwealth workshop for chief electoral officers in the Pacific, held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, between 31 October and 2 November, 1995, brought together election officials from ten commonwealth countries in the South Pacific region to consider all aspects of the electoral process in order to promote best practice in election management (Commonwealth Current No. 1, 1996).

The Contemporary Commonwealth has continued to support and work with the United Nations to further common global interests. The Commonwealth Secretariat has obsever status at the United Nations General Assembly where it monitors debates, decisions and developments of interest to the Commonwealth. In August, 1994, the Secretary-General attended a special meeting convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in New York of executive heads of regional and other

inter-governmental organizations on how to enhance cooperation between themselves in the pursuit of international peace and security (Secretary-Generals Report, 1995; 25). The commonwealth and the UN cooperates in a number of areas, as they did in the period of transition before the 1994 elections in South Africa.

As part of its involvement in shaping the international order, the commonwealth, through its secretariat liases and cooperates with other international organizations. The Secretary-General and other senior officers usually attend Summit meetings and other high-level meetings of the Movement of Non-alligned Countries, the Caribbean Community (Caricom), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the European Union (EU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADCC), and other bodies. The Commonwealth has become part of the global fight against international crime. It does so to ensure that the rule of law prevails for the sake of good governance. In recognition of this, the commonwealth seeks to deny international criminals their profits and strengthens international legal cooperation to bring offenders to book.

The Commonwealth has thrown its weight on the global economic scene in recent times. It would be recalled that the past few years have seen a fundamental change in the global economic environment that has

had far-reaching effects on developing countries. This change has been driven by a new awareness of the benefits of free trade and open competition, as well as the almost universal liberalisation of the economies of the developing countries. The Uruguay round of multi-lateral trade has introduced a broad range of changes in global trade policy frameworks and practices. A single European market has emerged with many new products and market characteristics in the community. The transformation of the economies of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and their integration into world trading and financial systems have also brought changes. The development of the newly industrialised countries of East Asia has become more pronounced, and the Pacific Rim is developing as a major world trading partner.

What the above implies is that the least developed countries need to adjust their export strategies to the new dynamics of international trade. It is against this backdrop that one analyzes the current weight of the commonwealth association on the international economic scene. The commonwealth through the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, has been assisting member countries in improving export performance and increasing foreign exchange earnings through a range of programmes covering virtually every aspect of export promotion, trade

development and export investment. Institutional development and export is also provided in strengthening the effectiveness of their export promotion agencies and redesigning and sharpening their export policies and strategies. Notable cases in this area include Trinidad and Tobago assisted by the commonwealth in assessing the opportunities of joint ventures with East Asian firms. Assistance was also given to Dominica and Western Samoa, to assess their export capabilities and identify investment opportunities for the manufacture and export of their products to the United States. Jamaica was assisted by the Commonwealth in the assessment of products and product-sectors with export potential which would be capable of attracting investments from Japan (Report of Secretary General, 1995:67).

The Commonwealth with its loose transregional organization, ideally suits the fluid and flexible requirements of the modern global order. In an environment where opportunities for both regional and transregional links are at *premium, the commonwealth global sub-system has offered* a major advantage to all member states. (Commonwealth Currents, 3, 1997:1). What we see in the contemporary world is an increasingly globalised economy and politics in which success depend on effective regional and transregional links. The Commonwealth, more than any

international organization has such links and has gradually and dramatically increased its political, economic and diplomatic weight in world affairs. Thus, in an increasingly globalised system, the unique combination of regional and transregional connections of the commonwealth provides an ideal base for launching successful commonwealth strategies for investment, trade and shaping the international order. Some instances of commonwealth activity in this area include Canada's enterprising use of commonwealth networks for transregional relations with fellow commonwealth members in the Caribbean, Asia and Africa; the 1996 Barbados international dialogue with its focus on the special needs of small states, and the recent initiative to achieve closer cooperation between commonwealth countries in South East Asia and Southern Africa. (Commonwealth Currents, 3:1997). The Commonwealth is also involved in a major international effort to find solution to the 164 Billion Dollar debt problem plaguing many developing countries including several commonwealth members. The above are some international issues over which the commonwealth has demonstrated concern and has taken actions to address.

Supported a greater flow of investment to developing member countries, a strengthening of the secretariats capacity to provide help and

expertise in development matters, and the measures for the relief of unsustainable debt burdens. It is a broadly held belief in the commonwealth that sustainable global democratic order and good government are dependent, to a large extent on the eradication of global poverty. The above are some international issues over which the commonwealth had demonstrated concern and has taken actions to address.

2.3 THE NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY COMMONWEALTH: AN OVERVIEW

In a sense the emergence of contemporary commonwealth with its majority of Asian-African-Caribbean members should be considered within the context of world history. In the first place, Asians were impressed by the rise of Japan and by the Chinese national movement. In the case of Africa, its nationalism must be seen partly in the context of the movement for the advancement of Negro peoples in the United States. The earliest progenitors of the doctrine of negritude sowed significant nationalistic ideas in Africa. Consequently, the spread of independence in Asia, Africa and the Caribbeans became a by-product of the decline of the Western-Europe colonial powers and the post-war tension between the United States and former Soviet Union (McIntyre 1966:214). Thus, the growth of nationalism, the rise of political parties, constitutional

advancement to responsible governments and the achievement of independence followed a remarkably consistent pattern which informed the evolution of the contemporary commonwealth.

Coatman (1950) considers the British Commonwealth of nations as very novel in political associations. He observes that:

> The British commonwealth is an association of completely independent sovereign states. It is not an alliance, it is not a union, it is not a federation or confederation, but an association. Yet the whole system, conscious though of the individual sovereignty of each state, nevertheless forms one family.

What the above implies is that the contemporary commonwealth is a unity, though not in the sense as an ordinary nation-state or conglomeration of peoples and has no one central sovereign authority for the whole.

The nature of contemporary commonwealth was depicted in the Balfour Report, a product of the imperial conference of 1926. In it, the self-governing areas under the British flag were described as:

> autonomous communities, within the British Empire, *equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another*, in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of nations. (Ijilade, F. quoting the Balfour Report in Sunday Times 25/12/83: P. 5)

From that point in time the term dominion which smacks of subordination to the imperial government, was jettisoned and the British commonwealth of Nations was adopted; and when India gained her sovereignty in 1947, the prefix British at the instance of Pandhit Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister was removed.

The conventions among others, of the imperial conferences of 1926 and 1930 were enacted into law in 1931 and are known as the Statute of Westminster. The legal status of the Commonwealth countries was thus laid and particularly section 4 of the status regulates the legal relationship between British Government and Governments of the Commonwealth Countries.

At the time of the passing the Westminster Statute, only five countries were members of the Commonwealth. But with the constitutional advancement, which began immediately after the Second World War, Afro-Asian countries began to gain their freedom from Britain, and to join the club (Ibid). The contemporary commonwealth which had steadily expanded its membership as decolonization gained momentum took on a new structural dimension in 1965 with the decision to set up a secretariat in London. Thus, unlike other international organizations whose secretariats were established upon their establishments, the commonweath's secretariat came into being long after the association had taken form. In other words, the secretariat was established at a time when the commonwealth had shed its old form and

adopted a new one for which a central bureau was a necessary invention.

The 54 member nations of the commonwealth organization and their peoples span a quarter of the world's population. About thirty two of its members are classified as small states (Commonwealth currents No. 1, 1988, P. 15). They are found in every continent and ocean and by faith, race, language and colour, their peoples are of infinite variety. They however, share certain common traditions and beliefs. In all commonwealth countries, people habitually use English Language. In all of them there are shared techniques and attitudes. In government, in law, in education, in public and private life. According to Nyerere, "the commonwealth is people meeting together, consulting together, learning from each other, trying to persuade each other regardless of economies or geography or religion or race. It is this which makes the commonwealth valuable". (Commonwealth Today, May 1977, P. 1). However, given the power-inclined nature of the international system, it is doubtful if Nyerere's and similar analysts' positions are correct.

The Commonwealth has no charter unlike the United Nations and similar organizations. Membership is entirely voluntary but its members are bound by some guiding principles and deeeply held beliefs in the promotion of international understanding and cooperation. These principles include, among others, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, equality for women and

sustainable economic and social development. These principles and beliefs were first enunciated by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOG) at their meeting in Singapore in 1971 as the commonwealth declaration of principles. These principles were reaffirmed by Heads of Government at their meeting in Harare in 1991. Members vary greatly in size. They include some of the world's most developed countries and some of its least. Only independent states can become members but some dependencies associated with member states participate in and contribute financially to certain commonwealth programmes for development cooperation.

The commonwealth secretariat established in 1965 has witnessed considerable expansion in the scope of its operations while its staff has outgrown the limited office space in Malborough House (Doxey, 1989:10).

There is a symbiotic relationship between the secretariat which has a physical presence and a day-to-day existence and the commonwealth as a whole which is a comglomerate of structured and unstructured official and unofficial relationships of political, economic and cultural nature.

The commonwealth secretariat remains the focus for multi-lateral integrated consultation and exchange of information among member states. In other words, its establishment symbolises the fact that the commonwealth was henceforth an instrument of all its members collectively. The secretariat

organises meetings and conferences, of ministers and of many others within the commonwealth, and it is responsible for putting into effect decisions for collective action. It is the main agency for multilateral communication among members, organises consultation and cooperation in many spheres, collects and disseminates information for the use of its members. Its ordinary budget is contributed by all members on a scale based on that for United Nations contributions (The Commonwealth Today, 1971: P.7). The main areas of operation of the Secretariat can broadly be divided into economic affairs, education, information, international affairs, legal matters, medical and scientific affairs and youth activities.

In setting up the Secretariat in 1965, Prime Ministers were at pains to reaffirm that the Commonwealth was not a formal organization but once the secretariat was in being, it obviously constituted a formal structural component of the association headed by a Secretary-General who serves as the Commonwealth Principal Officer. Coming on the heels of the formation of the Secretariat were the creation of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) in 1971 and the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) in 1973, now Women and Youth Division and the reconstitution of the Commonwealth Science Council (CSC) in 1975 which further strengthens its structure.

At the top of the Commonwealth Consultative Structure are its two-yearly meetings of Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGMs). The host country for these meetings rotates between different regions. Some mandates from Heads of Government are sometimes in effect, recommendations of various ministeral meetings held between summits. These may be annually like the case of Commonwealth Finance Ministers whose meeting comes up prior to International Monetary Fund/World Bank meetings. Meetings could be biennial or triennial like the case of some ministers of education, health and law (Doxey, P. 5). Some ministeral meetings are however held before or during other regular international conferences. It must be pointed out that in the interest of continuity, senior government officials of member countries meet every non-summit year to monitor implementation of decisions of Heads of Government and views on international developments.

2.4 ISSUES IN THE COMMONWEALTH FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

The commonwealth has often laid emphasis on consensus building and cooperation as a step towards development. This aspect attests to the commonwealth's ability to bridge the differences between cultures, regions, religions, politics and economies to the benefit of all peoples. Functional cooperation reflects the commonwealth global reach and its

capacity to help the wider international community and commonwealth member states by expanding on its own experiences. In order to facilitate global consensus among its members, the commonwealth employs the mechanisms of political consultations, economic and social cooperation. Issues in this area are what we address below.

2.4.1 POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS

It must be clearly stated that the contemporary commonwealth is not governed from one centre by one government but from a number of centres by a number of different governments. There is therefore no question of one supreme authority legislating for and administering the affairs of the whole commonwealth. In place of relations of authority and control, the commonwealth possesses relations of cooperation and consultation. It is the dynamic quality of commonwealth affairs that makes the subject of inter-commonwealth political consultation and cooperation one of the master forces or factors in its development. This aspect of the commonwealth affairs entails full consultation, effective deliberation and free cooperation which add up to be the mainspring of harmony in political policies and actions between all the members of the commonwealth.

The habit of political consultation that has grown up between all

members of the commonwealth is probably the most effective means of cooperation that has been devised by the association. Consultation (political) takes place at all levels and the machinery to make this possible is smooth and efficient. For instance, in London, the commonwealth relations office is the main centre of political consultation and information (Arnold, 1964:25). As a mark of commonwealth members' intimate relations, commonwealth continues to exchange High Commissioners instead of Ambassadors. Political consultation is so valuable and continuous as there is a non-stop exchange of telegrams, memoranda and visits upon all subjects of mutual interests. It should be noted that there is no majority rule in commonwealth political consultations. Rather, the object is to find subjects upon which all can agree and then act on them. In some cases, the individual countries make their own decisions after discussions with each other. The level of meetings varies from the Prime Ministers Conferences which take place about once every eighteen months to small sub-committees. Apart from what the communique term a 'frank exchange of views' the prime ministers' meeting offers an opportunity to get to know one another properly and to understand the most likely approach that their opposite numbers will make to problems of mutual concern. Basically, commonwealth countries try to work

together wherever there is mutual agreement or a common aim otherwise, at least to keep one another informed as to their political policies and developments.

In this aspect of political cooperation, the British System of Government (Parliamentary) seems to be the most copied in the world and particularly among the commonwealth members. Today, virtually all the commonwealth countries have a form of government which is more or less based upon the British pattern (Arnold 1964:83). Political consultation among commonwealth members point to one of Britain's enduring monument to her past imperial rule. However, changes have taken place in the process of transplanting, with most commonwealth countries taking on a more rigid constitution from that of Britain. The fact however remains that the basic assumption that underlies the British system has also reflected in other commonwealth countries. An appreciation of the similarities in each member states system is a vital factor of commonwealth understanding.

There is also a resultant effect of political consultation on the promotion of commonwealth fundamental values. This collective commitment has further deepened since the commonwealth Heads of government meeting in Cyprus in 1993. These values include democracy

and democratic processes, the eradication of poverty, fundamental human rights in all their aspects, the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, and just and honest government.

The roots of the commonwealth commitment to these political values lie in the Declaration of Commonwealth principles issued by Heads of Government in 1971. This declaration affirmed members' belief in peace, prosperity, liberty and equality for all, and the benefits of international cooperation. The commonwealth is particularly suited to advance these values as a result of its instruments of political consultation and cooperation. In other words, in most member countries, the tradition of parliamentry democracy, accountable administration and respect for human rights are well put in place courtesy of political consultations. Thus, common traditions and institutions particularly in governments and judiciary, facilitates useful exchange of experience and enable swift responses for commonwealth assistance in areas of cooperation and consultation. This integrated, multi-sectoral agenda of democracy, human rights and development as reflected in the commonwealth's commitmnt to its fundamental political values has been the transition through free elections, of military regimes and one party states to democratic, civilian, multi-party system of government. For

instance, the acceptance of Cameroon's effort for membership was based on Cameroon's effort to establish a democratic system, consistent with the Harare Commonwealth declaration (Report of Secretary General 1995:17).

The Commonwealth as a "family" also takes advantage whenever possible of political consultation built up by the special ties that bind members to seek solutions to internal or regional political problems, or come to consensus on wide ranging matters. For instance in 1994-95, the Commonwealth Secretariat was closely involved in the management of political crises of one kind or another in Lesotho only months after that country's impressive transition to multi-party democracy elections observed by the commonwealth in March, 1993. (See Secretary-General's Report). The position here is that the good offices role combined with the commonwealth's ability to build consensus and consultation on international political issues forms the hallmark of political consultation. Political consultation also rests squarely on the Secretariat's capacity to monitor political developments in the Commonwealth and on the association's acknowledged ability to promote consensus as well as to carry out its diplomatic activities discreetly, away from the glare of publicity.

2.4.2 ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

Regular consultation and cooperation in economic affairs is a vital part of the contemporary commonwealth activity. Nearly one-fifth (1/5) of the total trade by commonwealth members is done with other members and some commodities are traded almost exhaustively within the association. (The Commonwealth Today, 1977:8).

In pursuit of economic co-operation and consultation the commonwealth association has been involved in finding ways of developing the economies of most member states and in reducing the poverty level of such states. Of the 54 members of contemporary commonwealth, about 49 are developing countries. Thus, progress in economic terms is considered indispensable for the stability of their political institutions and continued adherence to commonwealth fundamental values. It is against the above backdrop that the commonwealth wades into member countries' economies to implement economic reform programmes to address their large debt problems and benefit from new international trade agreements. Economic cooperation is carried out by the secretariat through promoting consensus and policy development on national and international economic issues, helping

governments achieve sound economic management based on market forces and promoting private sector development and investment flows.

The main forum for building pan-commonwealth consultation and cooperation on economic policy is the commonwealth finance ministers meeting held just before the annual IMF/World Bank meetings. The ministers focus on special themes particularly bothering on economic reform and the effects of reform packages on national economies and on debts. Among other issues, ministers discuss how vulnerable groups can be protected from the impact of economic policy reforms. The commonwealth secretariat has been at the forefront of economic cooperation and consultation by offering assistance to governments in managing economic change. In 1993/94 for instance, a new management of economic policy reforms programme was initiated by the Secretariat at the India Institutte of Management in Ahmedabad (Secretary-General's Report, 1995:42). This CFTC funded programme is designed to develop a cadre of top civil servants responsible for administering complex economic reform programmes in their countries. At the requests of governments, the secretariat shifted emphasis in 1995 and is sponsoring, through CFTC, regional policy workshops dealing with issues related to post-structural adjustment strategies for developing

countries to manage the challenges of the global market.

Given the fact that even global official development has stagnated in recent years and in line with the desire to achieve sound economic management based on market forces, commonwealth governments have increasingly aimed at promoting the private sector and to attract private capital for development. The commonwealth secretariat has therefore, sought to help member countries to evolve new ways of attracting foreign investment. This it does through consensus, consultation and cooperation in economic matters. To this end, the commonwealth secretariat established a Commonwealth Business Network aimed at strengthening the role of private business organizations throughout the commonwealth in promoting international flows of trade, investment and technology and the development of small business sectors.

The commonwealth's concern over global poverty is also reflected in economic cooperation. Broadly speaking, the commonwealth, through economic consultation aims to assist member countries to develop and implement sound sustainable development policies that are beneficial to all their peoples. At one level, the secretariat works with other international organiaztions to promote a stable international economic framework within which equitable and economic progress can be

achieved. At another, various economic development programmes foster consensus and provide advice and technical assistance in a wide range of areas, including economic growth, human resource development, gender equality, youth and science and technology. This deals specifically with the interests of small states within the association. As a result the small states concomitant characteristic of particular developmental and security problems, the commonwealth pays special attention to promoting the special interests of its small member states, all within the general context of economic cooperation.

An aspect of commonwealth economic cooperation is environmentally sustainable development which are reflected in virtually all secretariat activities whose objectives are to accelerate economic growth of member states and improve the welfare of their people through economic cooperation. The ultimate aim of the above activity is to promote consensus building or cooperation and policy development and to strengthen national capabilities to achieve environmental issues of concern to the commonwealth. The associations pre-occupation with appropriate application of science and technology as a condition for economic development are all geared toward economic co-operation.

2.4.3 SOCIAL CO-OPERATION

The advancement of social cooperation is an essential ingredient of the contemporary commonwealth system. It facilitates pan-commonwealth relations as well as, help in the development of human resources of member states. People are considered the commonwealth's greatest asset and developing their skills and improving their welfare is crucial for growth and national development. Among those various aspects of cooperation in the social parlance in commonwealth are education, health, youth programmes, etc.

The commonwealth considers education as one of the main foundations for successful and sustainable social cooperation among the member states. It therefore has a long tradition of recognising its worth and the need to broaden access to education and to support the improvement of education managemnent and structures. As part of its effort towards social cooperation in areas of education, the commonwealth has focussed on three main areas viz: developing the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS), monitoring and diversifying commonwealth student mobility and implementating the recommendations of the commonwealth scholarship and fellowship plan. While striving to help member countries develop their own capacities in

higher education, the commonwealth recognises that there is a continuing need for students from developing countries to study abroad in order to acquire the knowledge they need to contribute to socio-economic growth in their own countries. For instance, to enhance social cooperation and interaction among member states, the CFTC has allocated $150,000.00 *(One Hundred and Fifty Thousand dollars) annually to the Association of* Commonwealth Universities (ACU) to maintain the Higher Education Management Service (CHEMS) which was established in November 1993 (Secretary-General's Report, 1995:84).

Health is one other area of importance in social cooperation among member states of the commonwealth. Commonwealth countries have long recognised that many of the issues of most importance to the health of their people are affected by factors such as finance, development, employment, housing and public utilities. Based on the above, the Secretariat takes into account health concerns when designing and implementing programmes. As part of promoting social cooperation in health matters, the commonwealth also focuses on promoting technical cooperation which matches health resources to health needs, particularly in the priority areas of child survival, AIDS and other communicable diseases, human resource development for environment and health; and

reduction of drug abuse. Notable cases of social interaction in health issues include commonwealth effective approaches to community based management and control of AIDS, developed in East, Central and Southern Africa which extends to other regions notably Asia and the Caribbean. A process of monitoring the development of national multisectoral health programmes annually was instituted at the request of Heads of Government using information from the World Health Organization (WHO) and member countries (Survey of Current Affairs, 1997). In the same vein, the African Centre of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) sets up a regional network of handling health issues among young people in various African states, particularly the commonwealth members in Africa. The commonwealth also organises research projects in its efforts to provide essential data and information to member governments to assist them in implementation of health programmes and services for young people. Apart from some other broad health programmes and servcices for young people initiated or carried out by the commonwealth, the above are few of the specific ones of activities in health aspects geared towards social cooperation among member states of the commonwealth.

The issue of empowering the youth is also considered as one of the

means of promoting social cooperation among member states of the commonwealth. The demand of social cooperation in meeting the needs of this distinct population group which however portend major part of its efforts to strengthen social cooperation, the secretariat's activities in youth affairs, delivered through the CYP have been directed at supporting national efforts to develop appropriate strategies for priority issues such as enterprise and youth employment, young women and development, youth health and welfare, environment and literacy. These activities are delivered at the pan-commonwealth level through the CYP's Regional Centres in Africa (Zambia), Asia (India), the Caribbean (Guayana) and the South Pacific (Solomon Islands) (Secrtary-General's Report, 1993). Other notable stride in this area include a new pan-commonwealth project by the CYP to train young men and women in conflict prevention and resolution which ultimately aims at identifying and working with young leaders whose exposure to war, community or ethnic violence, inequality or injustice have equipped them to address conflict resolution and prevention across the commonwealth countries.

One other issue of social cooperation is the commonwealth's commitment to the 'people' or 'unofficial commonwealth'. In other words, it has long been recognised by the commonwealth that the people

link is partly maintained through the many voluntary bodies in member states. These Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are important not only for national development and quality of life in member countries, but also for the promotion of understanding and cooperation within the commonwealth. In 1965, the member states set up both the commonwealth secretariat and the commonwealth foundation. The former was to coordinate consultation and development assistance at the official or governmental level. The latter was to support and strengthen links among the professional, development, cultural and other bodies which make up the 'people' or 'unofficial commonwealth'. The ties between the two organizations are close and, to a great extent, strengthen social cooperation.

It has for some time now, been part of a larger commonwealth initiative to encourage social cooperation and the linking of sports with wider development efforts. It must however be pointed out that it was not until 1989 that commonwealth Heads of Government decided to explore whether sport might be used in a more consistent and strategic manner to reinforce existing commonwealth connections and to strengthen development and cooperation. In recent times therefore, sports has become a veritable tool and link between the people as well

as the associations public display of fellowship and unity.

2.5 INSTRUMENTS OF THE COMMONWEALTH FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

As a subsystem, the commonwealth has certain well-defined mechanisms through which it operates and which entitles it to be considered as international organization, though a loose one, those *mechanisms or instruments are what we enumerate below in form of* various divisions within the commonwealth association.

i. Political Affairs Division: This division is mainly concerned with international affairs such as consultation with member governments, organizing of commonwealth observer missions, carrying out human rights watch, employing the good offices missions in dealing with internal crises among member states and facilitating the exchange of experience and information among commonwealth electoral officials in election matters.

ii. Economic Affairs Division: This is the banner under which regional and inter-regional meetings on economic distress, structural adjustment, etc. are held. The division also sees to the smooth operation of commonwealth finance ministers meeting and other such issues that centre on global change

and economic development.

iii. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division: This specifically *embraces commercial crime and human rights unit.* It oversees commonwealth law ministers meeting and organises workshops, human rights and development, white collar crime, money laundering, drug trafficking, terrorism, extraction and mutual assistance in criminal matters.

iv. Human Resource Development Division: This list includes work on human resource development strategies and enterpreneural skills development of the human resource development group. It carries out such functions as facilitating cooperation in education through Commonwealth Higher Education Support Scheme (CHESS), student mobility in the commonwealth, student exchange for commonwealth university development (CSFP), teacher management, cooperation in distance education, etc. This division is also committed to improving the quality of science, maths and technology education among member states.

v. Export and Industrial Development Division: This division is broadly divided into three: Export market development

department, industrial development department and agricultural development department unit. In specific terms, this division carries out pan-commonwealth projects, regional projects, consultancy projects, Contact Promotion Programmes (CPP), Integrated marketing Programmes (IMP), export and trade studies.

vi. Women and Youth Affairs Division: Formally known as Commonwealth Youth Programme, it basically embraces women affairs department and youth affairs department. It organizes meetings of commonwealth ministers responsible for women and youth affairs. Conferences and workshops are usually organised by this division to explore the role of women and the youths in commonwealth cooperation and sustainable development among commonwealth member states.

vii. Information and Public Affairs Division: This was established with the aim of disseminating information and ensuring public awareness of commonwealth activities parricularly as it affects its various members. Thus, it carries out commonwealth media development fund supported coures

and projects like training course for media technology for print, radio and TV journalist management training and consultancy visit to broadcasting corporation, training of radio and TV staff in Newswriting and interviewing techniques, etc.

viii. Science and Technology Division: Programmes carried out by this division can be broadly divided into three which include Biological Diversity and Genetic Resource Programme (BDGR), Energy Programme and Water and Mineral Resources Programme. This division's main task is to give regular advice and scientific input to research and development plan of projects in commonwealth member states. It also provides funds, training and expertise to help implement pilot projects in member states.

ix. Management and Training Services Division: This division carries out pan-commonwealth training programmes among commonwealth member states. Such training include, *among others, international programmes for trainers of* information analysts, training programme in design construction and maintenance of equipment, management of

economic policy reforms, management and development of international trade transactions programme. It also carries out regional programmes in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Pacific.

x. The Commonwealth Consultative Group on Technology Management Support Unit: This carries out programmes like quality management network workshop on competitiveness through technology and quality management, advisory mission on quality management and reform in the nuclear research unit, networking activity in relation to non-aerospace application of composites.

xi. Advisory Divisions: It should be noted here that some other divisions exist within the commonwealth whose activities can best be described as advisory functions to the commonwealth organization. Such divisions include Economic and Legal Advisory Services Division which carries out consultancy activities of the commonwealth unless stated otherwise; General and Technical Assistance Division which carries out advisory roles in youth development, meteorology, management of finance and any other issue of

general interest to the commonwealth organization. There is also the strategic planning and evaluation unit which evaluates and rationalizes the governance of commonwealth funds and assist in the review of economic and social programmes.

2.6 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEMPORARY COMMONWEALTH

The analyses in previous section of this chapter are mainly concerned with the nature and activities of the commonwealth organisation as an international actor. A critical assessment of the association is likely to bring out some lapses and achievements in its many years of existence.

In the first place, the worldwide movement to democracy remains the dominant trend of the post-cold world war, a trend which has suffered some setbacks within the commonwealth framework for example, the manifestation of racism, ethnicity, xenophobia, power politics and all manner of intolerance among member states continue to cast lengthening shadow over much of the associations programmes and initiatives.

Again, despite the spread of democracy, entrenched dictatorship still survive in some commonwealth countries to defy the will of the

people and the association. In some of its small member states, democracy has either been still-born, suffocated by primordial nationalism based on such factors as religion or accompanied by resurgence of cruelty and bigotry. Elsewhere, the contemporary commonwealth is being put to test by new political and economic crises and conflicts inflicting immense sufferings and desolation upon people in some member states. These crises have made their own contributions to the problem of poverty and underdevelopment which continue to afflict some member states. Overall, the dangerous unpredictability in world affairs which has become even more apparent portends serious implications for most smaller nations of the commonwealth organisation.

However, inspite of the above negative assessment of the commonwealth, the association's achievements and benefits for member states far outweight its lapses. It should be noted that many of the changes which the international scene has undergone are in tune with the *commonwealth aspirations for a better world. The worldwide upsurge* in the democratic ideals and demands for fundamental freedom, which is a major concern to the association, has led to the introduction or restoration of political pluralism in many commonwealth countries. The very existence of contemporary commomwealth gives ground for

optimism in postulating future possibilities for international cooperation. The commonwealth has grown out of the deepest and the most enriching currents of its times. These include decolonisation and national freedom, individual liberty and democracy, racial equality, development and the struggle to alleviate poverty, international cooperation and understanding across historical divides and the quest for an equitable world order and world peace. Amidst the vast changes that buffet the international community, the commonwealth values stands unchanged and are sustaining basis for its contemporary role as a growing force among its member states and the international system.

The commonwealth grouping of countries is best placed to consider meaningfully, at the highest level of government, ways in which the different causes of massive human sufferings as well as the emerging threats to the very survival of various aspects of the human habitat can be addressed. It is the commonwealth that can effectively contribute to the emergence of the international order in which the international community can work together. This is because its scope and reach is global since it embraces a large representative group of the global community.

In recognition of the importance of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, the commonwealth has supported a programme of mutual assistance among its member countries for the provision of expertise for the establishment and development of such institutions. In all these efforts, the commonwealth has endeavoured to foster a culture of democracy and human rights through encouraging broadbased debates and discussion, appropriate education programmes and professional training of key officials. These technical assistance which affect public service reforms, cultural change and training of diplomatic personnel is aimed at consolidating the new international democratic order in commonwealth countries.

The agenda of the contemporary commonwealth has significantly expanded, its membership has grown. The commonwealth's multilateral mechanism are being increasingly called into play by member states to address many issues that go beyond bilateral relationship and to institute practical programmes of cooperation. The commonwealth is now deeply involved in the promotion of fundamental political values while it continues to assist member states in a practical way in the no less important task of sustainable development. These mutual trusts which informs the commonwealth relationships has made the association a very

significant force in the contemporary world, political, economic and social spheres.

The main benefit of the commonwealth membership, particularly to the developing countries, is not only political but practical. It derives from the commonwealth function not as a forum but as a service organisation and is the product of secretariat - adminstered programmes of cooperation and assistance in economic, technical and social fields.

2.7 SUMMARY

The analysis thus far has been an attempt to explore the nature and role of the commonwealth in relation to member states and the international system. The significant role and achievement of the association in contemporary politics has greatly influenced most member states' foreign policy formulation. Nigeria is one of such member states whose foreign policy, right from independence, has been made to reflect her position as a commonwealth member. The question now is how and in what areas has Nigeria's foreign policy been influenced by commonwealth stance? This is the issue we address in the next chapter of this study.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0 NIGERIA AND THE COMMONWEALTH

Nigeria's relations with the Commonwealth predates her independence in 1960. However, it was not until October 1st, 1960 that she became a full member of the Commonwealth since independence was a prerequisite for membership. Nigeria's membership upon attainment of independence therefore did not come as a surprise to many but as a fulfilment of official formality. In becoming a member, Nigeria was towing the line of previous British colonies who also became members at independence.

The United Nations during this period was pervaded by the Cold War, and it was only in the Commonwealth of nations that there existed the understanding and harmony that could span all races, creeds, colours and continents. It was indeed a source of joy for those associated with it because it made manifest that fact that only statesmen could work towards these goals. For countries such as Nigeria, the Commonwealth held out additional attractions of shelter which the United Nations had failed to provide. (Ofoegbu, Ray et al, 1986: 117).

Nigeria shares common beliefs with the commonwealth organisation such as belief in international peace and order essential to the security

and prosperity of mankind. Thus, the commonwealth has support for the United Nations and its attempts at strengthening its influence for peace in the world also its efforts to remove causes of war, belief in equal rights, individual liberty for all irrespective of colour, creed or political belief. Support for democratic political process, opposition of injustice and support for secure development among peoples of the world (Olusanya 1986:82).

Nigeria played notable roles in the commonwealth such as the expulsion of South Africa from the commonwealth. This was a practical move in the policy of isolating South Africa which had much biting effect on the racist regime than other previous attempts. (Opcit: 82). Nigeria has played several other notable roles while in the commonwealth and being the most populous black nation in the world and an important actor in African affairs, it is a very important member of the commonwealth.

Nigeria was suspended after all entreaties failed to persuade the government of General Sani Abacha (late Nigerian Head of State) not to execute Ken Saro-Wiwa an Ogoni rights activist, and eight others who were convicted for their alleged role in the murder of four of their kinsmen.

Following the suspension, Nigeria was asked to democratise within

2 years and improve its human rights record before it could be re-admitted into the commonwealth. A body of foreign ministers, the Commonwealth Ministeral Action Group (CMAG), consisting of Britain, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Malaysia was also set up to dialogue with, and monitor developments in Nigeria.

The 1995 announcement of the resolution on Nigeria stated: "in response to developments in Nigeria which constitute a serious violation of the principles set out in the Harare Commonwealth declaration, Commonwealth heads of Government, with the exception of the Gambia have agreed to suspend Nigeria from membership of the commonwealth pending return to compliance with the principles of the Harare Commonwealth Decalaration".

They urged the Nigerian government to take immediate concrete steps to adhere to this principles and offer whatever practical assistance the organisation might request in this respect. They called for the release of 43 prisoners which were being held for involvement in an alleged coup attempt and also the release of Chief M.K. O. Abiola. They further decided that if no progress was made towards fulfilment of these conditions within a time frame to be stipulated, Nigeria would be expelled from the association. (Africa Today, November, 1995).

3.1 ON NIGERIA'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The modern commonwealth comprising 53 nations is the product of an evolutionary process which is still continuing. The commonwealth of nations developed from relations between Britain and her old dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. As the former British colonies became independent, membership of this organisation was opened to those former colonies who wanted to join it. Because of the purpoted economic advantages derived from membership practically all former British-African territories who gained their independence joined the Commonwealth. Nigeria's membership upon attainment of independence was therefore not in doubt in anyway. In fact, even before independence, the then Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, made a public statement in London in which he spoke of the importance of the British and Commonwealth connection and the inevitability of Nigeria's association with it.

> However tempting it may be to adopt a neutralist position in world affairs, I myself very much doubt whether Nigeria will be wise even to contemplate such a course. She will depend to such an extent for her successful development on the goodwill of the people and government of Great Britain, of the British Commonwealth and of the western world, that I don't *myself see any future government of the federation in* much doubt about the main principles on which to base

its foreign policy (Ituen 1971:277 quoting news from Nigeria, 1958).

The Prime Minister was very well aware that Nigeria was an underdeveloped country and that in order to expand her economy, she had to seek investments (both financial and technical skill) from the richer and more developed countries (Ibid:278). Especially with the fact that as a newly independent nation, lacking the long history of political and economic traditions of the more advanced western nations, she had to rely on them. In realizing the danger of the difficulty for Nigeria to sift genuine friends from self interested ones, the Prime Minister warned that Nigeria should be careful in recognising her true friends.

Despite Nigeria's non-alignment policy, it found it difficult to extricate itself from the influence of western nations. At independence and the years preceding, Nigeria ranked very high among African nations south of the sahara in its potential economic strength, it still remained comparatively poor in relation to western nations. Industry was not expected to occupy more than a minor place in her economy, industrial growth must therefore continue to rely largely upon foreign capital investment and technical knowhow (Ibid:279).

Nigeria's immediate prospect was therefore dependent upon

development of new export products such as oil and the expanded and more economic production of traditional exports. This in turn will call for expanded trade with other countries. The importance of trade, capital and manpower therefore, cannot be overlooked in the life blood of Nigerian economy nor in the context of her foreign policy. The problems of economic conditions and Nigeria's external relations were brought out by the late Prime Minister Balewa during his address to all Nigerian Peoples Conference in 1961, shortly after independence. In that address he said : "At present, we lack the necessary capital and technical skill to develop our resources by ourselves alone and so" he asked, "how are we to obtain help from outside and still keep free from being under the influence of one power bloc or the other? (Ibid:282).

Additional economic pressure on Nigeria's foreign policy stems from the fact that she depended heavily upon external capital and investment for almost all her development plans. In the years before independence, the United Kingdom was by far the main source of financial assistance to Nigeria's development projects. Having realized that she had to depend on the external world for her development, Nigeria had to so design her policies as to attract foreign capital investment. The late Prime Minister himself brought this fact home to the people early after independence

when he cautioned critics of his foreign policy (who maintained that his policies were not befitting of Nigeria's status) "we lack capital and technical skill to develop our resources.... so we are to obtain help from outside".

However, as far as her commonwealth policy was concerned, Nigeria considered herself in no way subordinate to any member of the commonwealth in any aspect of her domestic or external affairs. And while benefitting from the interchange of ideas and consultation between members of the commnonwealth, Nigeria was free to select those policies she considered to be most advantageous to her. By the time of Nigeria's independence, there was within the fold of the commonwealth: India, Ceylon, Canada, Great Britain, Ghana, Australia and New Zealand, South Africa, etc while Nigeria was to benefit from the experience of the commonwealth, her policy would not allow any of these countries to dictate to her (Ibid:280).

Despite the heavy dependence upon western nations in her external affairs, Nigeria is no doubt one of the most important members of the commonwealth arising from the influence she pulls in Africa. Nigeria had been a dedicated member of the commonwealth prior to her suspension and values greatly her commonwealth connections. This can be seen

from her contributions to the maintenance and growth of the association as pointed out by Tom Ikimi in his address to members of the diplomatic corp, 29 October, 1997. In this address, he asserts that since Nigeria joined the commonwealth in 1960, she has contributed to the growth of the association both in terms of personnel and financial resources. In fact, Nigeria was one of the 5 major contributors to the regular budget of the commonwealth (par. 75 Pg. 34). The Commonwealth Secretariat writing on the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) affirms that Canada, Britain, Nigeria, Australia and New Zealand are the fund's largest contributors. Since its foundation in 1971, it grew from an annual 400,000.00 pounds to 8 million pounds in 1976-77 (The Commonwealth today, 1977, P. 16). For Nigeria, a developing country to rank among developed and industrialised nations as a major contributor to the commonwealth fund shows its commitment to this association.

The basis on which Nigeria was suspended from the commonwealth was the alleged non-compliance of the Harare principles relating to good governance, Democracy and Human Rights. Tom Ikimi (Opcit, 35) asserts that Nigeria had played a leading role in the formulation of these principles in Harare, five years before the Auckland Summit where she was suspended. Nigeria fully supported the principles

enunciated in Harare. "However", Ikimi pointed out, "there is no place in the Harare document where member states confered on the commonwealth the rights, limited or unlimited, to interfere in what would normally be regarded as the internal affairs of sovereign members, especially when the issue against Nigeria was the process involving murder which fell within the purview of the courts of the land".

3.2 NIGERIA, THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER

The UN in the heat of the cold war was reduced to the stage of anachronism by the fraticidal super power cold war. Regional organizations that could have taken care of the failure of the UN were armstrung by the term regional itself. Regional organizations are not by scope, capable of assisting the evolution of international consensus beyond the confines of their respective regions.

However, some international multi-regional organizations like the commonwealth gained attention in conflict resolution. The increasing world interdependence and need for dialogue emphasized that such organization as the commomwealth has a better future in the achievement of world peace than the UN. The horizontalization of power in this organization and the provision for heads of government summit as the principal decision making organ makes the commonwealth and other

multi-regional organizations more effective in result attainment and achievement better than the UN that was handicapped by the machination of superpowers.

The infamous cold war is a direct antecedent of the new global order. It marked a period of rivalry and stiff competition between the western and eastern bloc due to their ideological differences. However, in 1985 given what he called "socio-economic stagnation, loss of momentum and inertia in Soviet Society, as reasons, Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev introduced the twin policies of Glasnost (openess) and Perestroika (economic reconstruction). Glasnost provided for political reforms including freedom of expression and dissent, while Perestroika provided for economic reforms through the introduction of commodification and other policies of free market economy.
The economy was decentralised and private ownership of some firms was allowed.

The introduction of Glasnost and Perestroika in the Soviet Union led to reform movements in Eastern Europe especially in 1989. It inspired peace moves, multi-party political system and liberalisation of political institutions worldwide.

The former United States President, George Bush defined the new

global order as one in which the principles of justice and fairplay protect the weak against the strong, a world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among nations. The former Soviet President, Gorbachev also defined it as a world order marked by a renewed global cooperation and an end to the arms race. Thus, the new global order as envisioned by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev would be found on the rule of law and on the principle of collective security (Adelusi, O. 1994: in ECPER Journal : 179, 180).

Many of the changes which the international scene has recently undergone are in tune with the commonwealth aspirations for a better world summed up by the association's leaders in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991. The worldwide upsurge in the democratic ideals and demand for fundamental freedoms have led to the introduction or restoration of political pluralism in many parts of the world.

The association emerged from the 1991 commonwealth summit in Harare, Zimbabwe with its priorities redefined and its principles originally formulated in the 1971 Singapore declaration of commonwealth principles, reaffirmed but the singular achievement of the Harare declaration was to fashion a consensus document supported by all those

government attending the summit which placed added emphasis on the practice of the commonwealth principles, as well as their redefinition and elaboration in the light of the new challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

Central among those priorities highlighted in the Harare declaration was the protection and promotion of the commonwealth fundamental political values : democracy, the rule of law, just and honest government and human rights including equality and equal rights for women (Emeka Anyaoku, 1993:2,3).

Anayaoku (Ibid) asserts that while the underlying commonwealth traditional principles have stood the test of time and must be reaffirmed, the latest commonwealth declaration acknowledged the fact that new challenges lay ahead in the aftermath of the cold war. Commonwealth in contemporary international relations can best be described in a review of the Harare commonwealth declaration of 1991.

The declaration emphasizes the commonwealth belief in international peace and order, global economic development and the rule of international law which are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind. Internationally, the world is no longer locked in the iron grip of the cold war. Totalitarianism is giving way to democracy and justice in many parts of the world.

The declaration also stressed the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the commonwealth such as democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government.

Other areas of emphases include the fundamental human rights of the citizens including equal rights and opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief, the development of human resources in particular the education training, health, culture, sports and programmes for strenghtening family and community support, paying special attention to the needs of the women, youth and children, effective and increasing programmes of multilateral cooperation aimed at raising living standards, support of the United Nations and other international institutions in the world's search for peace, disarmament and effective arms control, and in the promotion of international consensus on major global political, economic and social issues. (Ibid:102).

The commonwealth secretariat's approach to the promotion of these values has been an integrated one which reflect a multi-sectoral concern with political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. This approach was further strengthened by Heads of Government who

stressed the importance of maintaining a balance between the promotion of fundamental political values and social and development considerations. In endorsing the 1993 Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, they affirmed that human rights were universal, indivisible and interrelated, and declared that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms were interdependent and mutually reinforcing (Ibid:10).

The 1995 Commonwealth Summit in Auckland, New Zealand saw to the suspension of Nigeria from the body. This followed the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni rights activists. The commonwealth viewed the execution of Ken-Saro-Wiwa as flouting of the Harare declaration of 1991 and decided to suspend Nigeria maintaining that Nigeria's human rights record was very poor. It thus prescribed certain measures for Nigeria to follow including democratisation within a stipulated time frame without which she (Nigeria) will be expelled if she failed to comply with the directives.

Nigeria on the other hand, maintained that the unprecedented decision to suspend her was arbitrary. Nigeria saw the commonwealth move as an obstrutive interference in her internal affairs and undermines her sovereignty. Tom Ikimi (1995:3) in his address to the diplomatic corp

maintained that Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa and his accomplices had not been tried on the ground of their political and environment views, but because of their involvement in the death of four Ogoni citizens murdered in the wake of the Ogoni disturbance. Ikimi asserts that Nigeria was unduly victimised pointing out the contrast between the passion shown at the Auckland CHOGM on the issue of adherence to the Harare declaration which was given great emphasis and the restraint demonstrated on the issue of nuclear testing (by France and China) that posed grave danger to a vast region which was weakly criticised (Ibid:4).

In addition to the lack of concensus which traditionally guides the decision making in the commonwealth, the decision to suspend Nigeria also violated the Millbrook action programme which was hurriedly drafted and adopted on the day of Nigeria's suspension. Due regard was not given to paragraph three, subsection (vii) thereof which states that "a country may be suspended only if acceptable progress is not recorded by the government concerned after a period of two years". Nigeria was suspended immediately and was not given the prescribed two years period (Ikimi's adress 1997:14).

Tom Ikimi further asserts that Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa was tried by a civil disturbance tribunal and not a military court-martial, that its

proceedings were governed by the due processes known to Nigerian law of evidence and procedures and were openly conducted and watched by national and international press crews; that they were accorded to the accused persons all rights and privileges recognised under Nigerian law and above all that, the trial was not without precedence as can be seen from similar disturbances in Kafanchan (1987), Tafawa Balewa (1991) and Zango Kataf (1992). Special Tribunals have a long history in the corpus of Nigerian law - Aba Women Riot (1929) under colonial rule were investigated by special tribunals (Opcit:4).

The Nigerian/Commonwealth confrontation entered a stalemate with each side giving justification for its action. The commonwealth on the one hand maintaining justification for suspending Nigeria through the commonwealth Harare declaration and Nigeria claiming undue victimisation and conspiracy by the commonwealth, justifying its execution of Saro-Wiwa and others as a due process of the rule of law. Even the Harare principle recognises that in the pursuit of commonwealth objectives, the peculiarities and uniqueness of the individual member states should be respected.

To this effect one is bound to ask such pertinent questions as: Why was Nigeria suspended even though she claimed to be settling her own

internal crises? And what exactly constitutes human rights violations?

By belonging to and participating in the one organization that most fully exemplifies the principles and norms of law and justice in the international system, members are conditioned to act in comformity with those principles and norms (Sonderman et al 1979:223). Thus Nigeria's claim of settling her internal matters does not arise in this case since as *a responsible member of the international community and a member of* various international organizations her actions cannot be completely unilateral especially on issues that border on the interests and expectations of the international community.

The issues for which Nigeria was suspended being continous military rule, violation of human rights lack of respect for the rule of law was strongly defended by Nigeria. But the issues at stake as determined by the international community, led by the commomwealth undermines this defence.

General Sani Abacha, the erstwhile (late) head of State of Nigeria was held suspect for his transition programme and there were questions as to his intention of handing over to a democratically elected government. General Abacha took over from Ernest Shonekan led (often desrcibed as lame-duck) Interim National Government. Many observers

had thought that he came in to correct most of the anomalies perpetrated by his predecesor's (General Babangida's) regime, but on assuming the mantle of leadership he completely deviated from the expected course. Prior to his Abacha's) assumption, General Babangida had embarked on a seemingly unending transition programme.There were feelers that he (Babangida) was planning to succeed himself. A lot of crisis generated from this which culminated in the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential elections (it was adjudged the freest and fairest in Nigeria ever). The interim National Government which was formed to address the impasse created by the June 12, 1993 presidential election was overthrown by General Abacha, continuing the military tradition of governance. Of course, at this period, Military rule was increasingly being seen as an aberration in the international community, the government thus sought ways of justifying its stay at the helm of affairs of NIgeria. Tom Ikimi, the then foreign affairs minister defended the military regime of Abacha at every given opportunity claiming that the transition programme was on course and was quite credible. But such issues as the constitutional conference and several elections held, even the electoral body, lacked credibility and continue to be held suspect.

In order to maintain its status-quo, the government continued to

clamp down on dissenting voices, there were arbitrary arrests and detention of several individuals and opposition groups. This move worsened the human rights situation in Nigeria. The final move that was to break the camel's back, so to say, was the detention, trial and finally, execution of the Ogoni-nine. The execution brought to the knowledge of the international community, the real situation in Nigeria in terms of human rights and democracy.

In talking about human rights generally, we can make reference to warren Christoper's (1977:348) definition of human rights, the most fundamental and important which are internationally recognised in the universial Declaration of Human Rights which the United Nations approved in 1948. Thus, three were emphasized being:

1. The right to be free from government violation of the integrity of the person. Such violations include torture; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitary arrest or imprisonment; denial of fair public trial; and invasion of the home. When human beings are forcebly abducted from their homes, interrogated incessantly at the pleasure of there captors, and prodded with electrodes et cetera.

2. The right to the fulfillment of such vital needs as food, shelter, health care, and education. The stage of a nation's economic development will obviously affect the fulfillment of this rights. But we must remember that such rights can be violated by a government's action or inaction -for example when a government diverts vast proportions of its country's limited resources to corrupt officials or to the creation of luxuries for an elite, while millions endure hunger and privation.

3. The right to enjoy civil and political liberties :freedom of thought, of religion, of assembly; of speech of the press; freedom of movement both within and outside one's own country: Freedom to take part in government.

we can see human right as being violated when government arbitrarily shut down newspapers and imprison journalists who have done nothing more than printing ideas which are out of step with official policy.

The principles of human rights correspond with universal yearnings of mankind. They have been formaly adopted by vitually all governments both in their own constitutions and through international committments (Ibid):349)

Thus, even though the events leading to the eventual hanging of the ogoni-nine in Nigeria can be said to be an internal affair as asserted repeatedly by Nigerian foreign affairs minister, it also borders on issues which are of interest to the international community. The Nigerian government reiterated that there was nothing wrong in the hanging of the ogoni nine, claiming that the accused were accorded their due rights and that the legal proceedings/trials were duely constituted. But an international human rights group, Interrights asserted in a signed document that the trial and conviction of the minority rights activists fall

far short of the standards of fairness and due process established by international law and recognised by the Nigerian constitution.

The document hinged its claim on some premises being:

i. The trial tribunal was not constituted in a manner so as to secure its independence and impartiality;

ii. The condemned persons were presumed guilty even before they were put on trial.

iii. The condemed persons were not afforded adequate time and facilities for the preparation of their defence.

iv. The trial tribunal denied the condemed person their rights to be represented during the trial by counsel of their choice.

v. The decision of the trial tribunal is subject to ratification by the head of state of Nigeria but is not otherwise subject to appeal.

vi The condemened persons were tried and convicted and sentenced to death for expressing their views and opinions on the violations of rights of members of the minority and oil producing communities of Ogoni and in south-Eastern Nigeria and for belonging to an association known as movement for the survival of Ogoni people.

vii Prior to and during their trial, the condemed persons were detained arbitrarily and subjected to prolonged torture in an army camp.

viii. Given the violations of due process and procedural unfairness that pervaded the trial, the imposition of capital punishment on the condemned persons by the tribunal was unreasonable and unjustiable by law. (The Guardian, 8/11/95:P.2).

One pertinent question to be asked at this juncture is: did the Nigerian government realise at all, prior to its international isolation, that *it was really contravening international human rights principles? Or was* it just a classical case of disrespect for the rule of law? The relationship of human rights to international relations has been said to be a complex subject. In principle, every state that belongs to the united nations and signed the Declaration on Human Rights undertook to respect human rights, Political as well as personal. However,many of these societies do not share the western tradition From which these principles have emerged. The notion of the individual as a self-directing person or as a citizen endowed with civil rights is unknwon to many non-western cultures. Questions to approximate the model of the democratic nation state; whether its traditional lifestyle favours the principle of undividuation; or whether its customary norms of law and administration favour liberty of speech or religion are questions that must be examined when making the western concept of human rights an objective of

international politics. However, this does not excuse the illegal incarceration of people without trial or the practice of toture and other unspeakable acts of babarity and genocide about which the present concern for human rights has sprung up. (Sonderman et. al 1979:341).

It is inadequate to dismiss violations of human rights by peculiar governments on the premise that they possess different concepts of human rights and therefore,thus not place the same emphasis upon the individual as does the western culture. Besides with the increasing interdepenence and interaction among nations of the world, most nations are now tied to the ideals of international human rights. Therefore, The individal rights of nations to conduct its own internal affair devoid of considerations of the international community, especially when such borders on sensitive issues like democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law could be seen as an aberration. This is the case between Nigeria and the internaltional community.

3.3 NIGERIA'S MEMBERSHIP OF COMMONWEALTH: WHAT PROSPECT?

Most African or Third World nations just emerging from colonization and gaining independence found it pertinent to join international organisations. It did not matter which it was and they did not weigh the long-term benefit or otherwise of their membership of such organizations.

They only saw the immediate benefit and this membership also meant responsibility as an international actor but also entails recognition in the international scene. There were also expectations as to gains, both materially and psychologically to be reaped from such association.

The functional preoccupation and programme of the commonwealth can best be explained in its relation with member nations. For instance, the commonwealth foundation was set up to develop and promote professional activities among members states and to support educational activities. The foundation awards fellowship to commonwealth professionals for study visits and exchanges between 1980 and 1985, once 76 Nigerians benefitted from the commonwealth scholarship and fellowship plan. In the area of economic development, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) holds a significant place. It helps the developing countries to expand and improve their stock of skilled personnel, provides educational advisers for government and specialist staff for institutions and finances the secretariat's fellowship and training programme under which arrangement is made for men and women to train abroad. (Olusanya, 1986:81; quoting Anyaoku).

The CFTC's industrial development unit is currently assisting in the development and rehabilitation of a number of Nigerian industries. These

include the manufacture of food crop processing machinery in Ibadan, Jos, Kano, Maiduguri, Issele-uku; and manufacture of granite products, development of ceramic industries, leather tanning and leather goods manufacture, etc. (Ibid).

The commonwealth has also distinguished itself in the area of international economic relations. The commonmwealth for example, has been a pioneer in the area of cooperation for development. The Colombo plan for Asia and the Pacific, the first major international initiative to assist less developed countries within the commonwealth received priority in the aid programmes of the developed members of the association who direct 70% of bilateral aid to other member countries. The commonwealth also has many voluntary organisations actively assisting in development either by chanelling funds collected from the public to projects in developing countries or raising the level of popular support from global action against poverty (Ibid:182).

To a very large extent, these enumerated benefits are enticing and attractive to third world countries whose development problems are numerous. However, the long-term experience within the organisation has shown that beyond this cooperation and several efforts to alleviate the development problem of third world countries, their position tend to

worsen and that means increase dependence on such associations and other western nations.

The commonwealth economic aims was formulated at the commonwealth Finance Ministers Conference in Sidney, Australia in January 1954. The Conference agreed that commonwealth countries would work together to achieve certain broad common objectives. They have no intention of seeking the creation of a discriminatory economic bloc, rather their objective is to strengthen themselves to benefit the world economy generally.

Accordingly, the following principles were agreed upon as governing the approach to the whole range of subjects under discussion.

A. Internal economic policies designed to curb inflation and rises in the cost of living should be steadily followed.

B. Sound economic development should be encouraged with the object of increasing productive strengths and competitive power, providing employment and raising standard of life.

C. A multilateral trade and payment system should be extended over the widest possible area. (Commonwealth Reference Book., 1958).

The mid-1970s marked a watershed in the approach to development. For three decades, strategies to reduce poverty had been

framed within the existing world economic system. Built up during the period when a handful of nations dominated trade and economic activity, it has created great wealth for a few. Post-war development policies were based on the belief that poor nations could travel the same road to prosperity. But the growing number of the poor demonstrated the failure of this approach.

The questioning of the conventional wisdom on development which this prompted coincided with stirrings of doubt about the continuing validity of the existing system for the affluent nations themselves, provoked by the most serious recession since the depression of the 1930s and marked disarray in world monetary arrangement. It was in this climate that in 1974 the United Nations called for a new international economic order, setting in train a whole series of debate and negotiations - The North-South dialogue (Ramphal S, 1977:3).

Within a few weeks of his appointment as Secretary-General of Commonwealth, Shridath Ramphal was in Ottawa for the first meeting of the Commonwealth Expert Group set in Kingston by Commonwealth Heads of Government. During the meeting, he made a speech addressed to this group of experts:

> Commonwealth Heads of Government has invited you as member of a distinguished group of experts to draw up for consideration by their government for a comprehensive and interrelated programme of practical measures directed at closing the gap between the rich and poor countries. They have directed you to draw up that programme in the context of the current international dialogue. (Ibid:16).

This statement reveals that the commonwealth as an international organsation right from the time and following the international trend has been committed to the upliftment of the standard of the less developed nations in its fold. However, reality has revealed to us that beyond the many programmes, speeches and conferences instuted as far back as the 1950s, there hasn't been any improvement in the lot of the less privileged/developed nations of the commonwealth or any international organisation for that matter.

Writing in 1975, Shridath Ramphal aptly captures the conditions of the third world nations in relation to the developed world. The condition still persist today despite the various programmes set out for development by the various international organisation of which most nations of the third world belongs.

Ramphall further asserts that two development decades had yielded bitter disappointment. Three UNCTADS have institutionalised frustration, and nearly thirty years of post-war internationalisation have seen the

political equality of states guaranteed by the UN charter almost totally nullified by pervasive economic inequality between the world's people. What is surprising perhaps is that the challenge to the system which preserve this economic inequalities should have come so late. Infact, it could not come before. In the early post war years when the old order was reinforced by Bretton Woods and GATT regimes, the third world for the greatest part was a voiceless captive of the colonial system, powerless to influence decisions being taken about the kind of world it would inherit. It was only 1947 that India became independent, making the start of the process of decolonisation. It was only in 1956 that dismantling of the French Empire in Africa began, and a year later that the first of British colonies in Africa attained freedom. Over several decades since then, the developing countries have been almost excessively patient in their trial of prescription for the development that in retrospect served merely to mask the basic ailment and indeed to worsen the prospect for a more equal world society.

In trade, the third world nations are told to produce more, sell more, and earn more: that was the simple formular, with major effort, developing countries produced and sold more, but their net earnings, their terms of trade, steadily declined. The amount of cotton or sisal, or tea or

bauxite they had to produce and export in order to buy, say a tractor or antibodies or an irrigation pump kept increasing. Despite all their efforts, they grew relatively poorer. They were developing on the basis of diminishing returns. And there were other problems when they tried to diversify their economic base. Efforts to industrialise, to process their raw materials and produce simple manufactured goods, led them to high tariff walls, differential freight rate and administrative obstructions to trade, all frustrating their entry into the market of the rich countries most of whom belong and infact control the international organisation of which most countries of the world belong (Ibid:28, 29).

In 1996, the commonwealth fund for technical cooperation (CFTC) commissioned a study on practical mechanisms for poverty reduction, prepared by Dr, Joseph Mullen and Professor David Hume of the University of Manchester Institute for Development Policy and Management. This study was in effect an admission of the commonwealth's inability to practically meet the development needs of its member states as the two expert pointed out that the study is a part of the Commonwealth's drive to establish practical not merely theoretical means of poverty alleviation among the third world members of the commonwealth (Commonwealth Currents; 1996:11).

It is very simple to dismiss the commonwealth body as not being relevant based on the above premises but one cannot help notice that despite the various areas of cooperation for development, the third world has still not developed. But can the commonwealth be realistically held for this phenomenon? Another pertinent question is that if the commonwealth had not being interested in the development of the Third World generally, would the situation have been better or far worse than what it is now?

In his defence of the Commonwealth Organization, Olusanya (1986:p 83) agrees that the commonwealth does possess weaknesses. But he reiterates that any organization, whether national or international possesses its own weaknesses which are paculiar to it. He states that if one was to use this as basis for membership of any international organization, no country will belong to any. He asserts that "it should be obvious that imperfect human beings cannot creat a perfect institution. Any institution is a mirror of its members".

It is difficult not to see an overwhelming advantage in membership of an organisation that embraces in its sweep the economic needs and objectives of developing countries and tries its utmost to see to their realization. What the commonwealth enspouses in the field of

international economic relations is completely identical with Nigeria's stand. Consequently, there is a meeting of minds which help to foster collective action in this field.

An impartial assessment of Nigeria-commonwealth relations must, therefore, agree that Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth has been advantageous. If Nigeria has been unable to take full advantage of her membership the fault is not with the association but with our incapability to tap the association's resources to the full. No nation can afford to live in isolation. Nations seek association with other nations having similar objectives in order to benefit from collective strenght. It is the collective strength that the commonwealth association provides for Nigeria and its other members. Every association or organization has its own shortcomings and this is no argument for withdrawal of membership. Besides, membership of international organizations is an essential feature of the modern state. (Ibid).

3.4 SUMMARY

In the whole course of foreign relation and foreign policy formulation, international organisations play very vital roles in the style and strategy of the foreign policies of their member states. In the same vein the commonwealth organisation has been responsible for the tenor

of most of its member states' foreign policies. It is thus expected that Nigeria as a member of the commonwealth organisation must have at various times been made to fashion out her foreign policy in line with the organisation.

Though the commonwealth's relations with its members might be seen to be of no benefit in terms of concrete development, areas of functional cooperation would show its importance in the present global dispensation.

To what extent has Nigerian foreign policy been affected by its membership of the commonwealth? What is the role of the commonwealth in Nigeria's international isolation? What is the effect of this isolation on Nigeria's image? These are the issues we address in the next chapter

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CHAPTER FOUR

NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE COMMONWEALTH

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the relationship between Nigeria and the commonwealth organization before and after its suspension (Nigeria's) from membership of the organization, for violating the Harare Declaration of the principles of the commonwealth organisation in the new international environment dominated by such concerns and values as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In this regards the chapter shall also be an examination of the conduct of Nigerian diplomacy within the Framework of its membership of the commonwealth organization, so as to be able to gain insights into the compatibility or otherwise of Nigeria's national interest vis-a-vis the membership.

4.1 NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY; AN OVERVIEW

What can be described as Nigerian Foreign Policy proper was given its definitive outline or clearly articulated in an era often described as one of decolonization. This was the time when the vast British Empire yielded to a commonwealth of independent and sovereign nations, spread through Africa, Asia, the Mid-East, and in the pacific rim region.

Thus, the international environment into which the independent

Nigerian nation made its foreign policy debut was characterized by blistering, and/or festering cold war rivalries between the Big Powers (in the then loose bi-polar international system) This Russo-American rivalry came simultaneously with the end of the second world war and constituted the central elements in the ensuing cold-war world. The nature of this mid twentieth century international system marked by great power control was a matter for debate as to how far the powers were collectively to order the whole world; how far each was to dominate a sector in the emerging 'East-West' blocks or power configuration. It was in this hostile international environment that Nigerian foreign policy was formulated, and subsequently given its definitive direction at Indpendence in 1960.

The basic principles of Nigeria's Foreign Policy was laid in 1960 by the country's head of Government, Alhaji Sir, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. These include what Ogunsanwo (1985) Categorised as the broad strands of Nigeria's Foreign Policy. He itemized this strands viz:-

1) Support for the OAU as the foremost continental machinery for the articulation of African interest, aggregation of African demands, harmonization of African policies and the conduct of African diplomacy vis-a-vis the rest of the world.

2) Anti-Colonial pre-occupation, inspired by the UN 1960 resolution 1514 (XV).

3) Total identification with anti-apartheid front

4) Promotion of intra African economic co-operation

5) Commitment to peaceful settlement of disputes. With the rest of the world, this strands can be extended as:-

(1) disarmament and arms control.

(2) The creation of a new and more equitable economic order.

(3) International peace-keeping.

A school of thought has commented that these policy principles clearly echo the U.N charter.

Thus since entering into the arena of international politics, Nigeria has both wanted to be seen and, peceived itself as a responsible member of the international community, whose behaviour must conform to acceptable standards under international law. This policy thrust involved a rejection of any attempt to re-order the system in any discernible and/or revolutionary way.

Moreso, because of the festering cold war and its dangerous threat to humanity and perhaps in line with Nigeria's objective domestic policy and national interest, the makers of Nigeria's foreign policy stressed the

necessity of world peace. The understanding of this emphasis is that peace in the Nigerian nation can only be guaranteed in a peaceful international environment. Nigeria's diplomacy therefore favoured friendship with all nations that reciprocated the gesture. As Ofoegbu, (1986:12 citing Balewa 1960) observes, this was an element vaguely defined to sustain the Balewa Government's decision to keep its foreign policy within the purview of her colonial masters, and the commonwealth member-nations.

An analysis of Nigerian foreign policy Philosophy showed that Nigerian philosophy like any other state's stressed primarily, its national interest, and then a commitment to world peace, friendship and co-operation. This policy is predicated on the belief at least in the formative years that these objectives were a necessity for an emerging state.

In any discussion about foreign policy, it is important to stress that the issue is about policy and not random and unmediated responses to actions of other states. Foreign policy is therefore about how one state will behave towards other actors, such as states, NGOS, MNCs and other International (inter-governmental) organisations in the international system. A policy thus takes into account all different ramifications, necessities, topic and equations of international behaviour. This view sees

foreign policy as the outcome of the push and pull of opposing ideas, interest and forces (Thisman, 1964: 3-17)

Foreign policy is a projection of the sum total of a nations national value. Which in Frankel's analysis are the general and continuing ends for which the nation acts (Frankel, 1969.36). Freedom of action in international affairs are largely determined, however, by the elites conception and perception of these values in the international system, and then rationalized as the national interest which that nation's foreign policy articulates. Foreign policy is therefore a long term strategic plan which is cognisant of all the domestic and political constraints, and the vast external realm in which the policy is to be implemented

The fundamental on which a state's foreign policy is predicated hardly change between regimes in terms of real substance, there may be change in orientation and degree.

According to Ogunsanya, the guiding principles and objectives of a nation's foreign policy hardly change from one administration to another at least in so far as the basic and fundamental national interest are concerned, unless there is a revolutionary change of regime in such a way as to affect the basic definition of the national interest.

The preceeding clarifications are necessary backgrounds to

analysing Nigerian foreign policy since independence because it is within the framework of continuity and change that one can fully grasp the essentials of Nigerian diplomacy.

Broadly speaking Nigeria's foreign policy may be analysed from a variety of perspectives, which Gambari (1980:24) outlined as the external realm, the domestic competition for economic and political power involving the old regions and ethnic groups, traditional foreign policy analysis may also be employed whereby broad foreign policy goals such as security, prosperity and independence can be matched with available physical resources, geographical setting and external environment.

However, the appreciation of the analytical framework of national -international politics linkages facilitate the isolation of landmark decisions in Nigeria's foreign policy. It also provides insights into Nigeria's external relations since independence, and evaluating the impact of Nigeria's foreign policy, its membership of the various international organisations.

The linkages can be identified in Nigeria's foreign policy decisions such as the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact, its associate membership of the E.E.C. and especially in its Southern African Policy in the hey days of the apartheid South African excesses, Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of independence in Rhodesia and over South West Africa (Namibia).

Major trends in Nigeria's foreign policy since independence would therefore be discussed within the framework of the changed and changing structure of the commonwealth and the external environment towards which Nigeria's foreign policy endeavours are directed and as well as the continuing definition of its objective national goals and interests in foreign policy orientation.

Nigeria's desire to be seen as a responsible international actor coincided with the nature and objectives of the commonwealth organisation. Thus, the commonwealth became a principal springboard for articulating and pursuing Nigeria's foreign policy objectives. A close look at these foreign policy objectives reveal their decidedly Afro-centric thrust. However, the ultimate aims of Nigerian policy over the years is the maintenance, preservation and consolidation of world peace. Nigeria's commitment to world peace coincides with the UN charter; and also the commonwealth's, which can be seen as an attempt to assure world peace via functional cooperation, albeit, at a micro-level, in the case of the commonwealth. For instance, her major foreign policy concern, apart from the promotion of unity and solidarity of African states or the economic emancipation of the African continent, is her commitment to the eradication of racial discrimination, colonialism and

other indignities to which the African was principally subjected in most parts of Africa. These twin-enemies - apartheid policy in South Africa and colonialism in most other parts at the formative period of Nigeian foreign policy not only represented injustice, but a potent threat to world peace, while they existed. On this basis, Nigeria's role in most international organisations, including the Commonwealth was clearly a strategic one. This would place her in a position where she can also play a promiment role in Africa, as a primacy of interest, which would then ultimately enable her play an important role as a responsible international actor in the larger world.

The commitment of the various Nigerian administrations to the Commonwealth, which she joined at independence, varied slightly but the fundamental objectives remained the same. Nigeria's utilization of multi-lateral diplomacy institutionalised in the Commonwealth, being an important international organization, to achieve its foreign policy objectives, especially its African policy, and economic diplomacy, generally would be highlighted in this section.

4.2 THE COMMONWEALTH AND NIGERIA'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

In the years following immediately after independence, Nigeria's policy issues were largely coloured by the unresolved conflict between

radicalism and conservatism. The government at independence was a coalition of regionally-based political parties, perhaps with different ideologies, as it were. As Gambari pointed out, faced with powerful regions and ideological groups in the country, the then Prime Minister's constitutional authority was not always matched by political power to override the former's encroachment upon Nigeria's foreign relations. This absence of an articulated national ideology, or even nation-wide political consciousness, rendered the formulation and execution of foreign policy susceptible to confrontation between radical and conservative elements in the country (1980:25). Largely as a result of these disabilities in foreign policy decision making, Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth also became a matter for political tinkering, controversies and horse-trading. It is perhaps on this basis that one can fully grasp the impact which the commonwealth had on Nigeria's external and/or diplomatic endeavours since its independence.

Nigeria's relations with the Commonwealth began immediately after the achievement of independence. In deciding to become a member, according to Olusanya (1986:81), Nigeria was following the tradition already laid down by the former British colonies that had achieved their independence earlier.

The Commonwealth in the context of its free association principles turned into a unique voluntary organisation. Today, it has 54 member-nations, with over a quarter of the world's total population; scattered over the six continents. The recent admission of the largely Franco-phone Cameroon and Mozambique can be regarded as a testimony of the political influence which the hitherto mainly functional organisation has garnered. This is no surprise however, to close watchers of the international landscape beginning with the collapse of the Soviet Union many now actually see the organisation as complementing the United Nations in terms of maintaining international cooperation and peace.

In terms of external (political) relations, Nigeria's membeship of the Commonwealth has impacted significantly on the conduct of its dipolmacy.

In the context of Nigeria's African policy, the discernible goals include - decolonisation of the African continent; eradication of all forms of racialism from Africa - such as was grossly represented by the (then) *apartheid regime in South Africa and Namibia.* With the larger world, the goal which Nigerian policy is avowed is a commitment to ensuring and securing world peace, order and security on the basis of disarmament, peace keeping and international cooperation, generally. This one

coincides with Olusanya's assertion that Nigeria, in its external relations shares common belief with the commonwealth organisation - belief in international peace and order essential to the security and prosperity of mankind and therefore support for the United Nations, and attempts at strengthening its ifluence for peace in the world and its efforts to remove the causes of war; belief in the liberty of the individual in equal rights for all, recognition of racial prejudice as a threat to world peace; eradication of colonial domination and racial oppression; an affirmation that the lopsided international economic order cannot be tolerated; belief in both functional and political international cooperation as essential to the removal of causes of war and the promotion to tolerance and opposition to injustice and support for genuine development among the peoples of the world. Thus, in the conduct of its diplomacy and pursuance of its foreign policy objectives, Nigeria has successfully used the commonwealth organisation to achieve its foreign policy goals (Olusanya; op.cit. P. 84).

In the foremost aspect of its foreign policy, a commitment to the dismantling of the inhuman apartheid regime and the ending of colonialism in Southern Africa, Nigeria successfully mobilised world opinion against these twin evils. Primarily, Nigeria's role in getting South

Africa out of the Commonwealth need not be belaboured here; and according to Olusanya (Ibid), this began the policy of isolating South Africa; a policy which had much biting effects on the racist regime and which eventually turned it into an international pariah state. Nigeria was able to play this foremost role in isolating and eventually liquidating the regime through its membership of the commonwealth. As a member of the commonwealth, Nigeria also used its oil leverage on the Zimbabwean question, and eventually on Namibia. Through the multi-lateral forum provided by the commonwealth, Nigeria was able to muster the entire international will against the then apartheid regime. Nigeria was also able to enhance her relationship with other nations in the international community as a member of the Commonwealth. Moreso, it was able to exercise its leverage against such countries as Britain and other western nations in her quest to end colonialism and apartheid. In the broad aspect of the demands of the countries of the South - G.77, for a restructured international economic landscape, greater South-South cooperation, Nigeria as an important member of the G.77 and the non-aligned movement, was able to draw the interest of the Commonwealth to such demands. It is therefore a testimony to such effort that one can now assert that the commonwealth has distinguished itself in the area of

international economic relations. It pioneered the area of cooperation for developed countries of the Commonwealth. It is important in this respect to note that Britain, a major actor in both the Commonwealth and the European Economic Community (EEC) was able to use its leverage to draw no less than 27 members of the Commonwealth to associated membership of the EEC - ACP pact; linked through the various Lome pacts. Thus the commonwealth like Nigeria vigorously advocated for greater justice in the international economic relationship.

In acclaiming its world view of order, peace and security through disarmament and non-alingment, the commonwealth's position reinforces Nigeria's goals, such that Nigeria's diplomacy towards achieving these goals were often to be channelled through the collective action or forum which the commonwealth provides. This is in view of the membership of such important actors such as Britain (a UN Security Council member) and other developed countries as Canada, to collectively adopt a position or agenda in the UN which mirrors such global concerns as arms race, militarisation of space and other international security matters/concerns.

Finally, what Nigeria espouses in its foreign relations is completely identical with Commonwealth stand. It is the collective strength that the Commonwealth organization provided for Nigerian diplomacy, backing for

Nigeria's policy, that saw its acclaim as the foremost country in the eventual liquidation of the apartheid regime and the end to colonialism in the rest of Africa. Thus, Nigeria's diplomacy was given muscle by the backing which the Commonwealth provided.

4.3 NIGERIA'S NATIONAL INTEREST VIS-A-VIS THE COMMONWEALTH

The major contours which concerns the interlocking patterns of national -international policies is often viewed with respect to the general recognition of domestic political constraints on law (international Law). It is on this basis that an analysis of the concept of national interest as it affects or relates to the limitation placed on it by international law/or organisations is carried out here.

The term 'national interest' according to Sonderman (1979:85) is of relatively recent vintage, it was and remains an effort to describe the underlying rationale for the behaviour of states and statesmen in a threathening international environment.

Despite the arguement that international law does not appear noticably to restrain states in the pursuit of their 'vital national interest' which are often narrowly self-seeking, it is obvious that a state's membership of any international (inter-governmental) organisation does compromise those interest that underpin its foreign policy objectives.

In view of the collective strength which Nigeria draws its membership of the commonwealth, both politically in terms of its external relations and in the area of the commonwealth functional co-operation programmes from which it (Nigeria) benefits, an analysis of Nigeria's national interest vis-a-vis its membership of the commonwealth be examined. This analytical position should however be understood in the context of a country which has always been seen both as a relevant, and responsible actor in the international system and which also takes into cognisance the contemporary commonwealth concerns and the issues which resulted into the recent face off between Nigeria and the organisation as well as a cursory appraisal of the import of Nigeria's consequent suspension for its foreign policy and/or what the membership of the organisation means for Nigeria.

The issues which led to the cooling-off of relations between Nigeria and the commonwealth derive from the latest re-assessment of the commonwealth broad principles and concerns, which was also a reflection of the organisation's reaction to the concerns and values which define the new global order, these values border on democracy human rights and the rule of law.

To be a relevant actor in contemporary international relations, again

subsequently disaggregated and given specific clarity and explicitness by (then) external affairs minister, Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi. Thus Nigeria's national interest can be predicated on the nation's military economic, political and social security. Anything that enhances the capacity of Nigerians to defend her national security must be seen as being in her national interest. Anything that will promote Nigeria's economic growth and development is in the national interest.(Olusanya and Akindele 1986:3-4)

Taken on its face value, Nigeria acted legitimately as a sovereign entity to take whatever action it deemed fit to safeguard its territorial integrity, but so also is she (Nigeria) bound to operate within the framework of its international commitments such as binds it to the commonwealth and international law generally.

Certainly Nigeria values its membership and commitment to the commonwealth, as a valid and important multi-lateral medium through which it conducts its foreign relations. So also does NIgeria remain consistent in its broad aim of a strong, stable and united country. No doubt Nigeria's membership is important for the benefit it derives from its membership of the body, especially as a developing country (this is in view of the largely functional co-operation, until recently, of the

commonwealth) Nigeria's suspension from the body border on issues which may fall within the ambit of Nigeria's national interest, but, the suspension shows the incompartibility of these interest with those of the organisation. In the final analysis, this suspension has and portend serious consequences for her (Nigeria's) foreign policy and external relations. For example, it affects, especially as a developing country, its relationship with important members of the commonwealth such as Britain, Canada, Austrialia and New Zealand. This may also mean the loss of valuable development aid to which she is largely dependent.

4.4 THE ROLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN NIGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION

Between 1995 and 1998, Nigeria entered an unprecedated era in her diplomacy and external relations. Since entering into the international system as an important nation- state and international actor, her diplomacy went sour and consequently she suffered status loss in international relations, to such low levels reserved for Pariah states and (most recently) rogue regimes. It is therefore not so surprising that its relations with its most important partners in the international system such as Britain, the United states, Canada, Austrialia and other states in the European union suffered severe set-back. The United States President's

(Bill Cinton) admission that he did not know how to deal with the NIgerian problem represented by (then) Head of State, General Sani Abacha was the clearest statement made to the effect that Nigeria had become a problem child of the international community of states.

The domestic situation which alarmed most states in the present day world of increasing globalization of economies and polities bordered primarily on the government - a military regime; in an era when military regimes are not only considered an aberation, but when even their sometime messianic roles is becoming subject to query. And more importantly, the regime's human rights record, the set-back to the rule of law and, the continued transaction of democratic values and governnace; among the issues of the time were the conflicts in the Niger-Delta and coastal areas represented by the Ogoni rights movement, issues of press freedom, constraints on civil liberties, and also the sculttled transition to democratic governance. The peak to the litany of the regime's showdown with its international partners came in the wake of its execution in 1995 of the Ogoni minority rights movements leader, Mr Kenule Saro-wiwa. When Nigeria went ahead to execute the Ogoni-nine despite pleas and remonstrations from the international community against the grains/currents of the feelings of the international community; Nigeria

was at odds with the commonwealth's Harare declaration of principles with regards to military rule, democratic governance, rule of law and human rights matters. Indeed even though this was purely a domestic (Nigerian) issue which falls within the precincts of its sovereign rights as an independent state, it however represents the common conflict between national sovereignty (and interest) and a country's membership of international organisations to which it tacitly surrendered some of its sovereignty: This is true to the extent that when a nation enters into an international agreement, it cannot on such matters act unilaterally.

Moreso, when the commonwealth organisation decided to suspend Nigeria's membership of the organisation on the grounds cited above, it was the organisation's tentative step in the evolution of the contemporay commonwealth principles which, again, has its reactions to the changed or changing circumstances and situation of the international system at the on-set of the new global order. The new world order as it is now generally characterised, began to surface when in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev, then soviet leader introduced the twin-policies of Glasnost and perestroika; meant to soften the Iron-clad Soviet Society; these corresponds to *'opennes'* and *'reform'*; eventually, this policy of openness heralded the collapse of the soviet empire and communist

ideology. The consequence of this trend was the break-up of the soviet union, the overthrow of communist regimes in most, of its Eastern satelite states and, the ascendancy of united states world hegemony as the sole untramelled global power. Thus what is now easily termed a multi-polar world is actually better appreciated as a uni-polar world dominated by the US. This united states world dominance meant that its age-long domestic ideals and values of freedom, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and free market principles became transposed into the world stage. It is in this world context that one can appreciate the commonwealth's Harare declaration and its renewed interest in these values. But more importantly, by adopting this new global concerns the commonwealth was emphasising its continued relevance in contemporary international relations.

By disregarding this concerns, Nigeria was also flouting the commonwealth Harare principles as well as the new global concerns upon which they were predicated, and repudiated an agreement to which it was party. On the other hand, the commonwealth is an important international organisation, and clearly, Nigeria's membership puts it at disadvantage such that it could not go against the currents of the organisation. Disputes over these issues eventually saw the

commonwealth at the fore-front of the collective international effort aimed at bending Nigeria to conform to the new global concerns of human rights, democracy and a return to the rule of law.

One can therefore conclude that the series of a collective international action which saw Nigeria's virtual isolation in the international community was ignited by the commonwealth at the Auckland commonwealth heads of Government meeting (CHOGM), and moreso the tempo against Nigeria was sustained by the commonwealth. This campaign to isolate Nigeria diplomatically was also matched by a regime of sanction, led by principal commonwealth members against Nigeria, consquentely the commonwealth virtually led a campaign of moral violence against Nigeria, which served to ginger other members of the international community. For example after the execution of the Ogoni nine while the commonwealth Heads of Governments were in retreat in Queenstown on the 11th of November, 1995; the millbrook action programme was given full effect against Nigeria; and she thus became the first country to be so sanctioned under the millbrook initiative (Ikimi 1997:6). In additon, a commonwealth ministerial Action Group (CMAG) made up of 8 countries was set-up after the announcement of Nigeria's suspension, to monitor compliance with the (1991) Harare

declaration. The strong and uncompromising commonwealth action against Nigeria roused international, concerted action to this effect. In the view of an official of the NIIA, cited by the News 20th Novermber, 1995, the Mandela-spearheaded suspension of Nigeria from the commonwealth is as invigorating as it is refreshing. The world now realises that we *(Nigeria) have a dictator of the crudest extraction on our hands* (P.9). This assertion is largely accurate, considering. The fact that after commonwealth action aganist Nigeria, other important countries and organizations began to reassess their relations with the regime. The clinton administration followed by the commonwealth example and recalled its ambassador; to be followed by a world wide regime of sanctions which has had a profound implication on Nigerian economy. Aside from the country's suspension from the commonwealth of nations, with whose member-nations Nigeria can no longer easily hold bilateral trade activities, other countries have imposed bilateral economic and political isolation of Nigeria.

The European Union's sanction put a hold on the European Development Fund (EDF) financed projects worth N22 billion some of which were meant for the creation of facilities that will attract investments such as the NITEL maintenance, training and research

programme, worth N2 billion, and the middle belt programme worth N3.6 billion among several others. Earlier in the second quarter of the year (1995), a 9-man deligation of investment portfolio members in the united kingdom visited Nigeria to investigate the economic potential of the country with a view to investing part of the over 40 billion dollars earmarked for investment in Africa with the resurgence and intensification of socio-political uncertainties, the opportunity was lost. The commonwealth at the forefront of this regime of sanctions prescribed further sanctions against Nigeria.

The clear implication of the commonwealth action against Nigeria can be appreciated better if one understood clearly what its (Nigeria's) membership of the organisation meant to her e.g. the ablity to project Nigeria's foreign policy in the international arena more forcefully via the collective, multilateral front or fora of the commonwealth. Another impact was that Nigeria's consequent international isolation as a pariah nation deprived Nigeria her means and /or medium of international cooperation and the medium to articulate its international pursuits. The 15 member European union considered and actually placed an arms embargo on Nigeria, the Group of eight (G-8) industrialised nations reconsidered its Lome IV agreement of 1995 and suspended some development projects

earmarked for Nigeria.

Before Nigeria's supspension from the commonwealth organisation, its membership of the organisation impacted significantly on its foreign policy in terms of both its contribution to the attainment of Nigerian policy goals, and foreign policy philosophy, in general. Nigeria's relative influence and international status was greatly enhanced by virtue of the fact that the commonwealth itself is an important international actor,encompassing in its family fold, some of the most important countries in the international arena.

Thus the commonwealth offered Nigeria an ample springboard from which its policy was vigorously pursued. Also the commonwealth forum leap frogged Nigeria's southern African policy such that she (Nigeria) received world aclaim in terms of its contribution to the liquidation of both the apartheid system in South Africa, and eventual end to colonial domination in Southern Africa in particular and Africa in general. The commonwealth also enriched Nigeria's contribution towards the attainment of world peace.

The influence which the commonwealth wields in the international arena is clearly exemplified in the collective international action against Nigeria at the time, which the commonwealth principally mustered and

weighted against Nigeria.

The death of former Nigerian Head of State, General Sani Abacha on 8th June, 1998 marked a turning point in Nigerian diplomacy. His successor, General Abubakar Abdulsalam made concerted efforts to woo back the support of the international community. He thus embarked on a number of reconciliatory measures. His first attempt was to improve the human rights situation by releasing individuals and opposition groups who were incacerated indefinitely by the erstwhile Abacha regime. He then addressed the democratic situation in the country by embarking on a transition which has been adjudged as being relatively creditable.

With these positive moves, the commonwealth once more led the international community by lifting off sanctions hitherto imposed on Nigeria. The international community followed suit and since then, more aids have started flowing to Nigeria with promises of complete removal of sanctions and more aids on attainment of complete democracy. This has boosted Nigeria's once moribund international image. This is also a clear indication of the commonwealth's efficacy in the international scene and also points to the fact that with a positive out look and emphasis on cooperation in the international community, Nigeria can once more take its place among the comity of nations. The outcome of

Nigeria/commowealth face off is an experience which Nigeria can use in its diplomacy and relations in the international system.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The excution of Mr. Ken Saro-wiwa and eight of his fellow Ogoni rights activists in the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Ignited what some Nigerian officials perceived to be an orchestrated compaign against Nigeria. This campaign was spearheaded particularly by the commonwealth. In the wake of this there started once more, the perenial debate among foreign policy elites and especially the media, whether Nigeria should not withdraw, after all from the organisation. Debates which bordered on whether Nigeria actually benefits or not from its membership of the organisation. The implications of the debate can be summed-up briefly; namely what is the relevance of the commonwealth in comtemporary International relations? What benefits do members gain from the commonwealth? What does the commonweath mean to members and does membership mean loss of sovereignty? It is against this lively backgrounds that we set out in this study to examine, analyse and appraise all the prons and cons of the issues in the debate.

In order to guide us in this respect, we have relied on the structural-functionalist perspective as the theoritical mode of analysis. This

approach is usually applied when analysing international order. It is also applied in description of the practical, political, economic and social problems that abound in the international scene. This approach thus helps deepen our understanding of the nature of the international system, and set in broad perspectives the role of the commonwealth in the contemporary international scene in general and in Nigeria's external relations and diplomacy in particular.

Elaborating on these, we observed that based on issues which form the main concern of the emerging global order, the commonwealth has adequately performed the added function it has taken up. Consequently, we noted that Nigeria's suspension came up as a result of its violation of the 1991 Harare principles to which it was party and actively participated in framing. Nigeria was thus asked to change its attitude at the domestic level towards addressing the issues of human rights, democracy and plurality, and the rule of law without which it would be ostracized by the international community.

We have thus attempted in the preceeding chapters to examine and fully explore these theorical postulations.

Chapter one was basically introductory (Its high points appear above) and provides us with a foundation which gives us an insight to the

main body of the work. In order to put in perspectives issues raised in chapter one and to enable us know the way in which the commonwealth operates, we discussed about the place of the commonwealth in International relations in chapter two.

Chapter two thus provide us with useful insights into the various functional cooperation activities of the commonwealth in the international system. This insights also avails us the opportunity to realise the role and relevance of the commonwealth especially in the contemporary global dispensation. The first part of chapter two talks about international organisations generally and their contribution to international order. We then narrowed down to the commonwealth, highlighting issues and areas of functional cooperation. Chapter two thus provides a background for chapter three which further narrows down to Nigeria's relations with the commonwealth.

Chapter three highlights such issues as Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth organisation. It is in this chapter that issues relating to Nigeria's suspension were pointed out. This chapter also talks about the redefined commonwealth principles enunciated in the Harare declaration of 1991 and how this was responsible for Nigeria's suspension. This chapter is important in that it reveals the reason why Nigeria was

suspended and now helps us to appreciate issues discussed in chapter four which stresses the repercusion of Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth body.

Chapter four could easily be described as the main body of this work because it is in this chapter that issues discussed in preceding chapters are now brought to play on the effects of Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth body. Issues relating to the impact of the commonwealth on Nigeria's external relations were discussed. We also highlighted that Nigeria's membership of the commonwealth affects her national interest and how such issues help shape Nigeria's behaviour in the international community. The main issue of this chapter is how Nigeria's suspension led to her international isolation and also how this isolation has affected not only Nigeria's image in the international community as a responsible actor but also how it dampens Nigeria's ability to fully articulate her policy ideas in the international arena.

From the above summary we can see that international organisations play a very useful role in the international system. The commonwealth, one of these organisations provides the useful functions of not only promoting affairs of mutual benefit among states through its various areas of functional cooperation but also aids in ensuring order and

respect for international law in the international system especially evidenced in Nigeria's suspension from the body.

Nigeria indeed shares common belief with the commonwealth organisation, such as belief in international peace and order, justice, freedom from oppression, racial discrimination. As such, it has, since joining the commonwealth supported the principles of the commonwealth. The commonwealth, through its activities of functional cooperation is interested, and indeed involved in peace in the international system. Issues like fear of nuclear war, economic plight of the developing world, global democratization, human rights watch, are all parts of its main concern. The commonwealth in pledging its support for the United Nations has taken an added function in the aspect of democratization, human rights et-cetera, which are the concerns of contemporary international society.

The Commonwealth Fund for technical corporation helps developing nations to expand and improve their stock of skilled personnel, provides educational advisers for government etcetera. The commonwealth has distinguished itself in the area of international economic relations. The commonwealth colombo plan for Asia and the pacific is an example of cooperation for development. Being the first major initiative to assist the

less previledged, developing countries within the commonwealth, receive priority in the aid programmes of the developed members of the association who direct 70% of bilateral aid to other member countries. The more advanced commonwealth nations themselves provide assistance in various forms to other members. Futhermore, the commonwealth also has many voluntary organizations actively assiting development, either by chanelling funds collected from the public to projects in developing countries or raising the level of popular support from global action against poverty. (Olusanya 1980:87).

It is thus clear to see that membership of international organisation is rewarding to its members in terms of material and psycological benefits. To most developing nations, the various areas of functional cooperation is of immense benefit to them as it is in line with most of their development needs. For the developed countries, membership could be psycholgically invigorating because it is through this means that they could articulate their external relation aspirations. The ability to be seen as playing an important and big brotherly role by helping out the less previledged could be mentally rewarding. All members of international organisation as examplified by the commonwealth thus hold their membership of such organisations dearly.

In realizing the importance of international organisation most nations therefore join this organisations, with its attendant implications being a small price to pay for the immense benefit they stand to gain as members. The issue of sovereignty generally and a state's national interest in relation to its membership of international organisation has been one of a lively debate. The requirement of membership of these international organisations demand that a nation should surrender part of its sovereignty for the functional occupation of these organisations.

Though most international organisations, as part of their objectives, respect the sovreignty and adhere to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of nations. However, the internal affairs of the member nations are still of interest to the international organisations especially if it touches on issues that border on contravention of international law or the working principles of such an organisation. The face-off between Nigeria and the commonwealth is a very good example of this phenomenon.

The issue of democracy and human rights which Nigeria was seen to have violated was of importance to the Commonwealth because the basic part of her principles, which was restresseed in the Harare Declaration of 1991 specifically mention these principles as fundamental.

Thus Nigeria's claim that she was settling an internal affair was a very lame excuse since the exigencies of the membership of the Commonwealth stressed adherence to these principles. Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth body was thus in order since to the Commonwealth, the issue that led to Nigeria's suspension, culminating in the execution of the "Ogoni nine" amidst pleas for clemency in all quarters of the international community, was a Classical case of flouting the Harare Declaration, taking into coqnisance its renewed qlobal interests. As a member of the international community and/or the commonwealth as an international orgainzation, Nigeria cannot take unilateral action on issues which are of concern to the international community on the one hand and to the principle/or charter of the organization(s) to which it belongs.

Nigeria's carefully nutured image over a long period as a responsible international actor crumpled suddenly by her suspension from the commonwealth and there were further calls for more international sanctions to be placed on her. Nigeria thus attained a new status/image reserved for Pariah nations. Nigeria was now seen as a deviant nation with recriminations coming from all quarters of the international community. Most developed nations with which Nigeria hitherto

developed friendly relations now withdrew their interests from Nigeria. These nations now exhibited a hostile attitude towards Nigeria. Nigeria's suspension drew embarassing international attention to her and a greater pressure was thus put on an already overstretched Nigerian nation. Prior to Nigeria's suspension, she had used the commonwealth as a platform to articulate her foreign policy ideals in the international scene but this opportunity was now denied. Since the international community see Nigeria as an irresponsible nation, her image was bound to suffer. For how can one claim to be responsible and to support peace and order in the international community when the principles of an organization that projects peace and order in the international scene was arbitrarily flouted? This issues thus, put Nigeria at a disadvantaged position.

Though it is easy to view Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth as an attempt by the commonwealth to test what amount of influence it still wields among its member states, and also to seek for relevance and or support from the international community, the issues raised are of importance and contributes to ensuring order in the international community.

Issues that arose before and after Nigeria's suspension has aided in reasserting the commonwealth orgainzation's relevance in the

international system. As a result of this, we have put forward some recommendations which appear in the next and final section of this work.

5.2 RECOMENDATIONS

This study was motivated by a desire to re-evaluate Nigeria-commonwealth relations, in the wake of Nigeria's suspension from the commonwealth organisation to which it (Nigeria) was an active even enthusiastic advocate, and on the basis of the Harare declaration of principles of 1999, to which it was party to its draft. The main aim was to appraise the commonwealth organisation so as to ascertain its relevance in contemporary global configuration where human right, democracy and the rule of law are top concerns. Based on the observation drawn from the analysis, the following recommendations are made:-

The commonwealth be given greater political clout by way of strengthening the position of the secretary general, so as to enhance its various monitoring mechanisms, in view of its present-day concerns with such issues as human rights, rule of law and democracy which reflect the new global concerns.

The commonwealth should maximise its functional/cooperation frameworks so that erring members can clearly realise the cost-benfit of

membership or otherwise, and/or adhering to the organisation's initiatives.

This should go hand-in-hand with strengthening the organisation's secretariat in such a way that the public does not continue to identify the commonwealth with Britain's foreign office.

The commonwealth broaden and entrench its principles (in the new global order) in terms of estabilishing formal treaties binding all members under international law, instead of the present form of consensual association of members. This would give credence and legitimacy to the commonwealth's activities, instead of the present ad-hoc posture, in which principles remain transitory.

On the part of Nigeria, that is in view of the enormous influence which commonwealth membership confers on Nigerian foriegn policy, Nigeria should re-examine its domestic front and ensure that it conforms to latest values in the international system. This entails a speedy transition to democratic values and an adherence to the rule of law.

It is also recommended that the military disengage permanently from direct governance as militarty rule is more than ever before, now considered an aberration.

Nigerian government should institutionalise the rule of law and

install freedom based on justice and equity in the polity.

Nigeria should take immediate steps to gain re-admission into the organisation as continued suspension is not in Nigeria's diplomatic, and development interest.

That even though the commonwealth's intervention into Nigerian domestic politics is at variance with its (regime's) perception of National interest, the interest of Nigerians should be the overriding consideration in the articulation of its external relations. Thus Nigeria should learn to avoid situations or events that may have negative consequences for the masses. This may mean both listening to universial opinions even if they contradict the regime's political interests.

As elaborated in the theoritical Framework considered For this study, no country is an island unto itself; this is incidentally the basis of international law. And one might expect to surrender a sovereign right to a collective functional organisation.

It is recommended on this basis that a rejuvenated Nigeria-commonwealth relations be based both on shared historical affinity, and also take into cognisance renewed interest on such issues as the rule of law, human rights and democracy.

Finally it is recommended that a meaningful and result oriented

commonwealth-Nigeria relations be initiated after the suspension of Nigeria is lifted.

The starting point, one hopes, is the shuttle diplomacy of the Abdusalam Abubakar regime towards normalising relations with Nigeria's traditional partners.

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