

NIGERIAN CITIZEN DIPLOMACY AND NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria occupied a place of relevance in regional and global networks of relations and exchanges. In the effort to bolster national prestige of African most populous country, citizen-centric diplomacy was initiated and popularized by Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar' Adua's administration, 2007-2011. After more than a decade of its conduct, it becomes pertinent to re-examine its functionality and trends in credence to current crisis of national security bedeviling Nigeria nation-state. In this vein, the methodology is qualitative design which explored the imperatives of documentary sources and non-participant observational method of data collection to textual analyze scholarly perspectives, empirical narratives and events as related to key concepts of the discourse. Similarly, Richard Snyder Decision-Making theory in foreign policy study was applied to argue that Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy was conceptualized and initiated in cognizance of 'objective realities' in response to domestic, regional and global exigencies. Furthermore, the discourse revealed enormous national security challenges across 96 local government areas and 29 states of the federation as relevant institutions of Nigerian foreign service grapple in myriad of inadequacies to efficiently respond to the expectations of 17 million Nigerians in Diaspora which undoubtedly militates against lofty ideals and targets of Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy. From these findings, the discourse recommend for multi-sectoral responses, institutional alertness, advocacy among other measures to establish that Nigeria's image and pride in international arena begins with the commitment towards safety and comfort of her citizens.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Westphalia Treaty of 1648 was remarkable for emergence and criticality of state system in the process and dynamics of international relation. To this end, entities and events of the international arena revolves enormously in the activities of sovereign states to advance national interests. From the classical Greece, imperial Rome, Renaissance Italy to 19th and 20th centuries of Euro-imperialism, sovereign states have stoutly continue to drive, influence and dominate the affairs of the international community. Although the collapse of the Soviet Union and fall of the Berlin Wall in the early 90's undoubtedly facilitated the unipolarity of United States hegemony and advancement of western globalization occasioned with proliferation of international non-governmental agencies of western orientation, however, sovereign states remain visibly relevant in the trends of international arena. Emphatically, the rationale of state's relations and exchanges with state and non-state entities is embellished in the symbolism and substance of national interest. Thus, national interest is a reflection of expectations of a sovereign state as articulated and expressed in foreign policy. Hence, foreign policy therefore constituted a diplomatic guide of lofty principles and plausible modalities adopted by sovereign states in pursuit of national interests in relations and exchanges with entities of the international system. In this vein, foreign policy represents the plights and expectations of nation-states in response to the exigencies of domestic, regional and global environments.

Nigerian's entrance into global community was watershed by formal presentation and pronouncement made by His Excellency, Alhaji Abubakar Tefawa Belwa, the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic at the occasion of admission of

Nigeria as the 99th member of United Nations Organization on October 8, 1960. At this significant event, the Nigerian political leadership and state acknowledged the fact that one of the fundamentals for national prestige and survival is premised on the visibility of its presence in the comity of nation-states through a pragmatic foreign policy for robust diplomatic relation. Thus, policy of Non-alignment for self-preservation, policy of Afro-centrism for national prestige, policy of regional economic integration for partnership and development; and policy of commitment to world peace for global security featured prominently as the foundations of Nigeria's foreign policy. However, domestic realities, regional expectations and global dynamics had in successive years and decades stimulated the expediency of foreign policy reforms to strengthen Nigeria's external relations for meaningful engagements. And, one of such reforms crystallized in citizenship diplomacy which represents a paradigm shift from policy of Afro-centrism of regional and sub regional commitments. Hence, Citizen Diplomacy aimed to rebrand the image of Nigeria with emphasis on Nigerian citizens resident in various parts of the world. In a specific sense, the intent of Nigeria's citizen diplomacy is premised on the welfare, security and potentials of Nigerians resident within and abroad in bolstering the image of the country. The Citizen Diplomacy initiated by Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar' Adua Presidency, 2007 -2011 which has been operational under successive national governments in Nigeria for a decade and half is today stridently challenged by crisis of national security. In this vein, Madubuegwu (2019) argued that the national interest of a state is premised on the security of lives of her citizens and investments within and beyond the national frontiers. This is demonstrated when the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had on 31st January, announced a temporary suspension of immigrant visa to six countries which were Nigeria, Myanmar, Eritrea, Sudan, Tanzania and Kyrgyzstan with effect from 21st of February 2020. The Nigerian's immigrant visa restriction ostensibly reminiscent the event when the United States on 3rd January 2010 enlisted Nigeria among the fourteen countries on their terror watch-list as emergency response to the unfortunate incidence of 26th December 2009. It was a day when 26 year old Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to detonate plastic explosives while on board in North-West Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit.

Today, Nigeria nation-state is overwhelmed by the sustained onslaught of Islamic State of West Africa Province, ISWAP in alliance with Jama'atuAhli Sunna Lidda Awati Wal-Jihad in the North-East and armed banditry in the North-West where thousands of lives were lost and millions internally displaced occasioned with the recent insurgency of unknown gunmen in the South-East. These torrents of unpleasant incidents arguably raised serious doubts on the significance and potency of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy as regards the security of its nationals. To this end, this discourse critically reexamines the essence and challenges of Nigerian citizen-centric foreign policy in credence to current crisis of national security. In this regard, the discourse is thematically streamlined in this introduction, conceptual analysis, theoretical framework, Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy in context of issues and challenges of national security, and, conclusion and recommendation.

2. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Basically, bilateral or multi-lateral cooperation, diplomatic relations and aggressive actions of sovereign states are function of national interest explicitly defined in her foreign policy ideals. It is therefore instructive to underscore the fact that national interest is the rationale for action and inaction of sovereign states in relation with entities, and, to issues and events of the international community. To this end, the conceptualization of national interest is pertinent to underline the intent, propensity and significance of what foreign policy represents. Asogwa (2009) however observed that the concept of national interest has generated a lot of controversy since the end of Second World War. Beyond its polemics, national interest is the reflection of plights and expectations of sovereign states in relation with entities (state actors and non-state actors) of the international system. In illustrative sense, Ebiuwa (2012) described national interest as issues that affect the goals and objectives of a particular state in its interaction with other state actors in the international arena. A state has to be affected directly or indirectly by some particular phenomena to be of significance of its national interest. National interest has to do with self-preservation and survival. It covers political, economic, social-cultural and ideological issues. Furthermore, Agbu and Emi (2006) noted that national interest of a sovereign state is anchored on three essentials: the degree of primacy of the interest; the degree of permanence of the interest; and the degree of generality of the interest. The degree or lack of commonality of interests between two or more states could be represented by conflicting interest, community of interests, identical interests and ideological interest. The ultimate outcome that a state, whether that state is small or big, weak or strong, rich or poor consider in its vital interest could be classified into three:

- i. All nation-states are interested in self-preservation; i.e. national security as well as stability of the system.
- ii. All nations are interested in economic wellbeing, economic stability and prosperity, the fight against unemployment, inflation, and unfavourable trade relations with others.
- iii. Nation-states are also generally interested in prestige and power, which implies that weak or poor nations want to have some degree of prestige among the comity of nations. The priorities that a nation's people collectively place on the achievement of these and other values are a product of their basic attitudes and beliefs, their perceptions of domestic and international pressure.

- Similarly, Olajide (1976) cited in Asogwa (2009) outlined the following fundamentals of Nigeria's national interest:
 - i. Self-preservation of the country.
 - ii. Defence and maintenance of the country's independence.
 - iii. Defence, preservation and promotion of democratic values.
 - iv. Economic and social well-being of the people.
 - v. World peace.

A review of Olajide submissions shared by Asogwa (2009) revealed that national interest is largely concerned with national security and survival (political, social and economic) as well as commitment to global security. To underline the significance of national interest in foreign relations, Ofoegbu (1978) cited in Ebiuwa (2012) described national interest as the ultimate destination of all policy goals and objectives. All alliances are built and based on national interest. National interest is the soul and essence of all interaction at international level. Ofoegbu's interpretation obviously showed the affinity between national interest and foreign policy as Morgenthau (1972) cited in Ajaonu (2016) observed that national interest defines the foreign policy of a country. The language of any foreign policy is its national interest of a country cannot be separated from foreign policy. It is its nucleus-its genetic map. It continuously changes the language, the needs, demands, aspirations and general nature of any foreign policy. It is always the driving force and the inspiration behind any foreign policy position. In the same vein, Obikeze and Obi (2003) argued that the formulation and implementation of foreign policy is determined to a large extent by the national interest of a state. The concept of national interest indeed occupies a prime position in nation's foreign policy. It is therefore believed that states engage in international politics in order to protect or further their national interest. The totality of actions, means and processes through which the national interest of a state are pursued constitutes the state's foreign policy.

Emphatically, 'foreign policy' as a concept elicits plethora of definitions and interpretations among scholars and practitioners of international relations. Accordingly, Deustch (1968) cited in Asogwa (2009) defined foreign policy as the search for preservation of a country's independence and security, the pursuit and protection of its economic interest. Deustch's perspective arguably does not necessarily distinguish foreign policy from national interest. Another attempt to underline disparity between national interest and foreign policy amid affinities is revealed in Holsti (1977) as cited in Asogwa (2009) which indicated that foreign policy is the actions of a state towards the external environment and conditions usually domestic under which these actions are formulated. Holsti's definition showed that foreign policy is determined by domestic realities however it failed to take cognizance of regional and global dynamics which can shape or influence action and inaction of sovereign states. This limitation is however corrected in Nnoli (1978) which revealed that foreign policy is defined as nation's reactions to external environment involving the organization of both domestic and external conditions.

Beyond the emphasis on ideals, actions and reactions, foreign policy is also conceptualized as coordinated strategy with which institutionally designated decision-makers seek to manipulate the international environment in order to achieve certain national objectives. It is the decision that defines goals, set precedents, or lay down courses of actions, and the actions taken to implement those decisions (Agbu and Emi, 2006: 40). In the same vein with emphasis on the essence of government and governance, Eke (2009) defined foreign policy as governmental decisions that guide international relations. It is that aspect of public policy (grand strategy) which deals with principles of relation between foreign governments. It is viewed as the interactions which are based on domestic interests between governments, its agencies and non-governmental organizations across national borders. To further embellish on the national objectives of foreign policy, it is classified as primary objective; secondary objective and tertiary objective. Thus, the primary objective is seen as the most important component and fundamental objective of foreign policy concerned with self-preservation. The secondary objective is concerned with meeting public and private demands of citizens through international actions and protection of citizens and their investment abroad; social welfare of citizens. The tertiary objective is plans, dreams and visions concerning the ultimate political or ideological organization of the world or the international system (Asogwa, 2009:20). A cursory examination of the foregoing analysis showed affinity in priorities of national interest and foreign policy. However, the disparities between national interest and foreign policy embellishes below:

- i. National interest represents the ideals while foreign policy embodies the strategy and modality to implement these ideals.
- ii. National interest is articulated expectations while foreign policy is the formulation of these articulated expectations for conduct and responsive actions.

A subsequent review of the preceding submissions obviously acknowledges the fact that the wellbeing and security of lives of citizens remained a pivotal national priority that found expression in the principles of Nigerian foreign policy. Hence, citizen pro-driven external policy otherwise contextualized known as Citizen Diplomacy places high premium on security and welfare of nationals.

Subsequently, Eke (2009) conceived Citizen Diplomacy as a renewed thrust of Nigerian foreign policy. The new objective in Nigerian citizen diplomacy is worthwhile and a pragmatic step to restore the image, prestige and glory of

Nigerians anywhere in the world. It is Yar' Adua's doctrine to ensure internal and external security of Nigerians with the intent that a stronger citizenry would better project the country's initiatives globally. Succinctly, Citizen Diplomacy articulates what is or should be implicit as the major goal of our foreign policy. Being people-centered; it is a step further in saying that in both its national and international actions, the Nigerian state will be driven primarily by the need to promote welfare and security of every Nigerian (Eze, 2009:31). Similarly, Maduekwe, a former foreign minister (2008) cited in Ujara and Ibiatan (2014) noted that Citizen Diplomacy focused on maximizing the economic, political and social welfare of the citizen through astute diplomacy. It is concerned with how to enhance the image and self-worth of the Nigerian people. Citizen diplomacy proceeds from the basic assumption that foreign policy must be the extent at projection of government's at promoting the welfare of the citizen. It was, thus, an extension of traditional diplomacy in seeking to advise and protect the national interest of Nigerian people.

In explicit and broad sense, Nwogbaga (2013) outlined the prospects of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy which include:

- i. Nigerians traveling or resident abroad are treated with respect by other nations.
- ii. Growing number of Nigerians in the Diaspora invest their resources in development of the Nigeria economy.
- iii. The images of Nigeria and Nigerians are improved abroad.
- iv. Nigerian Diaspora who seeks consular assistance should receive sufficient and timely diplomatic attention.

A depth review of the foregoing scholarly conceptualizations seem to suggest the primacy of security and welfare of citizens resident in various parts of the world with less or no emphasis on security and welfare of citizens resident within the country.

However, these perspectives attempts to correct this observed gaps. In this vein, Onoja (2001) cited in Eke (2009) argued that Citizen Diplomacy is a diplomatic practice which the citizens of Nigeria are the primary focus or concern, that is, citizen-centered such that too, the Nigerian citizen is the subject and object of Nigerian foreign policy; the first and last line of defence and a policy that strengthens Nigeria's resolve to stake her political and diplomatic weight in protection of her citizens maltreated abroad or in protection of economic assets at home and abroad. In a more instructive sense, Citizen Diplomacy represents people-centered and it indicates that Nigeria's national and international actions will be driven primarily by the need to promote welfare and security of every Nigerian (Eze, 2009:41).

In another perspective, Eke (2009) argued that Citizen Diplomacy is also practised at the level of citizen-to-citizen, a form of reciprocal relationship; it is counter-strike diplomacy; it is the tit-for tat diplomacy and it is 'interdependence diplomacy' because it hinges on the axiom that actions and reactions are equal and opposite. It acts to wait for reciprocal response or reacts in payback fashions. This is because it involves essentially reciprocal relationships between Nigeria and other nations in terms of their citizens, lives, properties and business undertakings. What Ojo Madukwe, former External Affairs Minister, referred as 'diplomacy of consequence' Nigeria's relations with one of the South African states, Zimbabwe, which Nigeria spent her political, material and financial resources to liberate but sadly, Zimbabwe authorities soon after independence of the country developed serious knack for humiliating Nigeria, her citizens and authorities.

The ideals of Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy are obvious under the following:

1. Nigeria and Nigerians to be at the center of nation's foreign policy.
2. Nigeria foreign policy must meet its development aspiration and objective in a manner that impacts more directly on lives of the citizenry.
3. Nigeria foreign policy must seek a synergy with domestic policy to ensure full benefit of ordinary Nigerians. Indeed, the boundary between domestic and foreign policy has collapsed into national security for the collective well being of Nigerians.
4. In line with the servant-leadership of Mr President, Nigeria Mission broad must actively engage the Nigeria community and Nigeria Diaspora and render quality consular and other services as a matter of right, duties and obligation.
5. Foreign policy making and implementation must be democratized to involve Nigerians from all walks of life and not left for a small circle of experts and practitioners alone.
6. Every foreign policy endeavor must meet the litmus test of determining the extent to which it protects and advances what will be the best benefit of the Nigerian people.
7. Nigeria to be guided by the principle of reciprocity in pursuit of diplomacy of consequence in all interactions with the rest of the world.
8. Nigeria and Nigerians will not accept being criminalized by international community simply on the basis of the despicable conduct of a few of their nationals. Due recognition must be given to remarkable feats and tremendous contribution of Nigeria and Nigerians to world civilization, socio-economic and scientific development as well as international peace and security (Yakubu, 2011:233-234) cited in Okeke (2020).

Significantly, Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy is indeed symbolic to the security and well being of Nigerians but its substance is doubtful in credence to prevailing realities as revealed in Ujara and Ibiatan (2014), there have been arguments advanced that Citizen Diplomacy is effective and yielding results or dividends as positive international image for Nigerian.

However, how helpful have Nigerian government been to Nigerians living in Nigeria and abroad? This fundamental question explicitly underlined the thrust of this discourse with focus on critical assessment of Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy in view of current security challenges. In Nigeria today, terrorism and banditry constituted most daunting challenges to well being of Nigerians. These national security challenges have ostensibly stimulated recessive socio-economic indicators and undermined the country's image within the international community. It is therefore pertinent to reexamine the concept of national security and establish its affinity to Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy. It is instructive to note that national objective of Nigeria underlines the importance of national security as aptly highlighted by the Report of National Security Strategy (2019:3);

'The Government of Nigeria is committed to protecting its people, economic interests, infrastructure and way of life. This entails deploying the full spectrum of national power to ensure a safe and secured nation. To this end, we will continue to strengthen our security and law enforcement agencies as well as upscale our overall national resource endowment to comprehensively and decisively address all domestic and external threats to Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will foster a culture of preparedness within our strategic institutions and build the resilience of our communities against the risks and hazards that pose the greatest threats to the Nigerian people while actively reducing our vulnerabilities' To this end, national security as concept and expedient measure becomes instructive. The concept of national security is not vague but elicits diverse definitions and seemingly interpretations that underscore the criticality of national power and national defence. Accordingly, Onimisi (2014) defined national security in terms of a nation's military capabilities or the struggle to overcome internal and external aggression. National security has traditionally been about the survival of the state against military threats posed by other states (Buzan, 2003). Security threat differs amongst nations. The major security threat to some powerful nations like the USA and its allies may be how to defeat international terrorists and to promote their economic interest and democratic values (Aliyu, 2012) cited in Onimisi (2014:81).

In Nigeria, the peculiarity of national security threats illuminates. Again, Report of National Security Strategy (2019) revealed that Nigeria as a nation-state is threatened by several challenges considered as security priorities in the next five years with both short and long-term implications. These challenges can be grouped under the following security threats: terrorism and violent extremism, armed banditry, kidnapping, militancy and separatist agitations, pastoralists-farmers conflicts, transnational organised crime, piracy and sea robbery, porous borders and cybercrimes. Others are socio-political threats, fake news and hate speeches, environmental threats, public health challenges, economic challenges, regional and global security challenges. Sadly, terrorism, armed banditry and pastoralists-farmers conflicts constituted daunting security problems that have continued to cause loss of lives, displacement of millions and thousands of fatalities across the federation. Today, most Nigerians live in perpetual anxiety unable to travel or reside in their villages, buy and sell goods in markets, go to places of worship and engage with social interactive forums because of fear of terror. These unpleasant situations have undoubtedly diminished the essence of the avowed commitment of Nigerian Government towards the safety of Nigeria people as embellished in Section 14(1) b of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria which indicates that the "*the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government*".

From this indication, the discourse therefore established that national security is the commitment of sovereign state to defend against what threatens safety of nationals and ideals that promote their freedom. Hence, intended or spontaneous activity or activities that undermine lives and liberty of people constitutes national security threat.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Basically, Nigerian citizen-centric foreign policy as earlier noted was adopted by Alhaji Umaru Yar' Adua Presidency, (2007-2011) in pursuit of national prestige through commitment in security and welfare of its nationals. Hence, the external policy represents the best option among alternatives conceived by decision-makers in cognizance of expedient factors for meaningful impacts and outcome. In other words, the behavioural theory of Decision-Making is adopted as appropriate framework to establish the rationale and review the operational significance of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy in view of current national security threats in the country. Richard Snyder was the exponent of Decision-Making theory. Accordingly, Verma (1975) noted that the decision making process of political analysis was developed by Richard Snyder and his colleagues after the Second World War. Snyder was engaged in developing the decision making analysis as a full-fledged 'approach' to the study of international political phenomena. The initial draft expounding this approach was circulated by Snyder to his colleagues in the Princeton University in a mimeographed form in June 1954. Hence, decision-making theory focused attention on the processes of public decision-making. It is argued that political action has the character of a decision taken by some actors in a specific situation through a particular process. Political action can be understood by referring to the person who took the decision and the interactive processes by which the decision was reached (Mahajan, 2003:38). Therefore, state action of domestic and international significance is analyzed from perception and intrigues of decision-makers. Hence, the scientific framework attempt to establish the context, influencing variables and outcome of the decisions made to impact on occurring and intervening phenomena.

Furthermore, Ambe-Uva, et al (2012) stressed that decision-making theory focuses upon the decision-maker as the fundamental unit of political analysis. The basic assumption is not that every political act is intentional, that ultimately,

indicates that politics involves making decisions that are judgments about how to gain a particular objective in a given situation. As noted, the decision making theorist does not claim that the model accounts for all political phenomena; rather, it is assumed that decision-making is the most important aspect of the political system and is of primary interest to the political scientist (Isaac 1984:230). Significantly, Decision-Making theory is more popular in the study of foreign policy. Its central argument is that policies can be understood as decision-making behaviour. Thus, the logics of the theory are anchored on two pertinent questions: (a) What informs public decision-making behavior or what informs decision making in public policy? And (b) How are decisions arrived at? (Ambe-Uva, et al, 2012:124). Similarly, Verma (1975) underlined the essence of Decision-Making theory in the study and analysis of international relations as it is stressed that even though the theory is applied in the beginning to the limited field of international relations, it was full of immense possibilities in other fields of political science too. Snyder had spelt out the decision-making variables and processes within decision-making framework. The state was regarded as the prime actor in international politics and its behavior was always tried to be understood in the 'objective realities' of its positions in the world. Its goals and sources of behavior traced to geographical, historical, political and technological circumstances, which were supposed to exercise a kind of compulsive influence on the behavior of the state. What the geography, history, politics or technology indicated in a particular situation was supposed to constitute the 'objective realities' to which the officials in charge of foreign policy had to submit. The goals of a state and its national interest were generally identified by the 'objective circumstances' in which it was situated at a particular time in history. Nobody seemed to have bothered to point out that whatever the objectivity of these factors, the behavior of state was in fact the behavior of the decision-makers and depended on how the decision-makers 'perceived' these factors. The state action was, after all, the action of its officials and the officials acted according to what they regarded as the 'objective circumstances'.

Succinctly, the basic assumptions of Decision-Making theory underline three fundamentals. First, state domestic policy or external action is the orientation and preferences of the decision-makers. To comprehend the dynamics of the emergence of this policy or action, it becomes pertinent to view it from the perspective of the persons responsible for taking decision. Decision-making lies at the heart of all political actions, and, therefore it alone provides that common focus under which political actors are brought together, situations and processes for purpose of analysis. It is therefore, important to know, in order to understand a political action correctly when attempts are made to provide depth explanation on; *Who made the key decisions that gave rise to a particular action? And to assess the intellectual and interactive processes by which the decision-makers reached their decision* (Verma, 1975: 250 and Justin and Merkin, 2010:342). Secondly, Snyder's classification of factors that are influential perhaps considered stimuli on decision-makers and decision-making behavior. These factors or stimuli are streamlined in internal setting, the external setting and decision-making processes. The internal setting constituted the society for which the officials make decisions. It includes, besides public opinion, major common-value orientations, major characteristics of social organization's group structures and functions, major institutional patterns, basic social processes (like adult socialization, and opinion formation), and social differentiation and specialization. The external setting consist of the actions and reactions of other states (meaning the decision-makers in those states) and the societies for which they act and the physical world. Thirdly, there are the decision-making processes-which are generated within governmental organizations and of which they are a part (Verma, 1975:280, and Renina, 2007:123).

In reference to critique of the decision-making theory, it might be useful in studying foreign policy but for the understanding of domestic politics, this model appears limited. In this context, it may not be able to explain some of the detailed political processes. Again, as a model, it may not be suitable for the explanation of change in politics. However, the value of its submission is that, it reminds you what is responsible for actions of actors involved in politics. It is also observed that reasons for decisions may be more varied than what has been identified. It is also observed that there may be so many forces acting on the decision maker at a particular time, which brings us to the warning that the rational actor model may be over assumed in talking of the decision maker because his/her decisions may not always be rational. Beside these critics, Decision-Making theory is applied to further accentuate its methodological and logical relevance in this discourse. In other words, Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy was conceived by the Nigerian decision-makers (in the federal ministry of external affairs and presidency) in response to the exigencies of Snyder's 'objective realities' as observed in events and issues of Nigeria's relation with other sovereign states of the international community. Hence, these 'objective realities' in the perception of Nigerian decision-makers reflects in the discourteous treatment against her citizens in the West, dehumanization and killings of her citizens in intermittent xenophobia restiveness in South Africa and incidents of resentment and human rights abuses against Nigerian nationals in most African countries and beyond the continent. Hence, citizen-centric policy action becomes expedient for Nigerian decision-makers to seek for pragmatic diplomatic and consular engagements to protect lives, safeguard rights and secure legitimate investments of Nigerians resident in other parts of the world. This policy-decision was also initiated by Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar' Adua administration in recognition of Nigeria's history of friendly relations with some nation-states and, its strategic importance in regional politics and western economy. This indication also underlined the importance of Snyder's external stimuli as a rationale for Citizen Diplomacy.

Subsequently, the stimulus of decision-making behavior of Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy as related to Snyder's internal settings is also imperative. In reference to internal setting which is ostensibly the domestic realities, citizen-centric diplomacy was also conceived as rebranding strategy for national rebirth as Eke (2009) embellished that Citizen Diplomacy was also seen as an internal strategy of the Nigerian re-branding project, the former Nigerian Minister for Information and National Orientation, Professor Dora Akunyili admits that, *“There is no doubt that this country needs change, a change in character and general orientationdespite our struggles and not-too-good reputation, we must seize every opportunity to make a change. Though Nigeria is a country with problems, it is also one with countless opportunities. Nigeria has many brilliant minds and experts who can hold their own in virtually every field of endeavorGradually, as a people, we are approaching a point where many feel that there can be no redemption”*. Hence, this national clarion call informed commitment of Nigeria decision-makers under Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar' Adua administration to promote positive image of the country through rebranding citizen-centric external policy.

Sadly, the domestic reality today as regards to crisis of national security which overwhelms in thousands of deaths and fatalities with adverse effects on national image therefore elicits the need for Nigerian decision-makers in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Presidency and National Assembly to review the operational strategy and conduct of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy. This is because Nigeria's national prestige in the international community begins with government's commitment and expedited efforts to ensure safety of lives and properties of citizens in various parts of the federation. And, this ideal is certainly the task of Nigerian decision-makers. In conclusive sense, Decision-Making theory established the imperatives of domestic and external circumstances described as 'objective realities' which remained visibly fundamental in the formulation and conduct of foreign policy. In this regard, the orientation and choices of the decision-makers are expected to be in deference to these 'objective realities' for pragmatic foreign policy and robust diplomatic engagements. And, any meaningful reform in Nigeria's foreign policy orientation, ideals and strategy should reflect these 'objective circumstances' beyond prejudices of decision-makers.

3.1 Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy in Context of Issues and Challenges of National Security

As earlier indicated, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar' Adua administration introduced Citizen Diplomacy as a foreign policy reform to bolster Nigeria's image and prestige in international community with exclusive interest in security and welfare of its nationals. In effort to promote the imperatives of this ideal, President Muhammadu Buhari in 2019 established the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, NIDCOM to resonate federal government commitment towards the welfare and security of Nigerians resident in various parts of the world. As Oghenekevwe (2021) noted that NIDCOM has the mandate to encourage Diaspora Nigerians to be good ambassadors of the country and mediate relations between the Nigerian government and Nigerians in the Diaspora for mutual development benefits. Basically, Buhari's administration has showed reasonable sense of commitment towards Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy as Madubuegwu, (2019) observed that the federal government of Nigeria under the presidency of Muhammad Buhari has implemented plausible policies and legislations in promoting citizen-centric foreign policy thrust. For instance, the economic diplomacy of Buhari's government had in the few years leveraged on bilateral and multilateral resolutions that attracted foreign direct investment in agric resources and export promotions to mitigate the challenges of a recessive economy. Subsequently, between February and April 2018, the federal ministry of external affairs in collaboration with International Organization for Migration airlifted over five hundred Nigerians trapped in Libya and visit of President Muhammadu Buhari to the South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa on the wake of resurgence of xenophobic restiveness against foreigners which culminate with the inauguration of Nigeria/South Africa Bi-National Commission for the safety of lives and investments of Nigerians in the Rainbow country which were few out of sundry indicators in credence to Citizen Diplomacy.

Similarly, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, NIDCOM has shown commitment towards the welfare and well-being of the estimated 17 million Diaspora Nigerians by organizing Town-Hall meetings and interventions during xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in Ghana and South Africa occasioned with evacuation of thousands of stranded citizens back home and response to petition from Nigerians abroad. Again, the Commission in collaboration with Nigeria National Assembly is currently seeking for amendment of the Electoral Act for Diaspora voting. The Commission has also partnered with National Identity Management Commission, NIMC for Diaspora mapping and, commenced data capturing of Nigerians in West Africa, Europe, Asia and America for effective planning purposes, especially in view of much anticipated Diaspora voting (Oghenekevwe 2021:2). Furthermore, the recent air-lifting of Nigerians from Ukraine due to the ongoing armed conflict with Russian federation also underscored the commitment of the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari towards the ideals of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy. However, the conduct of Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy is immersed with enormous challenges that stem from domestic realities. In retrospect, Dickson (2010) recalled that from 2007 to date, citizen diplomacy seems not to have yielded the envisaged dividend due to some factors that are both domestic and international. Accordingly, Abati (2009), noted that placing the citizen at the centre of the national programme reinforces the original purpose of the Government and when those in power provide necessary leadership, they will without much effort secure the trust of the general populace and create centers of national solidarity and more agents for national progress. In Nigeria, we don't seem to get this. Our Governments do not value our lives. One Nigerian was killed in Spain, another one was brutalized in Asia, routinely, our people are beheaded in Saudi Arabia. At home and

in Diaspora, Nigerians are left to their own survival tactics; many have learnt not to expect anything from their government (cited in Dickson, 2010:6). In a more broad sense, Madubuegwu (2019), noted that a cursory analysis of events at domestic, regional and global arena as regarding the safety and welfare of Nigerians revealed enormous challenges towards the realization of the lofty ideals of Citizen Diplomacy. On domestic level, the security of Nigerians is threatened daily by unabated kidnapping and insurgency amid the efforts of the police and the army. At regional level, the wide spreading human trafficking in Libya, terrorism in West Africa neighboring countries and xenophobia violence in post-apartheid rainbow country, South Africa stridently elicits serious concern on the safety of Nigerians and their investments. Beyond Africa, most responsible Nigerians have suffered discourteous treatment and resentment with foreign immigration officers.

In instructive sense, it is argued that humiliating situations that most responsible Nigerians in Diaspora found themselves occasioned with extra-judicial killings by authority of host countries in isolation of concerted efforts from Nigerian government emanate obviously from the failure of appropriate authorities to guarantee safety and improve living conditions of people in the country. In this vein, Dickson (2010), argued that back home, the average Nigerian is treated badly by the authorities. For instance, the Nigerian Police Force vested with the responsibility of maintaining internal peace and security have in all ramifications become agents of terrorism engaging in extra-judicial killing, arrest, and detention of innocent citizens, extortion of multifarious dimensions, and brutality. On Sunday, January 3, 2009, a detachment of Policemen on patrol in Illorin, the Kwara State capital shot a taxicab when the driver allegedly failed to stop for inspection and subsequent payment of amount ranging from N20.00 to N100.00, while the bullets hit on a nursing mother, Titilayo Olutunde, aged 20 years and her eight months old baby late Anuoluwa and they died. Titilayo and her daughter's brutal murder by the Police have since occupied front burner in legal interpretation. The question now is, what kind of citizen diplomacy are we talking about? (Jimoh,2010:7) cited in Dickson (2010:7). Again, instances of kidnapping incidents abound where State Government or Police authority, instead of rising to the challenges posed by this act of criminality, they will ask relatives of the victim to negotiate with them (kidnappers) and to pay a ransom as may be demanded. Then what is the role of the government in the security of its citizens? (Dickson, 2010:8).

The decade observations of Dickson (2010) and Jimoh (2010) on the unpleasant national security situation in Nigeria have unfortunately not abated rather it has deteriorated in alarming intensity and scale in the recent years. Today, terrorism in North-East has become globalized with the alliance of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda Awati Wal-Jihad and Islamic State of West Africa Province, ISWAP, torrents of offensives by armed bandits in North-West with recent attacks on Kaduna international airport and Abuja-Kaduna rail transport occasioned with Fulani herders killings in rural farm settlements in Western states and North-Central. Furthermore, Igiebor, et al (2021), revealed that in Nigeria, hardly anywhere is safe. Stories of blood attacks appear regularly in the news, so, few people get shocked by them. The northeast, northwest and southeast, play host to messengers of death. But the other three geopolitical zones are not any better. Not in a country where kidnapping has become a trade. So, those who escape Boko Haram in the northeast, the bandits in the northwest, and north central, must be vigilant and prayerful because of terrors without borders. In the southwest, arguably the safest among the six zones, criminal herders are always on rampage. Amotekun, the regional security outfit, is not sufficiently equipped to totally ward off the armed criminals. In the southeast geo-political zone, it is the indiscriminate killing and arson by so called unknown gunmen.

Consequently, these torrents of national security threats have undoubtedly worsen negative reflections of Nigeria's image in the international community and heightened discourteous treatment of its nationals in various parts of the world. Again, it has also severed relations with the West as related to intermittent sanctions against Nigeria immigrants. As earlier noted, United States in acknowledgement of unabated terrorism incidences and federal government failure had in 2020 placed stringent visa ban on Nigerian immigrants. Again, Madubuegwu (2020), document that the US Department of Homeland Security stated that the action became necessary because Nigeria failed to meet the US security and information-sharing standards. Similar travel restriction of this kind was in the past extended to Iran, Somalia, North Korea, Venezuela and Yemen on the expedience of precautionary security measure to stem the tide of terrorism. The US visa restriction created so much apprehension and anxiety among Nigerian passport holders who intend to visit United States on medical, leisure, work, schooling, etc. Report from DHS revealed that in 2018, a total of 7,922 US immigrant visas were issued to Nigerians. And as of 2017, bureau survey indicated that there were 348,000 Nigeria immigrants living in United States engaging in productive ventures. However, this unpleasant development obviously illuminate the inadequacies and challenges bedeviling our appropriate institutions and agencies with reference to inadequate security intel, failed institutional synergy, fraud, absence of viable data base and unabated spread of terrorism in various parts of the country. The systemic failures of our security architecture have today constituted a serious threat to the safety of citizens of Nigerian foreign allies and possible diplomatic row. The Federal Government of Nigeria in response to the unpleasant situation created a special committee led by Honourable Minister of Interior to interface with relevant persons and agencies on ways to resolve this diplomatic impasse. President Muhammadu Buhari had on the occasion of 33rd Africa Union Summit in Addis Ababa Ethiopia re-echoed Nigerian and regional commitments towards ending terrorism. It is therefore expected that this lofty ideals should be translated in the operational procedure of the appropriate institutions to ensure public safety of Nigerians and strengthen our foreign relations.

Although, the issue of United States immigrant visa ban has been amicably resolved but the national security threat has remained more stridently than ever raising apprehension of diplomatic row between Nigeria and Western allies particularly in view of resurgence and vehemence of international terrorism with the re-emergence of Taliban in national governance of Afghanistan in 2021. Hence, the unpleasant security situation in the country currently looks frightening as security personnel and institutions works fanatically to reverse the trend. As reported in December 2021, the government effort led to a consecutive month-to-month reduction of security incidents and fatalities but not kidnappings, where 574 cases were recorded representing a 58 percent month-to-month increase. It is also recorded that diverse range of security incidents occurred where 431 fatalities were confirmed in 29 states across 96 local government areas. Further breakdown of these incidents showed 26 percent occurred in the North-West geopolitical region, 19 percent in the North-Central, 17 percent in South-West, 13 percent in South-South and South-East and 12 percent in the North-East. The thematic indications of the incidents that resulted in these fatalities include mostly armed attacks and a continuation of the trend of several non-state actors successfully challenging the state's monopoly of the use of force (Report of Beacon Intel, 2021:3). Subsequently, Report of Beacon Intel (2021) outlined what may likely be the trending security situation in 2022 and its implications as embellished below:

- The dislodgement of gunmen from bases and camps due to the ongoing interdiction operations by the security forces in North Central and North West Nigeria will lead to further unwarranted one-off bestial attacks against defenceless communities,
- Political violence localized to political events and gatherings will continue as preparations continue for off-cycle elections and the party congresses of the ruling party,
- Criminal activities including kidnap for ransom, violent and petty crimes as well as home invasions are likely to continue in the short and medium terms due to the deteriorating economic circumstances of the country and rising inflation,
- A continuation of 'non-state actors' activities challenging the supremacy of the state's monopoly of force and sustenance of their attacks on communities including kidnap for ransom and raids. This, in turn, will push communities to evolve self-help initiatives including protests, where they block access routes and arm themselves.
- The deteriorating security situation will continue to fuel political rancour and the exchange between the ruling party and its members and between it and opposition parties,
- Social upheaval especially protests by civil society organisations and political groups hiding behind civil activists will intensify as a major driver of security challenges as the effect of the economic downturn forces government at the Federal and State levels to take measures to manage these impacts,
- In the North East, the non-state actors waging a terror war and the ongoing military operation Hadin Kai will continue the armed conflict. The restructuring and consolidation of ISWAP and its reduced membership will translate into bolder attacks and other activities of the group. This will mean a continuation of armed attacks and counter attacks as well as illegal checkpoints mounted along major travel routes particularly in Borno state but in the border towns of Yobe and Adamawa states,
- The trend in criminal activities especially in South-West Nigeria, where we recorded the highest quarterly and month-to-month increase, is evolving and requires robust community-based prevention and law enforcement measures.

Nigeria is currently in the first quarter of 2022, and the insecurity situation has heightened as earlier indicated. More worrisome is the current onslaught of armed banditry across states in North-West and North-Central. It is therefore logical to establish that the clumsy efforts of federal government and appropriate state institutions to ensure safety and well being of Nigerians is indeed the underlying cause of abysmal failure in the conduct of Citizen Diplomacy towards safety and reputation of Nigerians resident in various parts of the world. Also, federal government failure also had ripple effects on the entire structures and personnel of Nigerian Foreign Service which is in deplorable status. Also, fraudulent activities of irresponsible Nigerians in various parts of the world have unceasingly over the years undermined the image of the country and makes mockery of the ideals of citizen-centric diplomacy.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conduct of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy is obviously immersed with myriad of challenges which stemmed from failures of state institutions towards public welfare and safety. This assertion indeed evinced the scope and thrust of this discourse. This discourse begins with introductory analysis which established the dominant visibility of state system in international community where national interest and foreign policy served as ideals and strategy of external action and inaction. The introductory analysis also underlined the rationale of foreign policy reform, Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy in Africa most populous country, Nigeria and debilitating conditions of its conduct. The discourse further dissected conceptual narratives of national interest, foreign policy, citizen-centric diplomacy and national security and, explored its

analytical affinities to illuminate its imperatives and limitations in Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy and national security threats. The empirical significance of the discourse was embellished in the logics of behavioural theory of Decision-Making advanced by Richard Snyder to argue that the Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy emerged from what Nigerian decision-makers considered as 'objective circumstances' in response to domestic and external exigencies. Furthermore, Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy in context of issues and challenges of national security revealed that the citizen-centric policy has performed below expectations in the actualization of its fundamental ideals and targets. Arguably, the failure of federal government of Nigeria on sundry issues of governance, public welfare and public safety has over the decades excruciatingly militated against efforts to optimally ensure safety of lives, rights and investment of Nigerians resident in various parts of the world.

From these findings, it becomes pertinent to acknowledge the fact that federal government of Nigeria has enormous task to change the narrative of awkwardness in the ideals and conduct of Nigeria Citizen Diplomacy. The Nigeria government at every level of governance and social engagement should prioritize in public welfare and safety across the federation. This has become imperative to reverse public trust deficit in governance and bolster national prestige in the comity of nation-states. In a specific sense, it is expected that Nigeria federal ministry of foreign affairs in collaboration with relevant institutions such as federal ministry of defense, Nigeria Defense Academy, NDA and Nigerian Institute of International Affairs should ensure holistic review of the operational targets and modality of citizen-centric diplomacy in cognizance of current security threats in the country. This measure shall indeed provide insight on areas of limitations, expedient measures and modalities to ensure optimal performance in response to domestic and external exigencies with emphasis on plights and expectations of Nigeria people within the country and Diaspora. This measure can be reinforced by efficient and robust Foreign Service system. It is earlier indicated that Nigerian Foreign Service is bedeviled with myriad challenges from inadequacy of manpower and staff development to paucity of funds and limited consular infrastructures. Hence, there is need to identify and expedite actions to mitigate these challenges for efficient and prompt responses. This has become very pertinent in view that robust Foreign Service system signifies a plausible measure in realizing the lofty ideals of Citizen Diplomacy.

Subsequently, Nigeria Institute of International Affairs should not relent in its statutory mandate of research, documentation and policy-inputs in the development of measurable and impactful ideals and targets of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy. It is also expected that the management of the national institute should initiate intellectual interactive forums through symposium, seminars and conferences to leverage on expertise of scholars and practitioners to explore meaningful recommendations to strengthen the conduct of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy in view of current dynamics at domestic, regional and global engagements. Nigeria National Assembly particularly the House of Representatives since the inception of democratic governance in 1999 has remained consistent, resolute and vocal in tasking the presidency, federal ministry of foreign affairs, Nigeria foreign mission (Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates) and other relevant institutions on the plights of Nigerians resident in various parts of the globe. These enthusiasm and drive should be sustained with more pragmatic motions and legislations in view of overwhelming threats of national security in recent time. In this regard, the office of National Security Adviser, NSA in collaboration with federal ministry of foreign affairs, federal ministry of defense, National Defense Academy and National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies should come up with inter-sectoral blue print to review Report of National Security Strategy (2019) in view of new security threats beside Boko Haram terrorism.

Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, NIDCOM, has done relatively well in prompt response to issues of safety and welfare of Nigerians resident in other parts of the world. However, more efforts are required in view of global public health challenge of COVID-19 pandemic immersed with human rights violation, immigrant visa ban, border closure and other restrictions which may undermine prospects and targets of legitimate investments. Hence, NIDCOM should however synergize with statutory institutions particularly the federal ministry of trade and industries and Central Bank of Nigeria to leverage on Economic Diplomacy blue-print of the present administration to promote resourceful potentials of Nigerians for foreign market and foreign direct investment. Finally, Nigeria civil society organizations should also complement the efforts of the government and its institutions through advocacy on anxieties, plights and expectations of Nigerians. It should be stressed that Nigeria's image and pride in international arena begins with the commitment of its government institutions towards safety and comfort of her citizens.

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