

THE PRESS AND FOREIGN POLICY IN NIGERIA

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NIGERIAN PRESS REPORTING,¹ and interpretations,² of the country's foreign policy news improved markedly in the 1980s. Many factors³ account for these improvements. The first relates to the growth of quality publications, a second undoubtedly was due to the higher standards of education of journalists, and a third reflects the greater degree of specializations now evident among Nigerian journalists. A fourth is what has been called 'Nigerian academics in print journalism'. As a result of all these factors interacting, editors and heads of foreign news desks are now more discerning in their uses of foreign news agencies. Thus, the assertion that Nigerian press reliance on international news agencies is impeding⁴ effective reporting, analysis and interpretation of foreign policy news is baseless, or certainly much exaggerated.

There is, however, much evidence to show that a veil of secrecy pervades Nigeria's information system. The extent to which the government provides information to the press depends heavily on the personalities that are in power at a given time. This means that the formal nature of the government (whether it is civilian or military) is not a decisive factor.

The Nigerian press occupies a significant role not only as part of the elite, but also as the forum or channel through which other foreign policy elites expressed their views. Foreign policy controversies such as 'the expulsion of West African aliens' (in 1983), the 'Dikko affair' (in 1984) and the 'Kuru conference and American confrontation with Libya' (in 1986),⁵ produced fierce elite public participation in foreign policy debates. Through letters and feature articles, contrasting perspectives of the crises were expressed.

The US confrontation with Libya was perhaps the fiercest and the most illustrative of the main attitudes of the competing elites towards a foreign policy issue. Much anger and controversy was generated and made evident. The press highlighted the contrasting viewpoints between those who approved of the then foreign minister Akinyemi's insistence on reciprocity, ie that the African states should consult Nigeria on external issues before it sides with them, and, in marked contrast, those who argued that Nigeria should have condemned US aggression axiomatically.

Akinyemi's views that Nigeria should not automatically get involved in crises drew forth some aggressive criticism. This came mainly from the radical left and the Marxists. His contention was backed by the external affairs ministry, which maintained that consultation is procedural in international relations,⁶ and that foreign

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policy should be predicated upon a nation's interests. Since Libya was acting against Nigeria's interests in Chad,⁷ Nigeria thus had no business supporting Libya, it was said. Others argued that this was contrary to the spirit of the OAU since Libya was a member. There were also those who contended that the initial silence had undermined Nigeria's Afro-centric foreign policy by inviting and exposing it to ridicule. These thought-provoking debates and discussions were expressed through the pages and columns of the serious press. The quality press thus both expressed its own views as elites whilst also analysing, interpreting and presenting the contrasting viewpoints of the main foreign policy elites.⁸ Nigeria's press and reading public are essentially elitist. When allowed to do so they are vociferous, but they are not broadly based. There are, of course, other more popular newspapers (both English and vernacular), but they are mainly interested in scandal and political gossip and do not concern themselves with foreign policy questions, except rarely when an issue touches the general public, as with the mass expulsions of non-Nigerians.

There remains, however, a crucial problem: that in Nigeria the government or its officials hoard information, thereby acting as a monopoly or near monopoly. The former chief of general staff, Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomu, now a retired naval officer, but a civilian vice-president, acknowledged in an interview with *West Africa*, that 'the press finds it difficult to get the necessary information on what is going on in government ... they are not briefed properly about certain policies ... [and] in some government organisations public officers have the tendency to hoard information ...'⁹

It must be emphasized, however, that problems of information are not peculiar to Nigeria. In reporting domestic politics and external affairs, virtually all journalists encounter difficulties or some form of censorship. Even in democratic societies, elected governments often skilfully utilize the organs of the state—the judiciary, the police etc, to muzzle, censor or control the press. Witness, for example, the attempts of the former British prime minister, Mrs Thatcher, to prevent some daily and Sunday papers from serializing the book *Spy Catcher* by the former secret agent Peter Wright. The harsh media policy of the Thatcher years prompted leading figures in the industry to write a memo to her successor, Mr John Major, offering a wealth of advice about what his information policy should be.¹⁰

In the USA, the Reagan administration did not disguise its resentment of what it called 'adversary journalism'. Reagan cited this and the alleged lack of patriotism of reporters as reasons for barring journalists from accompanying US troops during the October 1983 invasion of Grenada.¹¹ With specific reference to the Grenada operation, the Reagan administration borrowed from the British information policy during the Falklands crisis in 1982 whereby adversary journalism, and the concept of 'operational security' was cited in justification for restricting information. The Department of Defense and the government used the concept of operational security so loosely that there were charges of misinformation, manipulation and propaganda.¹²

The Reagan administration made several attempts to restrict contacts between administration officials and journalists. For example, in March 1983 President Reagan signed an executive order requiring more than 128 000 government workers to sign agreements whereby their writings and speeches were submitted to official censors equipped with lie detectors.¹³ Another order was also signed which required White House officials to report all contacts and conversations with reporters,¹⁴ and

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the administration maintained a daily record of every office telephone conversation with reporters.¹⁵

Despite the fact that allied commanders during the war with Iraq maintained daily briefings and provided reporters with much information with which to fill their news editions the whole concept of the news pool was and is based on restrictive information and manipulation of news.¹⁶ Since the declaration of the ceasefire in the Gulf war revelations of the extent of allied coverage, distortion and manipulation of news began to emerge.¹⁷ Even before the war ended some public concern was being expressed about allied reporting restrictions and distortion of facts.¹⁸

There are, however, significant differences in Nigeria between policy formulation and implementation. A major difference between Nigerian governments and governments in Britain and the USA is that in the latter democratic societies have planned and organized communication policies which enable them to avail themselves of the publicity facilities offered by the press.

The importance of communication cannot be overemphasized. It is part and parcel of diplomacy. The existence, success or failure of diplomacy depends on communication. It has been well said that 'Representing, reporting, and negotiating demands the acquisition and sharing of information, as well as opening up and maintaining constant and uninterrupted communication'.¹⁹ The role of the media is therefore crucial to the success of diplomacy because of the pivotal place it occupies as a conveyor of information. The Nigerian government's communication policies usually do not extend beyond manipulation of the media for domestic politics and personal aggrandisement. Habitually no guidelines, procedures, criteria, framework of reference, or policies are articulated to ensure close working relations between government and the press during international developments.

While British, Indian, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand officials worked closely with their press corps during the Commonwealth's Heads of Government meetings, in Nassau in 1985 and in Vancouver in 1987, in sharp contrast Nigerian leaders were either incompetent or busy hoarding information.²⁰ During the Dikko affair, the external affairs minister was reported to have disappeared, and journalists were frustrated by lack of information.²¹ While the government was busy appealing to the press to help cement Anglo-Nigerian relations during Mrs Thatcher's visit to Nigeria in 1988, the same government's security agents were busy harassing the press and preventing journalists from talking to the British prime minister.²²

The extent of the problem associated with information management in Nigeria can be discerned if one looks at the situation during the Gulf war. Despite the reporting restrictions and manipulation of journalists by military authorities, the fact remains, however, that they maintained regular briefings, and defence and information officers regularly briefed the press at home. On the other hand, the Nigerian authorities did not do the same in its involvement in Liberia's civil war, as is illustrated below.

In view of the above-mentioned problems of information policy, how then does one generally evaluate the input, impact, influence and effect of the Nigerian press on foreign policy matters? A starting point of analysis is to recognize that if the press were merely a bunch of lap-dogs, then Nigerian governments surely would not have bothered to enact laws, promulgate decrees or formulate policies that merely impede the practice of 'tame' journalists.

Basically, the role of the Nigerian press had been to provide information, to advo-

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cate and criticize policies, and to provide entertainment. What clearly emerges from a recent work²⁵ highlighting a decade of Nigerian press handling of foreign policy matters was that it was characterized by inconsistency, bad management and a defect-

ive information system. At best it makes constructive suggestions, enlightening its readers about international affairs, and encouraging them to form their own opinions; but these virtues are not invariably on view.

The quality press of Nigeria

In speaking about the provision of information, advocacy and criticism, we are referring to Nigeria's quality publications. For example, any researcher seeking to compile a detailed list of Nigeria's press coverage, analysis and interpretation of foreign policy matters, would find the following publications of relevance:

Daily newspapers:²⁴

- *Daily Times*
- *New Nigerian*
- *National Concord*
- *The Guardian*
- *The Punch*
- *The Vanguard*

Weekly magazines:

- *Newsweek*
- *African Guardian*
- *African Concord*
- *Thisweek*

Some state government-owned newspapers, such as the *Standard*,²⁵ *Nigerian Tide*,²⁶ and *Nigerian Chronicle*,²⁷ do make occasional excursions into areas of external relations; however, the above publications constitute a standard reading list for officials in the external affairs and information ministries.

The importance of the Nigerian press in providing information, in stimulating and reflecting debates about foreign policy issues is considerable. For instance, regarding Nigeria's relationship with the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the press monitored and reflected the diverse opinions that were expressed.²⁸ Some newspapers carried editorials condemning Nigeria's flirtation with the OIC; others strongly supported Nigeria's relationship with the organization.²⁹ There is, of course, what has been called 'selective perception'³⁰ in Nigerian journalistic practice.

Professionalism decrees that he should report and reflect in his news analysis and cover stories the criticisms and denunciations of Nigeria's connections with the OIC. He is bound by his profession to report, for instance, that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Dr Anthony Okogie (who is the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)) has condemned Nigeria's ties with the conference. But as a journalist, perhaps with an Islamic cultural background, he remains free to express supportive opinions in his personal columns about Nigeria's relationship with this body.³¹ Cleavages which are constitutive of the country's heterogeneity thus have at times helped to promote press freedom in Nigeria³² as well as being sources of internal conflict.

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For a country of about 100 million people, with diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds with attendant interests, the Nigerian press plays its part in providing adequate information and analysis. Occasionally, press probing and questions do draw official attention to certain issues. The authorities may not be aware of certain things. By providing information and details, the press sometimes is influencing policy by shaping attitudes towards a particular policy.

Relations with Israel

The Nigerian press frequently has been providing information for its readership, publishing views and interpreting opinions which either favour or oppose Nigeria's lack of diplomatic relations with Israel.³³ For example, any Nigerian observer of the country's Middle East policy will find the *Newswatch* cover report of November 1990 quite informative. One report began by saying 'In business and commerce, Israel is Nigeria's friend; but in politics and diplomacy, it is a pariah'. There followed a comprehensive investigation into the extent of trade and economic relations with Israel. It revealed a huge Israeli presence which prompted the magazine to ask, 'On the basis of the facts on the ground, is it rational for the break in diplomatic relations to persist?'³⁴ In effect, the press was helping the reader to understand the nature of Nigeria's external relations by highlighting the consistencies and contradictions inherent in this particular policy.

A constructive press?

Public acknowledgment of press contributions to foreign policy formulations and debates by officials are not common. But there is evidence that officials sometimes express private appreciation to journalists for their constructive inputs, or in order to influence them by encouraging a favourable response to a particular item of news. 'Until you talk to them, you don't know how much influence the press has had over their decisions. It is they who can tell you, Look, I was about to do this until I read what *Concord* or *New Nigerian* or *Punch* has said'.³⁵ This is the statement of Yakubu Muhammed, managing editor of *Newswatch* magazine, and a leading Nigerian journalist.

The Nigerian foreign minister in 1988, Major-General Ike Nwachu Kwu³⁶ (now retired), could be said to be publicly acknowledging the occasionally constructive role of the press when he appealed to reporters to help in cementing and promoting greater understanding and co-operation between Nigeria and Britain during Mrs Thatcher's visit to Nigeria in January 1988.

Some implicit official acknowledgment of press contributions in foreign policy matters is provided in a study entitled 'Evaluation of the Buhari administration's foreign policy'. This is a chapter in a book whose general title is *Theory and Reality in Foreign Policy-making: Nigeria after the Second Republic*. The author, Ibrahim A. Gambari, is a professor of political science and Nigeria's present ambassador to the United Nations. He was Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs in 1983, and in 1984 became foreign minister until the coup of August 1985, which was a palace revolt against General Buhari. The extensive references to newspapers' and magazines' reactions, comments, and recommendations about foreign policy are a testimony to the sophisticated standard of Nigerian quality journalism. The author's appraisal of such policy issues as the seminar organized for Nigeria's foreign diplomats (designed to stimulate the intellectual ability of the

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ambassadors), the quadripartite agreements signed between Nigeria and her neighbour states in 1984, Nigeria's policy towards Southern Africa, the decisions by the government to recognize the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic as a sovereign state in November 1984, and approval of its membership of the OAU, and the projection of Nigeria's national interests along the lines of concentric circles of foreign policy priorities—all these matters are discussed with reference to Nigerian newspaper and magazine sources in order to proffer evidence of the Buhari regime's popularity in the sphere of external affairs.

Gambari enthusiastically recalls the *Guardian* foreign policy delegations in March 1985 which visited Israel, Egypt, Tanzania, Libya and Burkina Faso. These delegations were led by the publisher of the *Guardian* press, Mr Alex Ibru. Their published reports and recommendations reflected acceptance of Buhari's foreign policy by the countries visited.

A three-part projection of Nigerian foreign policy in the 1990s written by the author for the *Daily Times* reflected the acceptance of the pivotal role occupied by the press in highlighting intellectual contributions to foreign policy debates.³⁷ As was pointed out above, Nigerian academics also made some contributions to the improved standard of Nigerian press analysis and interpretation of foreign policy issues.

The coverage of the Liberian civil war provides another example of press roles in foreign policy matters. Drawing largely from the opinions of scholars and diplomats, the *Newswatch* magazine of October 1990 analysed the domestic and regional implications of Nigeria's crucial position in the establishment, deployment and operation of the ECOWAS peace-keeping force—ECOMOG. Because the venture violated Article 3 of the OAU charter, which commits member states to non-interference in the internal affairs of states and respect for the total sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state, *Newswatch* interpreted Nigeria's involvement as a new foreign policy objective, and suggested that the ECOWAS intervention might mark the end of 'the era of passive observance of catastrophes in member states'.³⁸

It is instructive to point out here that the magazine did not only express its views as a foreign policy elite, but also provided an avenue for other elites to express their opinions. Central to elite concern was lack of information from the government. *Newswatch* summed up the situation when it wrote, 'It is part of the poor information management which has characterised the Babangida administration that even enlightened Nigerians still ask, "What is Nigeria's interest in Liberia?"'

The *African Concord's* contributions to this Liberian foreign policy adventure seemed most analytical and interpretative. First, in its issue of 27 August 1990, commenting on the failure of the Babangida administration to report decisively on the plight of Nigerians stranded in Liberia, the magazine said, 'inertia seems to be a recurring decimal in Nigeria's foreign policy, save during Murtala's six-month's rule'.³⁹ It provided a brief historical analysis of Nigeria's acrimonious relationships with its neighbours which had always climaxed with Nigerians losing their lives. As far as this issue of the magazine was concerned, the Liberian policy was a foreign policy 'misstep'. Presenting a litany of what it called 'one foul step after another', the magazine remarked that Nigeria's conduct of the Liberian foreign policy issue rekindled 'some feelings about its handling of foreign affairs'. The government only responded belatedly to the sufferings of Nigerians in Liberia after severe criticism and prompting by the press.

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Secondly, the magazine's issue of 21 January 1991,⁴⁰ highlighted problems of logistics and Nigeria's high death toll, and the difficulties faced by Nigerian soldiers in Liberia. For example, it reported that 'many of them complained of poor welfare as essential commodities like uniforms, boots, belts, headgear and even mattresses were in short supply'. There was also the problem of insufficient allowances.

Apart from commenting on, analysing and interpreting actual policy issues, the Nigerian press has also been active in responding to conceptual development of Nigerian foreign policy, and the administrative aspects of this policy. For example, when Professor Ibrahim Gambari propounded his concentric circles of foreign policy priorities which placed Nigeria's interests as uppermost of these circles, thereby giving precise definition to the Afro-centrism of the country's foreign policy, the *Newswatch*⁴¹ magazine did a cover report which traced the growth and development of Nigerian foreign policy under the military. The *African Guardian*⁴² also highlighted the cash crisis faced by Nigeria's external publicity—the Nigeria Information Service Centres (NISCs).

In view of the above analysis, it must be restated here that the criticisms levelled against the press concerning the coverage, analysis and interpretation of foreign policy news have no basis. The Nigerian press has been performing its duty in this sphere within the limits of information and cooperation offered by the government. Apart from commenting on the government's foreign policy position,⁴³ newspaper and magazine initiatives, innovations, analysis and interpretations are helping to shape Nigeria's foreign policy.

Problems of surveillance and standards

The mid- and late-1980s also witnessed the phenomenal rise of popular publications. Various descriptions as 'junk journalism', 'jaundiced journalism', 'new wave journalism', 'I feel-alright journalism', 'gossip journalism',⁴⁴ these publications thrive on fabrications, rumours and invasion of privacy. They are also sometimes, and perhaps more flatteringly referred to as people-oriented publications.

Clearly Nigeria's soft-sell publications are emulating the popular journalism of the British tabloids, such as the *Sun*, the *News of the World*, the *Star*, the *People*, and the *Mirror*. They are therefore as irrelevant to the serious study and informed analysis of Nigerian foreign policy as the British tabloids are to the study and analysis of Britain's external relations. The only British publications that can be compared with the Nigerian quality press in the context of press coverage, analysis, interpretation and presentation of foreign policy are *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, the *Financial Times*, and *The Times*.

However, unlike Nigerian popular publications, the British tabloids do not pose a threat to the stability of the state. If Nigeria's popular press is upsetting the public because of their lies, rumours, invasions of privacy, and excesses under a military government with its stress on discipline and civilian restraint, it will not be difficult to imagine what the situation will be under an elected government. There could be more excesses and more adversarial journalism. Invasions of people's privacy will assume political dimensions which could be disastrous for the country. As was pointed out in a study,⁴⁵ there was no significant difference between government-owned newspapers and private publications during the civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari in terms of playing the role of political megaphone of their owners. Often,

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private publishers are friendly or sympathetic to some party bosses and their political programmes.

During the second republic, there were many issues which served as sources of oppositional relations between the centre and the states.⁴⁶ Such issues included the recurrent question of revenue allocation, the control of police, and the maintenance of law and order, and elections.

The demand for more states cannot be ruled out, and the fact that all the above issues are bound to re-emerge as issues of national controversy raises concern about the role of Nigeria's popular press.

Unscrupulous publishers can use their newspapers or magazines to inflame the debates and impugn the characters of their opponents. Because these publications excel in offensive journalism, the future may look bleak for Nigeria's 1992 civilian government.

In an attempt to arrest the problems of Nigerian polity, the Babangida government disbanded the 30 political associations which were formed in the wake of the lifting of the ban on politics, and created two political parties—the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). Nigerians were urged to join on the basis of individual interest. However, 'the military may succeed in tailoring events along their own prejudices and preferences ... the conjuration of two political parties, and the enthusiasms that they would penetrate the grassroots, cannot suddenly sweep off the fears of religion and region',⁴⁷ considering the existence of the above publications.

In November 1990 the Nigerian Guild of Editors gathered in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, to deliberate on the phenomenal rise of junk publications. Present at this meeting was the Vice-President, Augustus Aikhomu, who was also the guest of honour. In his address he called on the Guild to 'have codes and standards' which would protect the privacy of Nigerians. Editors were urged to discourage their members from violating people's privacy for financial rewards.⁴⁸ Prior to this meeting, the government had on 30 December 1988 promulgated the Media Council Decree 59 which addressed the issue of training, registration, licensing and the monitoring of journalists' performance. Nigerian journalists, however, refused to have anything to do with it because of its enforcement procedure, punitive measures, and the choice of a government appointee as its chairman.⁴⁹

The problem of discipline and accountability is not peculiar to Nigerian journalism. The lack of clout inherent in the British Press Council contributed to the recent attempt by some members of the British parliament to force through a private member's bill designed to stem the tide of popular press excesses and violations of people's privacy. Although the present chairman of the British Press Council is working hard to check the worst excesses of the tabloids, there is concern that the Council is developing a 'pre-publication censorship' under Louis Blom Cooper.⁵⁰

It is thus the responsibility of the various news bodies in Nigeria to ensure discipline and accountability. If the campaign for probity and responsibility championed by the press is to be taken seriously, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria (NPAN), and the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) must all act to check the excesses of the junk press. Nigerian journalism and mass communication institutions might consider a strict disciplinary monitoring mechanism. For example, this might consist of 'certificate withdrawals ... letters of reprimand or published notices of reprimand, demand for published

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apology and signing of an undertaking to avoid serious unethical practices in the future'.⁵¹

The press and foreign policy in the 1990s

The 1980s witnessed a Nigerian foreign policy decision-making process that was narrow, ill conceived, and ignorant of the conduct of public international diplomacy. For example, it was a strange commentary on the conduct of contemporary international affairs that the then Nigerian minister of foreign affairs, Professor Ishaya Audu, heard about his country's expulsion of West African aliens via the media. The government naturally was concerned about domestic factors such as the creation of job opportunities, prevention of crime and armed robbery. But it was wrong to have ignored the external repercussions of such a huge expulsion exercise. If the ministry of external affairs had been fully appraised of this particular policy issue, Nigeria perhaps could have successfully countered the barrage of international criticism which in fact greeted this exercise. It is instructive to note that the internal affairs minister, Alhaji Ali Baba, referred to the Nigerian press's highlighting of alien crimes and menaces as in itself sufficient notice to regional ambassadors that Nigeria would soon act on the issue. More intelligent leadership, which was both alert and decisive, would have consulted or at least deliberately informed the press before announcing the expulsion.⁵² If there had been routine working sessions between the government and the press, the views and opinions which were later to form press criticisms of the expulsion could have been put to the government experts.

Nigerian foreign policy makers need to avoid the rhetoric and crass blunders of the past and recognize the realities of the prevailing international environment. What is therefore required is 'a better defined and more actively pursued interest that would be more truly representative and broadly national'.⁵³ A foreign policy which regards Israel as a diplomatic pariah⁵⁴ but enjoys lucrative business with this same country, is inconsistent. At a foreign policy workshop organized at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), in Ile Ife, Nigeria, it was pointed out that press roles would be enhanced 'if the objectives and goals of foreign policy were clearly spelt out and perceived as relevant to the national interest ... foreign policy must be conceived, planned and communicated within a particular context and social perspective which is within the daily social experience of the majority of the Nigerian populace'.⁵⁵

In Nigeria, radio and television will maintain their position as providers of on-the-spot information. However, the print media will continue to be the main sources for accurate, in-depth and detailed news analysis and interpretation. Because Nigerian governments prohibit private ownership of the broadcast media, it follows that there are governmental monopolies of radio and television. Consequently, the 1990s will continue to witness broadcasting services which function as the mouthpieces of Nigerian governments.

Finally, the best of Nigerian press coverage, analysis, interpretation and presentation of foreign policy news improved markedly in the 1980s. It is to be hoped that this trend may continue in the 1990s. On the whole, Nigerian foreign policy has not been well reported over the 30 years since independence by either domestic or foreign newspapers, though there have been a few notable exceptions. But intelligent discussion and realistic appraisal of the substance of foreign policy depends heavily on an accurate and able press. In this, as in much else, good practices should begin at home.

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Notes and references

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- 2 Linus Chukwuemeka Okere, *The Press and Foreign Policy in Nigeria*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1991.
- 3 *Ibid*, pp 162-165.
- 4 *Daily Times*, feature, 'Foreign policy, the media and national interest', 7 September 1990.
- 5 Okere, *op cit*, reference 2, pp 169-190, 191-207, 208-228.
- 6 *The Guardian*, feature, 'Akinyemi's doctrine and national interests', 7 May 1986.
- 7 *African Concord*, feature, 'Dining with a long spoon', 8 May 1986.
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- 9 'Open-door policy?', *West Africa*, 28 July 1990, pp 2016-2017.
- 10 'Dear next PM ...', *Media Guardian*, 29 November 1990, p 27.
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- 12 David A. Morrison and Howard Tumber, *Journalists at War* (Sage, Menlo Park, CA, 1988), p 190.
- 13 Van Dinh, *op cit*, reference 11, p 64.
- 14 *Ibid*.
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- 16 'Free to report what we're told' by Robert Fisk, *The Independent*, 6 February 1991.
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- 18 'Mission to disinform' by Melinda Wittstock, *The Times*, 17 January 1991.
- 19 Van Dinh, *op cit*, reference 11, p 8.
- 20 Okere, *op cit*, reference 2, pp 234-238.
- 21 *Ibid*, p 205.
- 22 *Ibid*, pp 138-139.
- 23 *Ibid*.
- 24 Sunday editions inclusive.
- 25 *The Standard*, feature, 'Foreign policy under the military', 17 January 1986; (b) 'Collective security problems in Africa: Nigeria and the issue of an African high command', 1 December 1986.
- 26 *Nigerian Tide*, feature, 'Nigeria 1990: foreign policy and political system', 9 December 1986.
- 27 *Nigerian Chronicle*, feature, 'ECOWAS: 11 years after', 4 July 1986.
- 28 (a) Nigeria in OIC', *National Concord*, 24 January 1986; (b) editorial, 'The OIC matter', *African Guardian*, 13 February 1986.
- 29 The *National Concord*, owned by a southern Muslim, fully supported Nigeria's membership. As a result of this, Christians boycotted the paper. This boycott caused a fall in the paper's previous record of 500 000 circulation. See Luke Uka Uche, *Mass Media People and Politics in Nigeria* (Concept Publishing, New Delhi, 1989), p 109.

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- 30 Recorded interview with Yakubu Muhammed, managing editor of *Newswatch*.
31 *Ibid.* Mr Muhammed was also telling the author where he stands on this issue.
32 Uche, *op cit*, reference 29, p 144.
33 (a) 'Bolaji Akinyemi on Nigeria-Israel relations', *The Punch*, 20 September 1985; (b) 'How sincere is Nigeria's policy towards Israel?', *National Concord*, 27 February 1985; (c) 'Renew ties with Israel, ex-UN envoy urges', *The Guardian*, 7 April 1985; (d) 'Nigeria-Israel: time to rethink', *African Guardian*, 20 February 1989.
34 'Israel in Nigeria', *Newswatch*, 26 November 1990, pp 15-20.
35 Recorded interview with Yakubu Muhammed, *op cit*, reference 30.
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37 'Nigeria's diplomacy in the 1990s', *Daily Times*, 26 January, 2 and 5 February 1990.
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40 'ECOMOG: Nigeria's high toll', *African Concord*, 21 January 1991.
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46 Rotimi T. Suberu, 'Political opposition and inter-governmental relations in the second Nigerian republic', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol XXVII, No 3, November 1990, pp 269-308.
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48 *Newswatch*, *op cit*, reference 44.
49 *Newswatch*, cover report, 'Media decree: chaining the watchdog', 30 January 1989.
50 'The right we have wronged', by Liz Forgan, *Media Guardian*, 26 March 1990.
51 Ikechukwu E. Nwosu, 'Mass media discipline and control in contemporary Nigeria: a contextual critical analysis', *Gazette*, 39, 1987, pp 17-29.
52 Okere, *op cit*, reference 2, p 189.
53 Ibrahim A. Gambari, *Theory and Reality in Foreign Policy Making: Nigeria after the Second Republic* (Humanities Press, Princeton, NJ), p 220.
54 In August 1991, Nigeria's external affairs minister, retired Major General Ike Nwachukwu, paid a surprise visit to Tel Aviv, Israel. The absurd secrecy surrounding Nigeria's information policy once again surfaced during this time. The official itinerary had misled Nigerians into believing that their foreign minister was visiting Cyprus, Rwanda and Zaire. However, the French news organization, Agence France Presse, exposed this as an exercise in disinformation by sending a despatch which informed Nigerians about the minister's actual destination. The BBC was later to confirm the AFP despatch. For full details on this visit, see 'The Jews and IBB', *African Concord*, 19 August 1991.
55 *Daily Times*, *op cit*, reference 4.