

## **Nigerian Nationalists and Pan-Africanists: Paradox of an Emerging Sub-Imperial Regional Power.**

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### ABSTRACT

The so-called "tripod" - Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt - on which rather presumptuously Africa and individual regions rest are in contemporary global geo-political terms illusory. If the hopes and aspirations of the African nationalists and Pan-Africanists as well as those of the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now AU are considered in relation to the vision and programmes of the present crop of African leaders; there is no shred of doubt that the 'road map' dreamt of and articulated in the writings of intellectuals and Pan-Africanists of earlier generation for a renascent Africa has been sadly betrayed. The colonialists agenda and the implicit contemptuous and dehumanising treatment of the "natives" were robustly rebuffed in the writings of African intellectuals and Pan-African activists. The struggle for independence, especially following the Second World War was fervently waged to confront political domination, economic exploitation and cultural imperialism. Today, the African identity has been immersed in the globalisation process of the western economic, financial and political institutions. The 'tripod' response to neo-imperialism is 'NEPAD' to be funded by G7/8 - a group that has not hidden its intention for global economic dominance and political supremacy. Pax Americana is unrelenting in foisting her hegemony in a 21st world order in which the United Nations will become irrelevant.

Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt geographically, given the size of their population and potential for economic development and militarily are in varying degrees enamoured to the current world hegemonist - the USA. They are therefore unlikely to champion the cause of Renascent Africa.

The focus of the paper is on Nigeria, the undisputed regional "power" in the West African region in terms of population size, gross domestic product, and more significant - the vast natural resources and potential for scientific, technological and industrial development and acquisition of military capacity.

The paper in the introduction is to discuss briefly as a background, the present state of the Pan-Africanists dream and project in relation to the achievements of famous initiators and propagandists of Pan- Africanists ideals.

This is to be followed by with an appraisal of the contributions of Nigerian intellectuals, politicians, workers etc to anti-colonialism struggle for political and economic independence as well as cultural identity in Nigeria, West Africa and indeed in the Pan-Africanist arena. They were engaged in promotion of the Nigerian cultural identity with Pan-African perspectives.

A section of the paper is devoted to the post independence, almost thirty years military governance of Nigeria - 1966 to 1979, 1983 to 1999. The contributions of Nigeria during the periods of military rulers will also be assessed. How did Nigeria advance, distort or subvert the nationalist,

anti-imperialist and Pan-Africanist Project? Though, Nigeria is now assumed, especially in the international community to be ruled by an elected democratic government, there are certain practices and approach to policy formulation by the ruling party that portrays the attributes of dictatorial (underdemocratic) regime.

The paper to attempts to summarise how prolonged military rule in spite of consistent role of Nigeria in the anti-apartheid struggle and the independence of a number of countries, objectively and rather paradoxically, is more of a sub-imperial power at least in the West African regions, if not

in some parts of other regions of Africa. The leadership of the ruling party seems to be promoting US ideology and global imperialist interests that are mostly anti-developing countries political, economic, and military/security aspirations.

In concluding, the contributions of well known proponents of the finest tradition of Pan-African ideals - Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor, Nelson Mandela etc will be considered along with current developments in Africa and internationally to construct a Pan-Africanist perspective and project for total liberation of Africa politically, economically and socio-culturally.