

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER PRESIDENT MUHAMMEDU BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS.

AKUMAH BROWN IHECHILURU, NNAJI FIDELIS C. & ELOM ANDREW C.

Department of Political Science
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

Corresponding Author's Email: Brown.akumah@ebsu.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper is an overview of "Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration: a critical analysis". It undertakes a conceptual clarification of foreign policy and explains foreign policy to mean the extension of the national interest of a state which it pursues in her relations with other countries in international arena. The specific objectives of this study were to sought whether economic determine the foreign policy of Buhari's administration; whether security determine the foreign policy of Buhari's administration and whether corruption determines the foreign policy of Buhari's administration. This work adopted Structural-Functional theory. It employed qualitative method of data which involves the use of secondary sources of data collection. Also, qualitative descriptive analysis is applied in this study. The paper concludes that Nigeria should restructure and look inward in her foreign policy calculation in their economic and human empowerment in international arena, to make Nigeria a free corrupt nation, boost her country economy and reposition the Nigeria security apparatus towards facilitating national security, regional integration and bilateral relationship with the rest of the world.

Key words: Foreign Relations, National Interest, Foreign Policy and Nigeria

Introduction

The international system is symbiotic in nature, leading to the notion that no country can exist as an island. Since Nigeria gained independence and became in charge of its internal and external affairs, this showcase that Nigeria became a participating and active member of international system. The rise and birth of Nigeria Foreign policy became inevitable. Specific to the Nigerian foreign policy sphere, Ashiru (2013) identifies a number of factors that have determined the nature of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence and have formed the basis of the domestic and external environments of Nigeria's foreign policy. These determinants include: the eruption of multiple power centers in regions and regional economic groupings such as the European Union (EU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); formation of the African Union (AU) (formerly known as Organization of African Unity (OAU)); the waves of dictatorships and democratic transitions across Africa and the Middle East; Nigeria's increasing

population; and the continuous existence of domestic and external challenges arising from issues like terrorism, climate change, arms proliferation, transnational crimes, oil bunkering, militancy, and migration, among others. A study conducted by Fayomi, Chidozie and Ajayi (2015) submits that the country's foreign policy efforts have been countered by an image predicament embedded in domestic crises experienced over the years. The pursuit of an Afrocentric foreign policy, with goals of emerging as Africa's foremost state, has continued to guide Nigeria's foreign policy aspirations to date (Ade-Ibijola, 2013). However, Nigeria's efforts have been truncated by certain challenges which arise from poor leadership, corruption, developmental hindrances (Imoukhede, 2016), the country's image crisis, ineffective representation of Nigerians in diaspora, and the seeming lack of will to engage the principles of reciprocity as it relates to its external relations (Chidozie, Ibietan and Ujara, 2014; Fayomi, 2015; Egwemi and Ochim, 2016).

In a bid to restore the domestic and external environment of Nigeria; President Muhammadu Buhari took over the mantle of Nigeria's leadership from President Goodluck Jonathan and immediately undertook so many diplomatic visits as President-elect even before his official inauguration. After his being sworn-in on May 29, 2015, he undertook more visits to further launder the image of the country and diversify her foreign revenue sources. Just as his three predecessors, he effectively utilized Nigeria's foreign policy and economic relations to attract foreign investors and other international business/development partners to do business in the country. Buhari's administration maintained the status-quo of sustaining the influx of more FDI and other foreign revenues into the country; but still with the tip tilting more in favor of Oil and Gas (O&G). There was however underperformance of the country's foreign policy in relation to domestic and external environment. It is against this backdrop that the researcher tends to investigate "Evaluation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy on Civil Administration of Muhammadu Buhari: 2015-2020.

Conceptual Nature of Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is a necessary instrument of states in their relationship, exchange and dealings with each other in the international arena. Foreign policy can be seen as a set of intended actions adopted by one nation with regards to its diplomatic relationship activities with other countries. Foreign policy is a defined ordered way for dealing with issues that may arise with other

countries in the politics of the international mainstream. It is often said that a nation without foreign policy is like sheep without a shepherd. No state is an Island and can boast of being self adequate; the need for mutual dependency a state has in abundance maybe missing and absent in another state. Describing the origin of foreign policy, it is relevant to understand that” friendship and relations have existed between humans since the beginning of human interaction. As the organization developed in human affairs, relations between people are also organized. Unarguably, Foreign policy dates back to primitive times. The only set back was that they may not have been evidence of record keeping but the interactions among the various countries in their pre-literate stage seems a better example from above.

Progressively, “the written works from ancient times, displays the process of gathering of experience in dealing with foreigners”. Foreign policy is the strategy which governments use to guide their actions in the international arena. Today the framing of foreign policy which nation’s state cannot do without has become an essential activity for modern states. Thus, the foreign policy of a state is but an extension of its domestic policy. It is a countries disposition towards the external environment. Being the extension of the national interest of a state beyond its borders, foreign policy is motivated by national interest rather than utopian considerations. It is the opinion of this paper that foreign policy is a theory and instrument of the state for action. On the whole, foreign policy is the interest, desire which guide the behavior of states in international politics and in the conduct of international relations.

Since no state can avoid relating with others, states must frame their interactions systematically to aid the advancement of national interests in its relations with other states. Foreign policy is therefore an integral part of the activities of the modern state. A state without foreign policy therefore can be likened to a ship without a sailor (Abdul and Ibrahim, 2013). In order to remain relevant in the international system, a state must articulate its foreign policy in the manner that it captures the state’s national interest. As Eze (2010) opined:

“Every nation’s foreign policy is or should be in service of its national interest.” African-nationalism and Pan-Africanism were two factors that informed foreign policy thinking and orientation at independence and inception of Nigeria’s foreign policy. In underscoring these averments, the foreign policy thrust of the country has been guided by the following: African unity and independence, peaceful settlement of disputes, capacity to exercise hegemonic

influence in the region, non-alignment principle, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and economic cooperation and development within the region.

It is crucial to identify that the approach that guides the formation and execution of foreign policy objectives is dependent on some variables within and outside the state (Odubajo, 2017). These variables can be subsumed under the domestic and external environments of foreign policy. The environment of foreign policy consists of the domestic and external factors, structures, dynamics and processes that guide the actions of foreign policy actors (Alli, 2010). Gitelson (2008) highlights that some of the major variables that affect the foreign policy choices of states (especially small or medium powers) include: the domestic situation of the state, the nature of its leadership base, and the state's foreign policy orientations. The domestic situation of the Nigerian state is affected by factors such as ethnicity, religious bigotry, communal clashes, civil unrests, and militancy, to mention but a few; while the nature of the state's foreign policy may be influenced by the personal idiosyncrasies of the individuals that represent the state in the foreign policy-making process. The state's foreign policy orientation refers to the nature of foreign policy pursued in terms of being dependent or independent, proactive or reactive, bold or conservative. Other variables, according to Babawale (2009) include: the nature of a state's economy, historical experiences, and the nature of the political society.

Theoretical Bases of the Study.

This paper adopted the Structural-Functional theory. It was adopted as a mode of analysis by Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton (1910). It is the theoretical analysis intended to explain the basis or order or stability in the society and relevant arrangement within the society which maintains order and stability. It originated in the biological and mechanical science as part of system analysis. The proponent viewed the society as a system made up of certain arrangement of parts (structures) which behave (functions) in a coordinated and inter-dependent manner to achieve the objective intended for them by society, these being the only means by which equilibrium and peace can be maintained with it (Igwe 2007). The theory was developed for political analysis by Gabriel Almond. Almond holds that 2 (two) basic things are involved and these are the concepts of structures and functions. He also held that every political system has structure and that these are there to perform certain functions. Structures are

composed of role which means that an individual can perform several roles such as a father, husband, lecturer, brother or son, some of these roles interact to form structure as the role of a husband, wife, son and daughter interact for a family (Nwaorgu 1998). These functions may be performed by different kinds of political structures and sometimes even by structures which are not overtly recognized as being primarily political such as Local Institutions such as Town unions, Trade unions, and Age grade. There is no one to one correspondence between structures and functions. A particular function may be fulfilled by arrangement of structures just like any structural arrangement may perform functions which may have different types of consequence for the structure.

Foreign policy does not possess a universal meaning, thus several scholars have different conceptions of foreign policy. In this light, Ade-Ibijola (2013) sees foreign policy as the objectives which constitute a comprehensive plan that serve as goals that a country hopes to achieve in its relation with other members of the world. In other words, Ade-Ibijola (2013) states that every country constructs a plan with certain key goals that it seeks to achieve in its relations with other states in the international system so as to avoid steering without direction in the waters of international relations. Ota and Ecoma (2015) identify foreign policy as a strategy that is properly articulated and designed in a coordinated manner by institutionally-designated decision-makers in a bid to manipulate the international environment to achieve identified national objectives. This conception presents foreign policy as an instrument of power via which states can react to events in the international environment by its actions or inactions for the purpose of advancing national goals. In explaining the interplay between domestic and foreign policy, Ukwuije (2015) conceives foreign policy as an offshoot of public policy that cannot actualize certain aspects of domestic policy without full and proper interaction with other countries. This assertion connotes that public policy subsumes foreign policy, therefore foreign policy serves the purpose of achieving domestic policy on international front. Eze (2010) simply see foreign policy is the basis on which a state can engage with another state or subjects of international law, such as international organizations. This view is corroborated by Barika (2014) who argues that:

“The concept of foreign policy is implicit in the fact that national interest is the guiding factor for nations in the formulation and execution of their foreign policies”.

However, he boldly identifies that the formulation of foreign policy is limited by the dictates of international law, treaty obligations and the leadership roles and responsibilities in international organizations assumed by the state with proper consideration to the foreign policy of other states.

Inherent in these conceptualizations by Eze (2010) and Barika (2014) is the role of international law, non-state actors and very importantly, the foreign policies of other states. Their position on the subject is that when states begin to formulate or restructure their foreign policies, they should do so bearing in mind the need to align with statutes of international law, their commitments in regional or international institutions and the nature of foreign policies of other states, especially the neighboring countries. The fulfillment of these criteria will not only enable the state to properly pursue national interest, but within the ambit of international law and the capacity to respond to actions of other states in the region or globe.

Determinants of Nigeria Foreign Policy

Foreign policies are not made by any state in isolation of the prevailing situations in the international system. Therefore, determinants are the factors both internal and external that have conditioning effects on the foreign policy of a country. To this end, a nation in formulating her foreign policy does not consider the goals she wants to achieve alone but takes cognizance to certain basic facts within the international scene that affects its existence. These special consideration and cognizance are:

a.Geographic strategic factor: A nation's physical environment as well as its political military position makes serious implications on its foreign policy as to whether it is landlocked, numerous borders, its topography mountain, rivers, forest, desert etc are always considered although recent development in chemical weaponry has reduced this strength. For examples, Soviet Spunik I on 4/10/57, and U.S moon landing on 24/7/69 and other inter-continental Ballistic Missiles suffice. **b.Population Factor;** Densely populated society, level of education, technical skill, level of industrialization determines the effectiveness of the use of manpower fashions a country's foreign policy.**c.Economic Factor:** This relates to effective use of land, capital and entrepreneur for production, distribution and consumption of goods and services have serious implications on foreign policy. **d.Public Opinion:** Also important in the determination

and processing of foreign policy is the factor of public as nations listen to opinions of her citizens on crucial issues as it was the case when Nigeria intended to go to war with Cameroun, the students association of the Cross River State cried out opting for diplomatic measure as against the war as they would be adversely affected. Truly, the students and other opinions were heard. **f. Ministry of external affairs:** This ministry is collectively responsible to the parliament for whatever decision it takes. The president therefore depends on heads of major ministries as External Affairs, Defence, Petroleum resources, trade etc for advice on foreign Policy related issues. The Ministry of External Affairs is a highly hierarchical administrative structure which assists the Executive in the foreign policy planning and execution in Nigeria. The minister of External Affairs is the primary person who relates to the president or senate committee on foreign affairs. Apart from administering his ministry, he supervises the diplomatic and consular services of the country. **g. The Legislature;** The National Assembly is the body with constitutional powers to support, modify or defeat proposal of the executive including foreign policy proposals. In a democratic society like Nigeria, the legislature assumes the role of shaping policy through its committee on foreign affairs as the Assembly gathers information, listens to the views of specialized interest groups and carefully weigh alternative course of action. Besides, the legislature through the power of approval of appropriation could increase or decrease or eliminate executive proposals to enable it implement foreign policy programme.

h.Foreign Service: This refers to the embassy that conducts diplomatic relations between the sending and receiving states. Every Embassy performs the dual function of representing the state in its relation with the foreign government to which it is accredited. It also provides constant stream of information on the vital statistics of the host country's economic, political and socio-cultural life.**i.The Political Party** More often than not, the general public are not always informed about issues of foreign policy or contribute to its formulation, execution and choice. By virtue of its role, political parties often sensitize and mobilize the public towards certain foreign policy choices by exerting pressure on the decision makers especially in a democratic system.

j.Public Opinion: Holding the fact that awareness in a free society is the expectation of both the ruler and the ruled to always have intimacy and connection between the wishes of the people and the policies adopted by the leaders. **k.Pressure Group:** These groups are otherwise known as interest groups. The main thrust of their activities is to reach and influence decision-making

agencies of the government towards pre-determined goals. We frequently see various categories of interest groups clusters around areas of public policy. They are usually organized around economic groups, religious, socio-cultural, academic and other professional groups. They include Nigerian Manufacturing Association, churches and mosques, Nigerian Bar Association, Academic Staff Unions of Universities and Polytechnics etc. The attribute of public opinion is that it is not static as they response to occurrence of events at hand.

State of Nigeria's Domestic Environment under the Buhari's Administration

The Buhari's administration gained political power during one of the most critical times in Nigeria's history. The government is confronted with challenges built up by decades of mismanagement and maladministration (Omale, 2016). Indeed, it appears that 'the chickens have come home to roost', because at this time, Nigeria is facing perhaps, the most difficult internal security problem in its history, coupled with the challenge of the worst economic recession in twenty-five years (Ishiekwene, 2016). Furthermore, the challenges are compounded by limited resources, especially as a result of overdependence on income from the sale of petroleum products which is currently experiencing low prices at the international market. The problems are multiplied by the pressures exerted on the state by various groups; political, economic, religious and ethnic, struggling to attract government's attention. On the basis of these, the Buhari administration had its work cut out for it from the outset. The major thrusts of the administration's domestic policies are; revamping the domestic economy, ensuring the protection of lives and properties as a response to the spate of security issues across the country, and lastly, ending corrupt practices (prosecuting corrupt cases and preventing the art of corruption at the highest level). On assumption of office of the Buhari administration on May 29th, 2015, the Nigerian economy had become the biggest economy in Africa. Despite this accolade though, the conditions of the critical sectors of the economy are debilitating, causing untold hardship for the generality of the people, who have to face rising inflation, while the purchasing power continues to reduce drastically. The Buhari administration had to contend with a great external shock induced by the heavy drop in global oil prices. Scott, 2016 states that:

“This was compounded by the activities of ‘economic saboteurs’ who disrupt the flow of oil production thereby causing reduction in the daily production of

Nigeria's major income earner; crude-oil. With a huge deficit inherited from the Jonathan administration (Tukur, 2015), it is no surprise that the Nigerian economy entered into recession for the first time in twenty-five years. Government is unable to meet up with its obligation in terms of recurrent expenditure, while being unable to embark on capital projects. These problems have led to soaring inflation, unemployment and reduction in the purchasing power of ordinary Nigerians”

The security challenge of the country has an international dimension. The Boko Haram terrorist insurgency in the North-Eastern part of the country brought global attention to Nigeria through both its activities in Nigeria, and other countries within West Africa. Dating back to 2010, the Boko Haram group continues to unleash terror and mayhem on institutions and individuals across the northern part of the country. Prior to the commencement of the Buhari administration, the country was besieged by the criminal activities of the group, among which was the sacking of, and hoisting its flag in Damboa community, the bombing of the Police headquarters in Abuja, the attack on the UN office in Abuja, and other daring bombings of ‘soft’ targets (Smith 2014). Perhaps the dominant discourse in the activities of the group so far, is the brazen act of insolence with which the group invaded and abducted two hundred and seventy-six secondary school girls in a night at Chibok, Bornu State in April, 2014 (BBC News 2016). Despite the global outcry against this action, the group keeps majority of the school children in captivity more than two years after. All attempts by the Nigerian government to rescue the school children have so far failed. This is the unenviable burden inherited by the Buhari administration from the Jonathan administration. Based on its campaign promises, the Buhari administration immediately swung into action to address the Boko Haram menace upon assumption of office. In relative terms, the Buhari administration’s success in the short-term has surpassed whatever was achieved under the Jonathan administration. While majority of the Chibok girls are still in captivity, there is however a noticeable reduction in the capacity of the Boko Haram group to wreck havoc. On record, the group has been chased out of its fortress in the Sambisa Forest of the North-East part of Nigeria. Whatever capacity remains for the group is now expended on low-level attacks against ‘soft’ targets in Nigeria and neighbouring countries (Vandiver, 2016).

Asides from the high incidences of kidnapping and other regular challenges of insecurity, the Buhari administration was equally faced with the activities of economic saboteurs from the South-South geo-political zone of the country. The Niger Delta Avengers is the umbrella body of disgruntled elements in the South-South bent on causing government's attention to bear on the economic, environmental and social conditions of the area. The group's method is to disrupt oil production by blowing up pipe-lines that serve as conduit in the production of crude oil for the international market (Hinshaw and Kent 2016). This act of economic sabotage continues to cost Nigeria the much needed revenue, especially at a time when the world is witnessing great reduction in the prices of crude-oil in the international market. Concerned about the negative implications of their activities, the government continually makes efforts to 'pacify' the group by focussing attention on the development of the area. For instance, a reversal of the despoliation of their lands is being undertaken through the 'Ogoniland Clean' project (Alike, 2016). As the administration engages the Niger Delta people in the solution to the problems in the area, there is a noticeable reduction in the negative activities of the Avengers, with direct impact on oil production, and positive implications on revenue accruing to government. Deriving from the President's publicly declared hatred against acts of corruption; the administration made the fight against corruption a pivotal part of its domestic policy. With a focus on the investigation and prosecution of corruption cases, the Buhari government deploys the anti-corruption institutions of state; the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to handle corrupt cases, while putting machinery in motion for blocking loopholes used for corrupt practices. Remarkably, numerous corrupt practices of government officials under the erstwhile Jonathan administration have been uncovered, and the processes of prosecution are ongoing. These three critical issues; economic revival, provision of adequate security, and the fight against corruption have formed an appreciable part of the basis upon which the Buhari administration has engaged the rest of the world since inception.

Nigeria's Foreign Relations under President Mohamadu Buhari.

The Buhari's administration was under no illusion that it could solve the multiplicity of problems confronting Nigeria without concrete engagement with the international community. Though not comparable in terms of frequency and number of times as was with President

Obasanjo in his first term of office, nonetheless President Buhari's equally embarked on high-power 'Shuttle Diplomacy' in his first year of assumption of office. The purposes of the shuttles, which have been at both bilateral and multilateral levels are tied to solving the domestic challenges of economic recovery, insecurity and fight against corruption. Shortly after assumption of office, the President undertook a tour of member-states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission in West Africa that are equally affected by the activities of Boko Haram. For the purpose, the President also visited France because of France's interest in West Africa, as a result of the close affinities with her former colonies. The visits were meant to seek collaboration, cooperation and the assistance of the various governments in tackling the Boko Haram menace. In line with the government's determination, the Boko Haram terror issue featured prominently in the president's discussion with the US authorities on his official visit to America. In the final analysis, the contacts made with various governments yielded result in the mould of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) (Assanvo et al. 2016). At present, the Boko Haram terrorist group has been seriously decimated (Somorin, 2016), with its existence hinged only on attacks on 'soft' targets. In the attempt to tackle Nigeria's economic problems, the president has been visible on the world stage, attempting to sell Nigeria as a haven of business opportunities to governments and corporations around the world. Indeed, the president has left the space wide open by not discriminating against any part of the world, either on the basis of ideology or religion. In the search for FDI, the president has made both bilateral and multilateral visits to Europe (France, Germany, Britain), the US, China, United Arab Emirate, Saudi Arabia, amongst many other countries. Some of the efforts have generated visible results, for instance, "the secured commitments for investments worth \$6billion from the Chinese government and private companies most of whom signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Nigerian government as well as private companies" (Akwaya 2016). While the economy is still in a terrible state, especially in the period of recession, there are signals that with the monetary and fiscal policies of government, in addition to the giant strides the government has made in establishing contacts and building the confidence of foreign investors, the Nigerian economy is on its way to recovery in a relatively short while. Finally in this regard, the Buhari's administration aggressively sought the commitment and cooperation of the international community in fighting high-level corruption at home. Specifically, the government continually

canvasses and lobbies foreign governments, especially in the West where most monies carted by Nigerian government officials are stashed. The cooperation of the foreign governments is sought in the area of refusal to provide safe havens for stolen wealth from Africa. Furthermore, the government is on an aggressive campaign of repatriation of stolen wealth that are already stashed abroad. The president's trips abroad are meant to win the loyalty of the foreign governments in this regard. One of such shows of support came from the government of the United Arab Emirate as demonstrated in the signing of a bilateral agreement that details the willingness of the UAE to facilitate the extradition of wanted persons, and seizure of stolen assets among others. Akwaya (2016) stated that in the quest for a corruption-free Nigeria, the president played a visible role in the London 2016, Anti-Corruption Summit, where emphasis was laid on erecting a strong global coalition against corrupt practices (Wakili 2016).

While the Buhari administration displayed elements of determination and commitment in deploying foreign policy to solve the various challenges at home, the government has equally been alive to its responsibility to the sub-region, in line with the underlying principles of the national interest. This is evidenced in the material and technical support provided for the following countries during their elections; Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Chad and Guinea Conakry. Most recently, the Nigerian government played a significant role as a leading member of ECOWAS to solve an impending political imbroglio in Gambia. The group ensured that the recalcitrant former President Yahya Jammeh vacated office for the democratically elected President Adama Barrow. From all indications, Nigeria, Senegal, Liberia and Ghana, under the auspices of ECOWAS, would have implemented a forceful removal of Yahya Jammeh from office (Freeman 2016). Equally important in the foreign policy drive is the extent to which President Buhari is willing to make Nigeria relevant in international politics. In most international forums, the president leads the Nigerian delegation, thereby creating visibility for the office of the President of Nigeria and by extension, enhancing the country's image. In this regard, the President has attended and addressed, the UN General Assembly, the African Union Heads of State and Government meeting, the Heads of State and Government Meeting of ECOWAS, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the COP21 Climate Change

Summit, the China-Africa Conference, the Nuclear Security Summit, among numerous others. Akwaya, (2016) stated that:

Despite the commendable efforts so far made on the foreign policy arena, especially as they relate to achieving positive outcomes in the domestic policy pursuits, the Buhari administration is relatively weak in terms of the pursuit of a concrete diplomatic agenda. It is an irrefutable fact that diplomacy is one of the most critical instruments of foreign policy, hence, the need to accord high level of importance to Nigeria's diplomatic practice.

A recurring albatross of Nigeria's diplomatic practice is the lack of funds experienced by many of the diplomatic missions in various capitals of the world (Aremu, 2016). This unacceptable practice hinders the capacity of the missions to carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently, with negative consequences on the efforts made by government from home. The government appears to be addressing the challenge by shutting down some of the diplomatic missions that are considered unviable (Salawu and Echewofun, 2016) perhaps so that funds can be made available to the diplomatic missions in capitals presumed to be of strategic importance to Nigeria's national interest. This position may appear logical on the surface, it however impedes government's efforts in taking advantage of opportunities across the globe. With the dynamic nature of globalisation, there is a sense in keeping diplomatic relations with as many state actors as possible, for the possibility of the strategic importance of a state may arise at short notice. Moreover, given the itinerant nature of the average Nigerian, government must be conscious of providing representation in as many countries as possible. A related development in this regard is the slow pace of appointing Ambassadors and High Commissioners to head the various diplomatic missions. As a critical element of foreign policy pursuit, the diplomatic machinery must be fortified to the highest level. A situation in which the appointment of the country's highest representatives take too long to be finalised does not bode well for the relationship between Nigeria and the country starved of the highest level representative. It is therefore imperative for both the executive and legislature to harmonise the processes of nominating, confirming, and approving Nigeria's highest ranking representatives abroad.

United State Relations and Assistant under Civil Administration of Muhammandu Buhari

U.S.-Nigeria ties improved after Nigeria's transition to civilian rule in 1999, and they remain robust. President Trump's phone call to President Buhari in 2017 was his first to any sub-Saharan African leader; in April 2018, Buhari became the first sub-Saharan African leader to meet with President Trump at the White House. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy visited Nigeria during his first official trip to the region, in 2018. He expressed interest in seeing Nigeria play a larger role in peacekeeping and democracy promotion in Africa, and described Nigeria as a focus country for efforts to increase U.S. commercial activity in the region. Bilateral engagements include the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission (BNC), a mechanism for convening high-level officials for strategic dialogue that was launched in 2010. The most recent BNC, held in January 2020 in Washington, D.C., centered on bolstering U.S.-Nigeria commercial ties.¹⁰⁴ A separate U.S.-Nigeria Commercial and Investment Dialogue (CID) aims to enhance bilateral trade and investment, with an initial focus on "infrastructure, agriculture, digital economy, investment, and regulatory reform." The United States maintains an embassy in Abuja and a consulate in Lagos, and the State Department supports "American Corners" in libraries throughout Nigeria to share information on U.S. culture. Nigerians comprise the largest African-born population in the United States, according to U.S. Census data, and remittances from the United States are a source of income support for many Nigerian households. U.S. human rights and governance concerns periodically have raised challenges for bilateral ties. As noted above, the State Department imposed visa restrictions on individuals found responsible for undermining the conduct of the 2019 general elections. In September 2020, the State Department imposed additional sanctions on unnamed Nigerians for "undermining the democratic process," citing gubernatorial elections in Kogi and Bayelsa States in late 2019 that featured reports of violence and fraud as well as forthcoming gubernatorial polls in Edo and Ondo States, which have seen rising tensions ahead of elections scheduled for late 2020.

In 2019, as noted above, the State Department placed Nigeria on the Special Watch List pursuant to the IFRA for governments that tolerate or engage in severe violations of religious freedom. In its 2020 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, the State Department additionally designated Nigeria pursuant to the Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA, Title IV of P.L. 110-457) as having government or state-supported armed forces that use child soldiers, a designation that

could carry restrictions on U.S. aid in FY2021, subject to a presidential waiver and exceptions. The State Department also downgraded Nigeria to the Tier 2 Watch List (from Tier 2) in the 2020 TIP report, meaning the country does not meet minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. A further downgrade to Tier 3 status could carry restrictions on certain types of U.S. assistance.

Nigeria routinely ranks among the top recipients of U.S. foreign assistance globally. The State Department and USAID allocated \$451.4 million in bilateral aid for Nigeria in Fiscal Year 2020, nearly 90% of which supported health programs. The Administration requested \$472.1 million for Nigeria for Fiscal Year 2021, a rare case in Africa in which the Trump Administration's aid proposal exceeded the previous year's allocation. These totals exclude emergency humanitarian assistance and other aid provided through global programs those not allocated by country in annual State Department Congressional Budget Justifications or funds managed by other U.S. agencies. The State Department and USAID allocated \$468.6 million in humanitarian funding in response to the Lake Chad Basin crisis in Fiscal Year 2019, including \$346.9 million for Nigeria.

Nigeria is a focus country under the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) as well as Feed the Future, an agriculture development program. U.S. assistance under the Power Africa initiative has supported gas and solar power generation, off-grid energy projects, and regulatory reform. U.S. Security Assistance and Military Sales U.S. security assistance to Nigeria has sought to bolster peacekeeping capacity, enhance maritime and border security, combat transnational crime, support civilian law enforcement, and strengthen counterterrorism efforts. Nigeria participates in the State Department's Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (SDTSCP, an interagency effort to build regional counterterrorism capabilities and coordination), but has not been a top recipient of funds under the program. Nigeria also has benefitted from the provision of U.S. training and equipment to the MultiNational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) coalition in the Lake Chad Basin. In addition to funds administered by the State Department, DOD has notified Congress of roughly \$50 million in planned security assistance for Nigeria under its "global train and equip" program, currently authorized under U.S.C. 333 considerably less than amounts provided to other Lake Chad Basin countries. Nigeria has received additional DOD assistance through regional programs. U.S. concerns with human rights abuses by Nigerian security

personnel have constrained U.S. security assistance, including counterterrorism aid. Ota and Ecoma (2015) stated that:

In 2014, the Obama Administration blocked a transfer of U.S.-manufactured military helicopters from Israel to Nigeria due to human rights concerns. U.S. security cooperation increased after the 2015 inauguration of President Buhari, who pledged to curtail and investigate abuses, and the following year, the Obama Administration sought congressional approval for the sale of 12 A-29 Super Tucano attack aircraft to Nigeria.

The Obama Administration froze the sale in early 2017, however, after a Nigerian jet struck a camp for displaced people during a bombing raid. The Trump Administration revisited that decision, and in late 2017 approved the sale, over opposition from some Members of Congress. President Trump has appeared to downplay human rights concerns regarding the Nigerian military. The aircraft are now in development, and are due for delivery in 2021.

The Buhari's Administration and China's Financial Aids to Nigeria

Before considering the President Buhari's administration and China's financial aids to Nigeria, it is proper to emphasize that Nigeria has been a beneficiary of several grants and loans coming from different countries and financial institutions. These include the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, the International Monetary Fund, the World Banks, the European Union, France (through the Agence Francaise de Development), Germany(KfW), Indian Development Bank, etcetera. Suleiman, 2016; Amaefule, (2018) stated that:

Between 2010 and 2015 Nigeria received \$3billion grant from the US government for military assistance, anti-terrorism and defence and security etc. the British gave Nigeria £140 million in aid supporting Nigeria energy privatization in 2015 and £2705 million supporting health, education and poverty reduction programmes; Spain helped to build photovoltaic electricity plant to generate 100 mw in the Nigeria's city of Kano.

The World Bank has supported Nigeria with the tune of \$96.28 million from 2001 to 2010 to fight HIV infections (Suleiman, 2016) among others. However, a lot of factors usually made it

difficult for such grants to achieve the desired results in Nigeria. One of which is the conditionalities attached to these loans by the lenders. The second is the low amount of grants given by the lending bodies or countries, which are quite insufficient for massive developmental projects. Third there is the issue of misappropriation of such monies by most handlers. Now back to Buhari's Administration. On 29th May, 2015 Nigeria sworn in a new President from the opposition party in person of President Muhammadu Buhari. The event was so spectacular not only because it was the first time such a thing had happened in the country but also because the government came with the blueprints to fight corruption, build the economy, among others, which it found a true partner in China to achieve. Thus, in his quest to fix the economy beginning with the closing of the infrastructural gaps, the President has been working intimately with China. On April 27, 2018 both countries signed a \$2.5 billion currency swap deal to boost local currency liquidity to Nigerian and Chinese industrialists (Udo, 2018). President Buhari has also sought and in most cases obtained loans from China. According to a Press Release by the Presidency dated 15, April 2016 after the President's first visit to China since assumption of office in 2015, the President praised China for the additional investments worth over \$6 billion his visit was able to attract to Nigeria in different areas of the economy. Thus:

1. In the power sector, North-South Power Company Limited and Sinohydro Corporation Limited signed an agreement value at \$478,657,941.28 to construct 300 mega watts sola power in Shiroro, Niger state;
- (2). In solid minerals sector, granite and marble Limited signed the shanghai Shibang and an agreement valued at \$55 million for the construction and equipping of granite mining plant in Nigeria;
- (3). A total of \$1billion is to be invested in the development of the Greenfield expressway from Abuja-Ibadan-Lagos under an agreement reached by the infrastructure bank and Sinohydro Corporation Limited.
- (4). For the housing sector both companies mentioned above also signed a \$250 million deal to develop an ultra-modern 27storey high rise complex and a \$2.5billion agreement for the development of the Lagos metro rail transit red line project
- (5). \$1billion agreement for the establishment of a Hi-tech industrial park in OgunGuangdong trade one in Igbesa, Ogun state;
- (6). The agreement by Ogun Guangdong free Trade Zone and the CNG (Nigeria) for the construction of two 500MT/day float gas facilities valued at \$200million;
- (7). An agreement valued at \$363 million for the establishment

of a comprehensive farm and downstream industrial park in Kogi state; (8). Others under negotiation were the \$500million project for the provision of telephone broadcast equipment and a \$25 million facility for the production of prepaid smart meters between Mojec Investment limited and Microstar Company Limited (Premiumtimes April 15, 2016). Similarly, in the recent concluded 2018 Forum on China African Cooperation (FOCAC), Nigeria signed more than \$10 billion agreements with others still under discussion by various parties. Among those that have been signed, in agreements or MOUs are as follows:

1. The agreement between the China National Petroleum Corporation, which has agreed to secure funding for the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, Ajaokuta- Kano (AKK) gas pipeline to cost \$2.8 billion; (2) The agreement entered by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment with Shandong Ruyi Internation Fashion Industry for \$2 billion, for a first-ever cotton value chain; that is from cotton growing to ginning, spinning, textile manufacture and garment with Katsina, Kano, Abia and Lagos states as the chosen locations; (3). The MOU between the Chinese conglomerate, Caepgate Integrated worth \$1.5 billion for energy and organic fertilizer that will cover Abuja, Niger, Nasarawa, Kaduna and Kano to generate: 30MW of electricity, 500,000 tonnes of organic fertilizer, 60,000,000 litres of oil from pyrolysis, create up to 10,000 jobs, 400 garbage collection trucks, various types of city sanitation equipment and one million (1.000,000) waste bins to be deployed; (4). An agreement between the NNPC, the Nanni Good Fortune Heavy Industries Group and Caepgate Group for a \$400 million investments across six states to allow for: 90 litres of ethanol, 64 MW of power, 72 tonnes of sugar per annum, 10,000 tonnes of animal farm per annum, 5,5000 direct employment;
5. The Nanni Industries and Caepgate Group submitted an MOU to the NNPC for an investment in 15,000 hectares of cassava ethanol in the South-West, and another project of the same value and scale in the South East; (6). Among other agreements that the NNPC signed was one with Obax-Complant Consortium and another with Caepgate-Nanning Consortium that targets 10 bio-fuel complexes nationwide;(7). An MOU between the Edo state Government and China harbor for the construction of Benin River Port; the Benin Industrial Park and a 550 barrels per day modular refinery; (8). A funding MOU between Huawei Technologies and the Federal Government of Nigeria, represented by Galaxy Backbone for the training of 1,000 Nigerian

government officials to acquire basic ICT knowledge and skills forwarded to the Ministry of Justice; (9). Huawei also plans the annual training of 10,000 Nigerians in ICT, with a wider and deeper training of 5,000 out of this number, who upon certification by Huawei will be employable anywhere in the world; (10) An MOU signed between Khromemonkey Nigeria Limited and Shezen Right Net Technology Limited to set up Amanbo Nigeria, a business-to-business-Consumer (B2B2C) platform and postal that would enable Nigeria exporters to trade with Chinese importers and vice-versa; (11). \$1 billion loan agreement for the rolling stock of the newly constructed rail lines as well as road rehabilitation and water supply project; (12). An agreement on sum of \$328 million for Information and Communication Technology infrastructure Backbone Phase II (NICTBII) project (Shaban, 2018; Olowolagba, 2018 and Vanguard, September 8, 2018) So far, the financial aids from China have been able to execute some projects in Nigeria since the assumption of President Buharis in office in 2015. This as reported by Shaban (2018) include: the West Africa's first Urban rail system valued at \$500million in Abuja; the 180km rail line connecting Abuja and Kaduna which was commissioned in 2016. Others that are at their various stages of completion which Nigeria leveraging on the \$3.4billion Chinese funding to complete are the upgrading of airport terminals, the Lagos-Kano rail line, the Zungeru hydroelectric power project, and the Fibre Cable for the internet infrastructure. Also financed by the Chinese aids was the new Portharcourt Airport International Terminal commissioned by President Buahri in October 2018 (Ogbonna, 2018). In recognition of these laudable achievements, President Buhari while commending his China counterpart noted that since "independence no country has helped our country on infrastructure development like the Chinese. In some projects, the Chinese help us with 85 percent payment and soft loans that span 20 years. No country done that for us as far as I can remember" (The Eagles Online, 2018).

Buhari's Foreign Policy with Neighbouring Countries

The protectionist policy of the Muhammadu Buhari's administration, particularly the policy that pertains to the closure of Nigeria's land borders, has been subjected to ridicule by scholars, political analysts and individuals from the business community. Critics all over the country have argued that the closure of the country's land boundaries is an anti-human policy that has further

impoverished the citizens and displaced businessmen and women from their sources of livelihood. Nigeria's neighbouring countries, together with its foreign trade partners, are also not left out among the critics of the protectionist policy of the administration. Although, the intention of the government is to promote domestic industries and encourage consumption of local agricultural products such as rice, vegetables, poultry birds, etc., yet critics did not find it necessary to support, in its entirety, this policy of government. A handful of political analysts have also argued that the policy objective of the government is in tandem with international standards which, in the long run, will be appreciated. Indeed, the problem laid in the manner in which the policy was executed with no palliative measures put in place to cushion its effects on the citizens before its official take off. Others have also discredited the good intentions of the government by tagging it the Buharism policy which, among the locals, signifies total hardship. In short, this latter group of critics conspicuously occupied themselves with discrediting every single step taken by the administration to restructure the country's dwindling economy. A host of other Nigerians accused the administration of pursuing unfriendly policies, as well as engaging itself in constitutional summersaults and abuse of the rule of law. But a closer look at this policy agenda shows that the policy has significant prospect that could be achieved in the short run, particularly in its campaign for selfinvestment in the manufacturing sector, and in the production, cultivation and consumption of local grown agricultural produce instead of over reliance or dependence on foreign imports. Unfortunately, critics all over the country alleged that the policy was a replicate of Buhari's policy during his short reign as military Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation from 1983 to 1985. Chidozie, Ibietan and Ujara (2014), asserted that:

The Buhari/Idiagbon military regime, in their brief reign, had proposed to restore the country's battered image overseas, and that administration promised to retrieve looted finances by politicians of the President Shehu Shagari led administration in 1983. In spite of their promise to the people of Nigeria, the administration only succeeded in promulgating anti-drug and anti-corruption military decrees.

In its attempts to avoid a repeat of the Shagari led civil rule over dependence on the international financial institutions through borrowing, the Buhari/Idiagbon regime violated human rights with

lots of impunity and disregards for constituted authorities. The administration put forth the argument that “a good image constitutes a country’s source of goodwill and encourages investors to consider investing their funds in the country” but the reverse was the case of the Buhari/Idiagbon regime which experience several international sanctions from the super powers. It is therefore very essential for every government to promote at all times, a better image nationally and internationally (Chidozie, 2014). Aremu (2015) criticised the Buhari/Idiagbon regime’s pomposity and insensibility to the feelings of the masses while pursuing its policy agenda. Also criticised were the regime’s incessant violations of human rights, with the Umaru Dikko’s case as a pertinent example. This singular incident was a major setback to the country’s foreign policy aspiration in the 1980s. Ismail, Asmau and Muhammad (2017) argued that President Buhari’s foreign policy has always reflected a radical posture right from his time as the country’s military head of state. Till date, with Buhari as the country’s civilian president, the story remains the same, they argued. Like his predecessors, Buhari has demonstrated the inability to sustain good neighborliness and maintenance of exiting diplomatic relations with the country’s immediate neighbours, as well as with the United Kingdom, United States, China, among others. Yet, his policies have been subjected to a lot of criticisms as demonstrated with the local slogan Buharism.

Skeptical of the likelihood of good intention of the administration to actualise stable economy and political commendations both at the international and domestic front, critics have consistently accused the government of involving itself in incessant and unfriendly policies. However, no matter the strategic objective of the government’s protectionist policy, critics always accused the government of pursuing policies that fall short of international standard and required reciprocity, particularly with its immediate neighbours such as Cameroon and Chad Republics to the East of Nigeria and, Benin and Niger Republics to the West of Nigeria (Worldatlas.com, 2019).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it appears Nigeria’s foreign policy under the civil administration of Mohammadu Buhari lacks national interest orientation in itself. Therefore the nation had even gone against the public opinion of her citizens in the attempt to protect the selfish interest of

some politicians in Nigeria. One can understand today that the giant of Africa has remained the toothless baby giant. It is the time to change the foreign policy ideology of the country to be in line with the national interest and economic potentialities of the nation. Therefore, one may wish to say that Nigeria lacks nothing both in human and material resources.

The thrust of Buhari's foreign policy is to make Nigeria a free corrupt nation, boost her country economy and reposition the Nigeria security apparatus towards facilitating national security, regional integration and bilateral relationship with the rest of the world. In achieving this thrust the Buhari foreign policy embark on bilateral talks with China, France, United States of America, United Kingdom etc to strengthen its security apparatus, boost economic growth and repatriate stolen wealth starch in foreign account. Despite Buhari effort in enhancing both domestic and external environment in order to restore the myriad of challenges facing Nigeria get stuck on worst security challenges, worst economic policies, target of opposition, lack of respect to the rule of law and delay in dispensation of corrupt public office holders. It is in the aforementioned findings that the researcher deemed it necessary to suggest solutions that will assist in boosting foreign policy of Buhari administration in order to enhance both domestic and external environment friendliness among Nigeria and other countries of the world. This study therefore recommends the following:

1. President Muhammadu Buhari should employ aggressive approach in tackling insecurity in Nigeria by mandating immediate community policy across the country, providing adequate fund for training, remuneration and modern security gadgets for security personnel for prompt response of crime, prevention, detecting and arresting of banditry and criminal elements disturbing the peace of this country. This will help in promotion of domestic and external environment of foreign policy of Buhari administration
2. President Muhammadu Buhari should diversify its economy and more focus should be put on agriculture and mineral resources that will drive job creation and wealth creation towards enhancing Gross Domestic Product and reduce the high inflation rate. This will help in enhancing domestic and external environment of foreign policy of President Muhammadu Buhari.

3. President Muhammadu Buhari should obey the rule of law and prosecute all corrupt political office holders irrespective of person political party.
4. President Muhammadu Buhari should ensure independent of the judicial and anti-craft agencies in order to enable them discharge their constitutional responsibility towards enhancing domestic and external environment of foreign policy of President Muhammadu Buhari
5. President Muhammadu Buhari should declare state of emergency on unemployment and ensure that adequate social security is provided for the vulnerable and massive job creation for unemployed youths in order to stem the tide of insecurity.

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