

The Reform And Democratization of the Security Council of the United Nations: The Viability of Nigeria's Quest for a Permanent Seat in the Council

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Abstract

This article appraises the viability of Nigeria's quest for a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations. The article examines the evolution of the United Nations as well as the issue of the United Nations reform particularly the proposed enlargement of the membership of the Security Council. It analyses the Nigeria's quest for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, the Nigeria's eligibility, the strategies to be employed by Nigeria and the challenges ahead of the country. The article is concluded with an admonition that Nigeria should intensify her efforts towards securing relevant supports from the African continent and the General Assembly despite the fact that the so-called reform has continued to remain illusory.

Introduction

The Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the organization. Others are the General Assembly (GA), Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Trusteeship Council (TC), International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Secretariat.¹ The Security Council is made up of fifteen members, five permanent and ten non-permanent members. The five permanent members are The Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (now Russia), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island, and the United States of America.² The other ten non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly.³ The permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council is provided for in the United Nations Charter as a result of a situation of force majeure and its acquiescence by Member States of the United Nations.⁴ This situation resulted from the role played during the Second World War by the major victorious allies who placed emphasis on the need to prevent future generations from the scourge of wars and, therefore, who had the capability and capacity to help prevent such likely wars.⁵

The United Nations system is today faced with a lot of challenges that were not available some decades back. Actors and indeed the different peoples of the world are taking another look at the global body. The initial consensus which mostly involved the victorious side in the Second World War would appear to be fast disappearing, leading to agitations for a new equilibrium.⁶ Repeatedly, keen watchers of the international system are asking questions on the rationale for granting of veto power to five members of the United Nations when over two hundred other members are without veto power in addition to being members of the Security Council only on rotational basis.

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¹ See Article 7 of the Charter of the United Nations.

² See Article 23 of the Charter of the United Nations.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Bola A. Akinterinwa, *Nigeria and Permanent Membership of the United Nations Security Council: Dynamics and Definienda* in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan. Vantage publishers, 2005, p. 35 at 36.

⁶ Hassan A. Saliu, *Reforming the United Nations: Issues, Problems and the Nigerian Aspiration*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan. Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.186

While the holders of the veto power are not taking the matter lightly, by coming up with counter arguments which, unfortunately, could only be potent at the inception of the United Nations, the vast majority that have been shut out of the elite club of veto power are daily coming up with arguments on why either the veto power should be abolished altogether or the number of the countries that hold it should be increased to give more bite to the global concern for democracy⁷. It is instructive, however, to note that the issue of veto is not the only challenge facing the United Nations. According to Hassan Saliu, there is a coordinated effort on the part of majority of the United Nations members that the membership of the Security Council is still not representative of the World. People therefore expect justice to be done to the marginalized parts of the world. The justice being expected should cover all continents⁸. Keen observers hold the view that some other countries in Asia and Europe deserve to sit on the Security Council by virtue of their assessed contributions to the world body. Informed by the same thinking, there is an apparent consensus that both Africa and South America also deserve to parade permanent members of the Security Council.

The reform agenda is expected to cover the operations of all other organs of the United Nations including the financial institutions⁹. However, as at this moment, there is no consensus yet on how to go about reforming the United Nations seventy-one years after its establishment in 1945. Actors and operators of the United Nations system seem to have their differing approaches to the issue of reform although they all agree that to bring about more vitality to the organization and restore the confidence of all peoples of the world in the global organization, the issue of reform must have to be confronted. One of the expected outcomes of the reform is that it will bring about a more balanced United Nations which will reflect the yearnings and aspirations of all parts of the World.¹⁰

Evolution of the United Nations

The birth of the United Nations could immediately be traced to the failed League of Nations project. The outbreak of the First World War, its nature and the destruction that accompanied it, shocked the world which had hoped for a world free from the scourge of war. It was therefore reasoned that the best way to guarantee global peace and security was to have a framework or institution that would compel reasonable behavior from all members of the world community¹¹. The framework that was settled for was called the League of Nations. In its original formulation, it was expected that its creation would collectivize the issue of threats to security and this would make member states to desist from acts that would threaten world peace. In particular, it had been expected that its subscription to the principle of collective security would checkmate acts of aggression on the part of its members. However, the failure of the League to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War, in addition to the deserved charge on non-representativeness of the Organization, made it to be roundly rejected as a framework that could preserve world peace.¹² Little surprise that even while the Second World War was going on, world leaders began to think of how to bring about a global organization that would be a better guarantor of world peace. Due to the pioneering efforts of the Prime Minister of Britain and the United States of America President, a number of meetings were held climaxing with the San Francisco meeting of 1943 that gave birth to the United Nations¹³. In its first decade of existence, the emphasis was on peace and security. In order to show its global reach, its opening paragraph reads “we the people of the World...” Like the League, it hopes to bring about a peaceful world through the principle of collective security.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid at page 187

¹¹ Hassan A. Saliu, *Reforming the United Nations: Issues, Problems and the Nigerian Aspiration*, op. cit. p.194

¹² See Carlsson I. “The UN at 50: A Time to Reform” in *Foreign Policy*, No. 100 (1995), pp. 3 — 18, Hassan A. Saliu, “The UN and Its New Agenda: The Dilemma of an Organization”, *Nigerian Journal of Policy and Strategy* Vol. 12, No. 51 and 2 June/December 1997, pp. 99 — 100.

¹³ Dayo Oluyemi-Kusa, *Nigeria's Permanent Membership of the United Nations Security Council: Raisons D'etre and Challenges*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.143

The Cold War environment that had ensued immediately after its formation was to render the principle ineffective as both threats to global peace and actions needed to ward them off were seen from the prism of the Cold War. Notwithstanding, the Organization has, among others, the following objectives:

- (a) To preserve world peace so as to save future generations from the scourge of war.
- (b) To promote friendly relations among nations of the world.
- (c) To promote the observance of human rights.
- (d) To promote unity and solidarity among the various peoples of the world¹⁴.

Since its establishment in 1945, the United Nations has been trying its best at meeting people's expectations. In the decades of 1960s and 1970s, when most nations in Asia and Africa were released for independence, a qualitative change in the operations of the United Nations was observed. Primarily due to their numerical strength, the focus of the United Nations' specialized agencies was changed to reflect more of the aspirations of the new nations. Gradually, more projects are being executed in Third World countries though at the displeasure of the dominant states. Indeed, since that phase, the history of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc, cannot be complete without recognizing their ever-presence in developing countries.¹⁵ Consequent upon the end of the Cold War in 1991 with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, added responsibilities were given to the United Nations. It is subsequently saddled with the responsibilities of promoting democracy, building peace, promoting development, etc, among nation-states.¹⁶ To be able to do all these, it is expected to cut down cost and bring about more efficiency in its operations. The golden question to be answered is how has the United Nations been carrying out these responsibilities in addition to its traditional roles?.

Rationale for the United Nations Reform

There have been widespread calls for the reform of the United Nations. Both the Southern and the Northern Hemispheres are calling for one kind of reform or another. The most important question to ask at this juncture is: Why is the call for United Nations reform so thick now? To satisfactorily answer this question, one needs to examine some developments which have led to widespread calls for reform. The necessity for reforming the United Nations can be located in the history of the Organization. Given birth to over seven decades ago, some observers are of the view that the political order that prevailed at the time had an influence on the structure of the Organization and even its modes of operations. However, the structure of the international system with which it is expected to relate has undergone some changes and as such the United Nations must reflect these in its activities. In particular the Cold War environment into which it was born has receded with the Soviet Union now part of history¹⁷.

The implications of the disintegration of the Soviet Union for the United Nations are many. A major one is that the rivalry between the former Soviet Union and the United States of America is now a luxury that the international system has done away with¹⁸. The United States of America remains the only superpower in the world in terms of military capability which has translated into other sectors of global political economy. This vantage position is being seen by the White House as an opportunity to imbue major structures of the international system with as much as American values as possible. However, while, on the one hand, the Pax Americana project is being executed, there is a strong opinion in the United States of America that Washington should cut her level of global visibility in keeping with the realities of the Unipolar World on which the United States of America sits¹⁹. Deriving from that, the United States has been complaining about her level of contributions to both the United Nations regular and peacekeeping budgets.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Hassan A. Saliu, "The UN and its New Agenda: The Dilemma of an organization", op. cit.

¹⁶ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "UN Peace-Keeping in a New Era: A New Chance for Peace", in *The World Today*. Vol. 49, No. 4, April, 1995, pp. 66 - 69.

¹⁷ John Olushola Magbadelo, *Nigeria's Bid for a Permanent Seat on the UN Security Council*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.129

¹⁸ Hassan A. Saliu, *Reforming the United Nations: Issues, Problems and the Nigerian Aspiration*, op. cit. p.194

¹⁹ John Olushola Magbadelo, *Nigeria's Bid for a Permanent Seat on the UN Security Council*, op. cit. p.130

Indeed, she has reduced her assessed contributions to the peace-keeping budget while she is continuing with the war to reduce her assessed contributions to the main budget²⁰. While the campaign is going on, she is busy accumulating unpaid contributions to the United Nations, making the United States a heavily indebted country to the United Nations. Yet, the United Nations has its headquarters in the United States with American citizens enjoying some visibility in the United Nations hierarchy. This exhibited reluctance has called to question the United States control of the United Nations especially with Germany and Japan making as much contributions to the Organization as the United States, at least its regular budget. Yet, neither of them is a permanent member of the Security Council²¹.

It is also being contended that the United Nations in its current mood needs a fundamental restructuring to give a sense of belonging to all segments of the international community. Today, Africa accounts for about twenty-eight per cent of the total United Nations membership. Yet, it does not have a permanent representation at the Security Council. This development has been blamed on colonialism which was in full swing when the United Nations was being formed. Asia is another continent which is also not being fully accommodated in the existing United Nations structure. Given its population, the continent deserves to have more than China representing it on a permanent basis in the United Nations Security Council.²²

The changes that have taken place in the world have had a telling effect on the mechanisms developed for United Nations operations. There is no doubt that the main concern of the United Nations is with Security. However, the contemporary conception of security differs from an earlier conception which placed a high premium on physical security as against psychological aspects of security. From all indications, all United Nations structures still subscribe to the physical conception of security because that is what was in vogue at the time of its formation though some commendable efforts have been made in altering the conception. It is therefore argued that as long as the United Nations' intervention in socioeconomic issues is informed by the articulations of the Cold War, so long will it be unable to make a definite positive impact. Reform in this context is seen as the panacea²³

No doubt, some veto-wielding states had acquired their power when the Cold War and colonialism were the norm. To be more specific, both France and Britain which sit comfortably as veto power states had attained their position because of their location among victorious side in the Second World War and also by virtue of the number of colonies they had. But things have changed. Keen observers, therefore, want a reform to correct the anomalies in the power status and membership of the Security Council.²⁴ A number of issues are being considered as constituting reform agenda for the United Nations. It should be noted, however, that of all these issues that of restructuring the Security Council is the most important. The interest which this organ of the United Nations has generated is not surprising. As a kind of Upper House of Legislature in which crucial decisions that affect the Organization are taken, the pre-eminent position it has assumed is not totally surprising going by the Charter. Apart from the Security Council, other issues are the restructuring of the international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, funding of the United Nations, utilization of the United Nations fund, gender issue, among others.²⁵

Viability of Nigeria's Quest for a Permanent Seat in the Security Council

Nigeria is one of the leading nations in the world, especially of the developing fragment of the international system. She has provided assistance to needy countries covering several sectors of the economy. It is therefore not surprising that she is one of the countries eyeing a seat in the Security Council as a permanent member. This quest is a legitimate one having served on the Council for a number of times in the past on a rotational basis. The Council has assumed importance in the international system with every visible and regional power wanting to serve on it on a permanent basis.²⁶

²⁰ Hassan A. Saliu, *Reforming the United Nations: Issues, Problems and the Nigerian Aspiration*, op. cit., p.195

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid at p.195

²³ Ogaba D. Oche, *Nigeria as a Regional Power and Representative in a Reformed United Nations Security Council*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.89

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Martins Uhomobhi, *United Nations Security Council Reform: An Update on Nigeria's Quest for a Permanent Seat*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan. Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.186

²⁶ Ibid

It should be noted that the country is seeking membership not for the fun of it. Rather the hallmark of Nigeria's foreign policy is its multilateral bent²⁷. Informed by the global order at the time of her independence in 1960, the country has traditionally accorded due attention to the United Nations and its activities across the world²⁸. Every successive Nigerian administration has maintained the tradition including the leprous Abacha regime which once invited the United Nations to send a fact finding mission to the country, apparently to defray the diplomatic pressure on it due to its poor democratic and human rights records²⁹. Recently, the Vice-President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Ambassador Babagana Kingibe, who is also an ex-foreign minister and former Nigeria's permanent representative to the United Nations, Professor Ibrahim Gambari canvassed Nigeria's inclusion as a permanent Member State of the United Nations Security Council, citing the advantages of territorial size, largest population and prominent roles in peace keeping missions in the continent. Speaking in Abuja at the Nigeria launch of the Global Commission's Report on "Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance", Osinbajo stated that:

.. In addition, we take the position that based on our peace keeping role in the United Nations, the size and strength of our economy and the fact that our country has the largest population in the continent and the largest economy, Nigeria deserves a permanent Member State in the (United Nations) Security Council³⁰.

Osinbajo said further that:

... Furthermore, Nigeria fully shares the views expressed in the report that the United Nations Security Council should be expanded including the call on the report on the use of veto (power) by five ordinary members. In cognizant with our view that peaceful settlement of disputes be encouraged and made more whole, we also agree that the International Court of Justice should be strengthened and put to wider use by expanding the acceptance of its jurisdiction and using it's opinions creatively for global dispute³¹.

Osinbajo stressed that the success of Nigeria in this endeavor would, indeed, impact positively not only on other countries in West African sub-region but the rest of Africa as a whole. In furtherance of the country's attachment to the United Nations, she was a troop contributor to the United Nations Peacekeeping mission in Congo even before the attainment of independence in 1960. The Angolan United Nations mission like the Congo had the singular attribute of having a Nigerian military officer at the head of its command.³² In terms of respect for the Charter, Nigeria does not fall within the bracket of countries that have been running foul of the United Nations charter. She has no record of deliberately making incursions into nations and where she has intervened she has been duly sanctioned by relevant authorities³³. Despite being surrounded by tiny countries it has never occurred to her to overrun them. If anything, the respect she has for the Organization strengthens her resolve to pursue the good neighborliness Policy through which a number of the countries has had cause to share with Nigeria her natural endowments.³⁴

We must note in particular the widespread Participation of the country in conflict resolution activities in the West African sub-region and larger Africa. Her own economic conditions notwithstanding she is a major financier of all ECOWAS and OAU (AU) Peacekeeping activities ever mounted in the continent. The two- time Chadian operations in the 1970s and 1980s and the Liberian and, by extension, Sierra Leonean operations, have their successes wrapped in Nigeria's history of peace keeping. Her involvement was wide-ranging to the extent that it covered practically the rebuilding of these countries.

²⁷ Hassan A. Saliu, Nigeria's External Image under Obasanjo and Membership of the United Nations Security Council, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.164

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Hassan A. Saliu, "Nigeria and the UN: Facing New Realities", *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 1997, pp. 79 - 103.

³⁰ See the Guardian Newspaper of Thursday, September 10, 2015, p.3

³¹ Ibid

³² Hassan A. Saliu, "Nigeria and the United Nations: Facing the New Realities", op. cit.

³³ Akindele R. A., Nigeria at the United Nations: An Overview, in Bola A. Akinterinwa, (ed.), Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.12

³⁴ Hassan A. Saliu, "Nigeria and the United Nations: Facing the New Realities", op. cit.

It is worth noting that these efforts were carried out on behalf of the larger international community which would have been embarrassed into carrying the financial burden of halting the march towards anarchy.

Her membership of the enlarged Security Council therefore will enable her to belong to the club of most visible countries in the world which in turn will increase the scope of her concern for global peace and security.³⁵ Similarly, Nigeria has developed a crop of seasoned international bureaucrats who have performed some functions for many international organizations with distinction, especially the United Nations. Beginning with Simeon Adebo, who had served the United Nations creditably, Nigeria has also produced Teslim Elias, Bola Ajibola, Maitama Sule, Ibrahim Gambari, Chris Garba, Joe Garba and a host of other personalities who are very conversant with the United Nations operations. In serving the interest of the United Nations as a permanent member, the country can deploy these human resources for the betterment of human race.³⁶

Nigeria is, indeed, a leading country in Africa. By virtue of this, she has been out to project and protect the image of the continent. Due to her unwavering commitment, several African countries were liberated from colonialism and are regularly being assisted to solve their material problems³⁷. She is also the spokesperson for Africa. Both the campaigns for reparation and debt forgiveness have received the deserved international attention because Nigeria has been using all fora available to her to make the two issues more forcefully to the point that some positive global reactions have been generated leading to a movement towards consensus especially on the latter.³⁸ Nigeria, herself, enjoyed debt forgiveness from the Paris Club during the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The African Group at the United Nations which enjoys her leadership complements her role in the Non-Aligned Movement to make a stronger case for Africa and the Black race whenever the opportunity offers itself. The call on Nigeria is even more now that there is palpable silence on the part of the dominant power states. Too many afflictions are happening to the black race without them being brought to the front burner of international politics³⁹. This is precisely so, because the Black race has no voice in the critical organ of the United Nations — Security Council. People have therefore held non-representation responsible for the disturbing regime of nonchalance that characterizes the reaction of the Northern Hemisphere to conflict situations around Africa⁴⁰.

In this era when international system is expected to play a role in dousing tension or managing it, Nigeria is almost the only country in Africa that has been resolute in terms of finding lasting solutions to numerous conflict areas in the region. One can hardly discuss the Ivorian crisis, Sudanese War, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Togo crises, and others, without having to reckon with the inspiring roles of Nigeria⁴¹. The feeling, therefore, is that since the United Nations itself is created to preserve peace and Nigeria is already a leading country in conflict resolution both within and outside Africa, the latter is eminently qualified to sit on the enlarged Security Council to guard the African or black race which the current shape of the United Nations is not sufficient in manning⁴². Happily, Nigeria is now democratic. All the known democratic institutions are in place, working to consolidate democracy.

³⁵ Hassan A. Saliu, "Nigeria and the African Seat on the Security Council: Problems and Benefits", *Arts and Social Science Research*, Vol. 2, September, 1999, pp. 105 — 121.

³⁶ Akindele R. A., *Nigeria at the United Nations: An Overview*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.186

³⁷ Akindele R. A., *Nigeria and the Democratization of the Security Council*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.226

³⁸ Hassan A. Saliu, "Nigeria's Policy towards Africa: Some Reflections" in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed) *Nigeria and the Development of the African Union*, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p86.

³⁹ Ogaba D.Oche, *Nigeria as a Regional Power and Representative in a Reformed United Nations Security Council* in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan. Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.98

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Gani Joses Yoroms, *Nigeria and Peace Operations in Africa: Beyond Post-Ecomog Triumphal Obsession*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.397

⁴² John Olusola Magbadelo, *Nigeria's Bid for a Permanent Seat on the UN Security Council*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan. Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.135

They have been doing so for the past seventeen years. Before now, lack of democracy had been the often raised issue against the country in her bid for permanent membership of the Security Council.

However with seventeen years under democracy during which a civilian to civilian transition has taken place four times⁴³, Nigeria is indeed a proud member of the international democratic family⁴⁴. The last transition in 2015 was indeed remarkable in the sense that for the first time in the political history of Nigeria, the opposition party, All Progressives Congress (APC) sent the ruling party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) out of power. The All Progressives Congress defeated the Peoples Democratic Party in a general election that was conducted in March, 2015. Nigeria is hoping to have another transition the next three years. The implication of this is that a democratic Nigeria whose President has been enjoying commensurate visibility is an unignorable candidate for the Security Council's seat⁴⁵. It is true the country has encountered many problems or crises since 1960 when it got independence such as civil war, religious crisis, corruption, book haram, among others currently; the President is embarking on reform programmes which cover all sectors of the economy. The hope is that with these efforts, the economy will soon be propelled to a level that it can meet the material requirements of Security Council's seat whenever it is secured.

On the whole, Nigeria seeks membership of the enlarged Security Council because she is convinced that she possesses all the credentials for membership. Her participation in security functions and her location in Africa which has no permanent member on the enlightened Security Council are strong points for her. Her desire to represent the black segment of the world and her consistency as spokesperson for Africa coupled with her democratic attainment, are notable attributes which cannot be ignored in the reform of the Security Council at the membership level⁴⁶.

The international community stands a chance of benefiting from Nigeria's membership in several ways. One, it will give hope to other parts of the world that the United Nations is now favorably disposed towards correcting the injustices associated with its operations. Two, the Black race will heave a sigh of relief and convince themselves that it is not true that they are being discriminated against because of the color of their skin. Three, the African continent which has the misfortune of being spoken for will have the opportunity of having in Nigeria a permanent member of the Security Council which can speak for the authentic African interest. Four, her membership will show that the international system has an unbiased way of rewarding faithful members who have been keeping faith with it through material and human contributions. Five, it will be a major effort to strengthen democracy in the country as it can easily be presented as a dividend of democracy. Six, in the present circumstance of Nigeria, her membership of the Security Council on a permanent basis has the potential of reversing the negativities which people generally associate with the African continent⁴⁷.

The Strategy and Tactics for the Realization of Nigeria's Quest

There are two levels at which the strategy and tactics of Nigeria for the realization of the permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council would have to be deployed. The first is in Africa, where efforts would have to be made to win support for Nigeria's designation as one of the two countries to assume the two permanent seats for Africa. This is expected to be determined in a Summit of the African Union. Already, Egypt and South Africa have also indicated their intention for the same purpose. The second could be at the United Nations General Assembly should the matter not be decided at the African Union Summit to designate Nigeria as Africa's candidate⁴⁸.

⁴³ That was in 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015.

⁴⁴ See, Hassan A. Saliu (ed) *Nigeria Under Democratic Rule, 1999- 2003*, Ibadan, University Press, 2004 and 2005, Vols. I and II.

⁴⁵ Hassan A. Saliu and J.S. Omotola, "Obasanjo's Foreign Policy" in Hassan A. Saliu (ed.), *Nigeria Under Democratic Rule, 1999 — 2003*, Ibadan, University Press, 2005.

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Hassan A. Saliu, *Reforming the United Nations: Issues, Problems and the Nigerian Aspiration*, op. cit. p.206

⁴⁸ Martins Uhomoibhi, *United Nations Security Council Reform: An Update on Nigeria's Quest for a Permanent Seat*, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan. Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.182

The portents for success at the Summit for Nigeria look dicey given recent developments, including the sudden emergence of Kenya and Senegal as contestants. Some observers see this as a spoiler approach, targeted at Nigeria, which has, until the emergence of these two countries, presented the exclusive image of a black power in the quest for permanent membership of the Security Council. In the worst-case scenario, South Africa and Egypt, neither of which has Nigeria's credentials in this respect would profit from the development. Other factors, which are tricky, include the silent but present voice of the opponents of Option 'A' who are in league with the preponderance alliance of small states at the global level in the United Nations system. Efforts should be pooled, and it is important to muster bilateral and sub-regional initiatives, to secure the votes of ECOWAS countries for Nigeria.⁴⁹ Egypt fully realizes its limitations on the continent appear to be doing everything possible to garner support from where it believes Nigeria is strong. Egypt, more than South Africa, may want to do everything within its powers to frustrate a consensus emerging out of the African Union summit as it fears that Africa might not designate it as a representative. Its thinking, it is argued, is that if a consensus does not emerge, all contestants would be compelled to fight it out on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly, where it believes it has a stronger chance of winning against Nigeria. Realistically, this is an option Nigeria should not allow to happen by doing all it can to ensure that it gets designated as one of the countries to represent Africa on the Security Council⁵⁰.

The second level is the "battle" at the General Assembly. The burden of the quest for membership would be considerably lighter if Nigeria gets Africa's endorsement in the African Union summit because it would then go to the General Assembly as a regional candidate. In the event that this does not happen the strategy would be for Nigeria to deploy its campaign armies afield, using the United Nations as the springboard and a fulcrum of campaign efforts⁵¹. The country must not underestimate the influence and power of the Permanent Representatives of Member States in New York. Nigeria should, therefore, proceed to court them in order to win their support for her candidacy.

At the bilateral level, Nigeria should reach out to the countries of the respective regions, particularly where she stands a good chance of winning support, namely, the Caribbean countries, Asia, the Pacific and Latin American countries. She must tap not into such affinities of the G-7 and the Non-Aligned Movement but of such Organizations as the OIC, the Africa-Asia Consultative Forum and the D-8. Egypt is expert at exploiting such forums and has already garnered support from the OIC and the League of Arab States. Nigeria must tap from its connections with the Islamic World, to her advantage in this bid⁵².

On the whole, it can be said that the major challenge facing Nigeria in its quest for a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations is how to secure overwhelming African support for her bid. Again, it must be noted that nothing can be taken for granted. Nigeria must not underestimate any factor or country. In 2005, Nigeria underestimated the diplomatic capacity and capability of Rwanda in the contest for the presidency of the African Development Bank as a result of which the Nigerian and Rwandese candidates tied⁵³. The situation calls for a great display of diplomatic skills on the part of the country. Although non-African powers have a limited role to play in the contest, Nigeria should do all it can to get their support as well. Nearly all of them have an interest in who emerges as the winner of the remaining seat for Africa in the Security Council. It may likely be a fierce battle.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Despite the genuine clamor for the enlargement of the United Nations Security Council by many member states of the Organization, it seems that a positive decision in that respect may have to wait for many years. There are indications that major countries of the world such as the United States and China really do not want any expansion of the Security Council, especially along the lines proposed under the current reform efforts.

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ogaba D. Oche, Nigeria as a Regional Power and Representative in a Reformed United Nations Security Council, in Bola A. Akinterinwa, (ed.), Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.96

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Dapo Fafowora, Nigeria's Quest for a Permanent Seat on the Security Council, in Bola A. Akinterinwa (ed.), Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council, Ibadan, Vantage Publishers, 2005, p.392

There are also indications that the so- called Coffee Club, made up of countries that favor Option 'B' could hold sway as opposed to those who favor Option 'A'. The conclusion from the foregoing is that we may, in fact, not be as close to the enlargement of the Security Council as many would think. Consequently, what we may, in fact, have been witnessing may be a lot of motion without progress, which serves the interest of those in favor of the status quo.

It will be interesting in the next few years to see how these events play themselves out. Meanwhile, Nigeria should not be discouraged but rather should continue in her campaign for a permanent seat in the Council. This she should do by unprecedented mounting of pressure on countries in Africa and the General Assembly of the United Nations.