



Muhammadu Buhari 'S Foreign Policy Under Democratic Regime: A Critical Evaluation

Okpa, Iruoghene Ufuoma¹, Professor Esekumemu, Victor Clark²

¹Department of Political Science, Delta State University Abraka Nigeria

²Department of Political Science, Delta State University Abraka Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study is a critical evaluation of President Muhammadu Buhari's Foreign policy under Democratic dispensation. The increasing interdependent world where no nation is an island has however led to the interaction amongst nations if they must survive. The essence of this interaction is to be able to derive from other nations needed support and resources as well as give to those that have in abundance This has increased the frontiers of foreign policy with the state continued relevance as the dominant actors in international politics so as to attain different goals and objectives in the process of governing their entities. While some of the goals can be attained by the state on their own without reference to any other nations, others can only be attained with co-operation or active support of other entities beyond their borders. Hence the need for a viable foreign policy to canvass for a state's set goals to be achieved outside her territorial borders. Therefore, in order to achieve this lofty objective, three research questions were raised to guide the study. The Realist theory was adopted as theoretical framework for this study. the historical research design used The study relied on secondary data and as such, the data were analyze using contents analytical method. Based on the analysis, the study revealed among others that President Muhammadu Buhari foreign policy under democratic dispensation is targeted toward improving the welfare of Nigerians both in the country and Diaspora. His firm disposition has led to the recovery of looted funds from different banks and organizations in international community. Also security, economy, Anti-Corruption crusade formed the basis of his foreign policy objective. Therefore, the study recommends among others that In view of the critical importance of national interest in the formulation of a country's foreign policy and the increasing need for nation-building as well as economic development and the welfare of the Nigerian citizens the philosophy "Africa is the Centre-piece of Nigeria's Foreign Policy" should be thinker with to facilitate more gains for Nigerians. A good government is known by how much it is able to satisfy the needs and yearnings of the citizens and not by how much it helps citizens of other countries.

Keywords: Policy, Foreign Policy, Democratic Regime, Foreign Policy Analysis, International Community.

INTRODUCTION

Nations seek to attain different goals and objectives in the process of governing their sovereign entities. While some of the goals can be attained by the States on their own, others can only be attained with the cooperation or active support of other similar entities beyond their borders Gauba (2020). This entails that we live in an interdependent world where no nation is an island. This however, has led to the interaction amongst nations if they must survive. The essence of this interaction is to be able to derive from other nations needed resources as well as give out those they have in abundance in order to derive the resources needed in paying for their needs. By interaction also, nations have been able to maintain friendly relations with others thereby making the world safer and conducive for human habitation which eventually has led to development (Kelman, 2020).

It can be noted that the level of development or its reverse of modern nations in contemporary world is determined by the quality of its policies as well as the nature of its policy makers. One of such policies is a country's foreign policy. Foreign policy of a state is concerned with the behaviour of a state towards other states (Akinboye, & Ottoh, 2019). It refers to the ways in which the central governments of sovereign states relate to each other and to the global system in order to achieve various goals or objectives. Through its foreign policy it endeavors to persuade others in accordance with one's own ends. It is principally in proportion to its national power that its persuasive power is effective in this regard (Garrison, 2021).

Foreign policy is the course of action pursued by a nation in its dealing with other nations, usually in pursuance of its national objectives. That is why, diplomatic circles, "national interest" is often regarded as the basis upon which a nation's foreign policy is constructed. According to Nwankwo, (2021), foreign policy of a nation is a decision in form of actions or reactions dealing with such matters requiring co-operation and active support of others across the borders of a given state for their attainment. Foreign policy is seen as a set of goals and course of actions, a nation wishes to pursue or pursues in respect to the demands or interactions of the internal and external setting as perceived by the decision makers (Okere, 2021). It is an action template of a given nation in relation to political, economic and social matters affecting its developmental agendas. Foreign policy is seen as the actions of a State towards external environment and the conditions usually domestic under which these actions are formulated (Agaba and Emmanuel, 2020)

Foreign policy of a State is seen as the general principles by which a State governs its relations to the international environment (Okoro, 2020). Foreign policy can also be seen as the courses of actions adopted by a state in the interest of the people's welfare. It is not in all cases that states act in the people's interest. However, even a powerful state must take into account, not only its own objectives and interests but also those of other states. This process involves intricate processes of diplomacy short of war (Bukarambe, 2021). It is also based on the observations regarding the behaviour of a given state. Moreover, a state while implementing its foreign policy cannot afford to ignore the rules of international law (Younus, 2022)). The whole essence of this prelude is that the term foreign policy cannot be studied in isolation from the factors that determine it. A nation's foreign policy is not a haphazard exercise hence it is a systematic and organized process. Just like domestic policies, it operates through some laid down rules and procedures and it is also expected to rely on a feedback mechanism in order to assess its impact and acceptability (Otubanjo, 2021).

The democratic era of the Nigeria's foreign policy under president Muhammadu Buhari was focus on improving the welfare of Nigerians in Diaspora. This was as a result of his desire to build a buoyant economy that is diversified which can accommodate every sector of the Nigerian society. With this obvious reason, Buhari pursued a foreign policy template involving Anti-corruption crusade, the fight against terrorism, collaboration with international organizations for looted funds recovery, assisting Niger Republic with funds, resolving, election related crises in some African countries and others. Buhari Foreign policy is anchored on national interest of the country and as such his foreign policy objectives were targeted at improving welfare for Nigerians such welfare includes security, economic, election and diplomatic relations with most of the super-powers.

1.2.1 Statement of the Problem

A country's foreign policy is increasingly influenced by domestic and external forces; thus, the objectives of a country's foreign policy undergo frequent changes. With the changing global political and economic landscape, the emergence of new actors in global affairs, and most of all, the complex confluence of these facets, the credibility and effectiveness of standard communication practices in diplomacy is under challenge. Relating the above analysis with domestic reality, one would quickly understand that the logic and the instrumentality of domestic development linkage in foreign policy is virtually lacking in Nigerian foreign policy behaviour. This is because Afrocentric foreign policy commitment overshadows domestic reality. The little gain from Nigeria external relations cum African diplomacy fall squarely within the domain of regional prestige that bears no relationship to the nation's human and economic security.

Okpokpo, (2016) has rightly argued that Africa alone should no longer be the one and only reason for the existence of a foreign policy in Nigeria. This position is apt, because Nigeria has sacrificed a lot for African countries without anything in return. Nigeria which received international approval in the early days of independence due to her pragmatic foreign policy, leading role in peace keeping operations, decolonization posture and rich natural resources, suddenly became horrified when the military got ingrained in the domestic politics of national governance and implementing various domestic and foreign policies that were very unpopular and anachronistic with the international community. As situations became intolerable in Nigeria due to abuse of human rights and maladministration by the successive military juntas, many Nigerians flee abroad in search of greener pastures and better lives. Foreign policy bothers on external costly political mission with little or no bearing on core national interest, run the risk of being underdeveloped; this kind of posture made Reuben Abate to accuse Nigeria of being extra-ordinary naive by restricting its foreign policy to Africa as its cornerstone. Most often, the economic and political policies of democratic and military administrations contradict each other and this has however disrupted consistency and continuity in the foreign policy of the country. It is on this backdrop that this study intends to address by comparing Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and directives under the military and democratic dispensations former Head of States and democratically elected presidents in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to compare Nigerian Foreign Policy under the military and democratic rules. The specific objectives are to;

- Critically analyse Nigeria's Foreign Policy under the Democratic regime.
- Identify factors affecting the implementation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under Democratic Regime

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guide the study:

1. To what extent has the policy objectives of Nigerian leaders who have ruled country in the democratic dispensation contributed to the development of the country and her neighbours?
2. What are the factors affecting the implementation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy under the Democratic regime?

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is justified both on theoretical and practical fronts. Theoretically, the study complements other works done by scholars on Nigeria's foreign policy in general. Practically, the study is of paramount importance to the initiators and implementers of Nigeria's foreign policy. The issues raised and

tackled here are cogent enough to justify a scholarly inquest which is beneficial to students of international relations in general, and those who are fascinated in the study of foreign policies of nations in particular.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Realists Theory was adopted as the theoretical foundation for this study. The theory rests on the theoretical assumption that nations in their international engagements act for their own benefit and not for the benefit of others unless both interests happen to agree. This logic of the Realist theory is, key to understanding contemporary Nigeria's foreign policy engagement under President Olusegun Obasanjo and Muhammadu Buhari. According to this logic, advancing the specific interest of the state or what Wolfers (1962) referred to as possession goals are immutable aspects of realism. Wolfers used possession goals in contra-distinction to milieu goals, while connected to states' interest are basically interested in the wider international environment. It is the pursuance of these goals, especially in Africa that has considerably dictated Nigeria's foreign policy in the past. However, for any nation to realistically pursue its interest, milieu goals must turn out to be a requisite towards the fruitful pursuit of possession goal, and, which in this study is defined in terms of domestic needs or priorities. Definitely, Wolfers (1962) recognized this fundamental fact when he noted that "efforts to promote international law or establish international organizations" in peace keeping operations, give assistance to less privileged nations among others undertaken consistently by Nigeria in the past) "make sense if nations have reasons to concern themselves with things other than their own possession". Milieu goal then turn out to be a station towards possession goal.

On the other hand, Akpotor (2011) maintains that realist theory evolved as a reaction against idealism with the emergence of WWII; that the idealists neglected the harsh realities of power politics and human innate compulsion to put their personal welfare ahead of others' welfare. Early proponents and principal scholars of realist theory like Carr (1939), Niebuh (1947), Kennan (1951), down to Morgenthau (1967), etc, posited that international politics is ruled by objective general principles based on national interest defined as power. Their basic argument at this point is that in the modern world politics, conflict of interest is inevitable among states and since international politics is anarchical, states must be rational in terms of power and preservation of their national interest. And hence the purpose of state is national survival, to acquire power if possible through self help in order to preserve one's own national interest. According to Waltz (1979), realism means that the state's interest provides the spring of action, the necessities of this action emanates from the unfettered competition of states. This calculation according to him was based on these necessities that can determine the policies that best meet a state interest. He further elucidates that victory is the final test of any policy, and success is defined as protecting and strengthening the state.

Morgenthau (1967) defines realism as governed by objective laws that have their foundation in human nature. The major indication that helps realism find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. From Morgenthau's definition of realism, one can rightly attribute that power and interest are variables in content. And universal moral laws cannot be exerted to the actions of states in pursuit of power and safeguarding state interest.

The realist's position is that the international system is composed of self-interested states that compete constantly for power or security. (Morgenthau, 1948 & Waltz, 1979). Conflict is more likely because the absence of an overall system of law and enforcement means that each political actor must look out for itself. In addition, realists argue that power is a relative concept. In a condition of anarchy, any gain in power by one state represents an inherent threat to its neighbours. (Keohane, 1986). Policies aimed at demonstrating military capabilities and securing spheres of influence are most important. This position was very prominent during the Cold War when competition for allies and power diplomacy dominated the foreign policy agenda. It was a bipolar system in which small and middle powers faced strong pressures to submit to alliance partner of one of the major powers thereby giving up autonomy in foreign policy for the sake of security. Although realism captures the primacy of security interests and the drive for power among all states, it is often criticized for its excessive focus on military conflict at the expense of economic cooperation.

REVIEW OR RELATED LITERATURE

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is the category of actions a government takes which deals with defense, security, global politics and international economic relations. It falls under the category of action wherein a nation deals with other states, non-governmental organizations, international institutions, and definite individuals. Thus, Frankel (2020) conceives foreign policy as a range of actions, as well as a set of principles influencing these actions, taken with reference to external situations and factors...the totality of thoughts, activities and principles on international affairs embarked upon by decision makers with the purpose of achieving long-range goals and short-term objectives.

Foreign policy comprises of two essential elements: national goals to be attained and the means for attaining them. To Pham (2021), the relationship between national objectives and the resources for achieving them is the recurrent subject of statecraft. In its ingredients, the foreign policy of all states, big and small, is the same. In short, the determining of foreign policy is a dynamic and fluidly courses that involve the interface between a state's interior and exterior environments. The one propels the other. Clark, (2019) defined foreign policy as the articulation, mobilization and aggregation of all domestic factors to maximize a nations security interests such as political, economic, diplomatic or military influence vis-à-vis other states in the international political system at no risk or little cost. For instance, internal and external considerations are the basic elements that influence a nation's policy maker's perception on foreign policy. Olajide (2020) defines foreign policy as the product of interplay between external and internal forces as perceived by a country decision maker. Meanwhile these two dimensional forces internal and external are influencing the course of Nigeria foreign policy

since 1960. The domestic forces are ethnic, elite, oil, religion and the economy, are inhibiting the foreign policy. Policy makers have tried to balance the major respective domestic actors, if a credible foreign policy objective is to be achieved.

More so, Nwachukwu, (2021) noted that foreign policy of a state is concerned with the behaviour of a state towards other states. It refers to the ways in which the central governments of sovereign states relate to each other and to the global system in order to achieve various goals or objectives. Through its foreign policy, it endeavors to persuade others in accordance with one's own ends. It is primarily in proportion to its national power that its persuasive power is effective in this regard. However, even a powerful state takes into account not only its own objectives and interests, but also those of other states. This process involves intricate procedures of diplomacy void of war. It is also based on the observations regarding the behaviour of a given state. Moreover, a state while implementing its foreign policy cannot afford to ignore the rules of international law. The whole essence of this prelude is that the term foreign policy cannot be studied in isolation from the factors that determine it. "Foreign policy is the key element in the process by which a state translates its broadly conceived goals and interests into concrete course of action to attain these objectives and preserve interests.

Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign policies of countries have varying rates of change and scopes of intent, which can be affected by factors that change the perceived national interests or even affect the stability of the country itself. The foreign policy of one country can have profound and lasting impact on many other countries and on the course of international relations as a whole, such as the [Monroe Doctrine](#) conflicting with the [mercantilist](#) policies of 19th-century European countries and the goals of independence of newly formed [Central American](#) and [South American](#) countries (Ginsberg, 2019). Foreign policy analysis captures three major components namely the actor (foreign policy formulator), the internal or domestic environment and the external or foreign environment. To set the three components of this basic, generic description of foreign policy analytically into relation, we can rely on a process-oriented approach often adopted in classical foreign policy analysis (Smith and Webber, 2020).

Firstly, everything that takes place in the domestic or internal sphere can be discussed under the term "foreign policy decision-making" With the intention of explaining foreign policy behavior. Classical foreign policy analysis focuses on this dimension by analyzing the decision-making process itself and the psychological, political and social context in which decision-makers are embedded when designing foreign policies. In essence, the study of foreign policy decision-making requires answering each of the following questions: by whom (actors), on what basis (capacities/foreign policy instruments), for what purpose (interests/objectives) and by what means (decision-making procedures) are foreign policy decisions made (Gross, 2018).

Secondly, the view foreign policy analysts hold of the external environment depends largely on the chosen level of analysis: some approach it from an actor-based perspective, focusing classically on states, but also on the other hand, non-state actors; others have taken a structure-focused (top down) approach (Carlsnaes, 2020). Finally, to incorporate the politics dimension into this process-based approach of foreign policy, analysts have distinguished between foreign policy decision-making and "foreign policy implementation" (Smith and Clarke 2018). Where the former depicts the phase in the foreign policy process during which decisions are prepared and taken, the latter describes how this output of the foreign policy decision-making machinery is implemented when "actors confront their environment and their environment confronts them" (Brighi and Hill, 2021). Here, the deeply political core of the relationship between an actor and its environment comes to the fore If "all politics is the exercise of influence" (Dahl and Stinebrickner, 2019), foreign policy as interaction between actors and their environment can be regarded as "the exercise of influence in international relations" (Hudson and Vore, 2020). The foreign policy actor attempts to have an impact on its environment by employing instruments that it considers suitable for realizing its predefined objectives.

NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER DEMOCRATIC REGIME

A democratic government is that in which the people are provided with the opportunity to elect their representatives through free, fair and periodic elections with power vested on the people, and exercised by them directly or indirectly. A democratic government is made up of an independent judiciary, a multi-party system, e.t.c. Foreign Policy Decision Making in a democratic government includes the presidency, ministry of foreign affairs (state departments or foreign and commonwealth office) and the parliament or legislature. All these multiple bodies influence FPDM in a democratic government which makes foreign policy a long drawn process due to due process and broad consultation. FPDM shows broad consensus mainly due to debates and approval of ministerial appointments, ambassadorial positions, treaties, a budget which are required to be approved by national assembly (Yakubu, 2020). This section examines the foreign policy under the Olusegun Obasanjo administration between 1999 and 2007 and the Muhammad Buhari administration from 2015-2022. This is with the view to determine the premises of Nigeria's foreign policy during this time as well as the foreign policy direction and actions at the time.

Nigeria Foreign Policy under President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2022)

President Muhammadu Buhari won the election the 2015 election by defeating the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan. The election which was conducted on March 28, 2015, saw the former military leader returning to power, making him the second Nigeria's former military leader elected under a democratic rule. Factors which contributed to President Buhari success at polls could be attributed to the failure of the former government to deal decisively with the Boko Haram terrorism which was badly affected Nigeria's image in the international community. President Buhari hinged his campaign promises on three cardinal points which include, Combating Terrorism, Fighting Corruption and Improving on the economy. As stated earlier, foreign policy under a democratic government involves a lot stages for planning and execution. The main foreign policy under president Buhari

government includes improving relations with its neighbors in order to jointly fight Boko Haram which assumed a multinational or transnational dimension, partner with US and other world power to support the government in order to fight terrorism by providing needed manpower and intelligence, and more importantly improvement of economy and fighting corruption, improved relations with China in order to foster economic development through provision of needed infrastructure.

Nigeria- ECOWAS Countries Relations

During his campaign for election to the presidency of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari promised to tackle head-on three main issue of Insecurity (Boko Haram Insurgency), Corruption and Economy development. Before his declaration as president, Boko Haram had taken over swat of Nigerian territories and declaring an Islamic state within the Nigeria territory. Apart from Nigeria, the Boko Haram terrorism took a transnational dimension by carrying out attacks in Nigeria and receding into the neighbouring countries. Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which was charged with the responsibility of insurgency in the Lake Chad region was not effective although it tried to curtail the activities of Boko Haram as members countries contributed to the war against Boko Haram in Nigeria. With onslaught against the group by MNJTF member countries, Boko Haram soon targeted these countries for daring to aid Nigeria in the fight against terrorism, thereby giving the Boko Haram action an international dimension (Johnson 2021). It was observed that MNJTF was not effective and efficient as Boko Haram even overran it base in BagaBorno State, and went ahead to commit one of the most heinous crimes against humanity when it massacred the locals in Baga town.

On the assumption of office, President Muhammadu Buhari first trip overseas was to the Niger Republic on June 3, 2015. The Cameroon president also attended the meeting; the trip was on Anti-Boko Haram summit which was aimed at discussing the regional offensive against the group. The Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufou committed his countries resolve to help Nigeria tackle the growing threats of Boko Haram which has continued to threaten peace and stability in the region. It was also agreed that MNJTF headquarters be relocated from Nigeria to N'Djamena in Chad an appointment of a Nigerian as the commander of the organization. The meeting was followed up with a visit to Chad on June 4, 2017; this visit was followed up by a bilateral meeting with President Paul Biya of Cameroon. Although Benin republic was not affected by the insurgent activities of Boko Haram, Buhari visited Benin republic and these visited was reciprocated by Benin President BoniYayi who committed troops to the MNJTF to combat terrorist activities in the country (Bello 2020).

As Onapajo (2017) and Waddington argued, the shuttle diplomacy by President Buhari to his West Africa neighbors played a decisive role in limiting the capabilities of Boko Haram to strike in Nigeria and recede to these neighboring countries as shield against Nigeria forces, this diplomatic relation between these ECOWAS countries help curtail the activities of Boko Haram. Apart from using foreign relations to tackle Boko Haram insurgency, president Buhari played a key role as the chief mediator in solving the constitutional impasse in Gambia, where President Yahaya Jammeh initially refused to give up power to democratically elected president Adama barrow, President Buhari was tasked by ECOWAS to led a negotiation with Jammeh in order to concede power to Barrow. President Buhari resolves for a peaceful transition and the need to avoid violence which could lead to a civil war and a possible a humanitarian disaster for the ECOWAS sub-region. The negotiation was fruitful, and former president Jammeh conceded power and stepped aside (Darboe 2021). President Muhammadu Buhari made it a cardinal objective of his foreign policy to pursue its national interest by maintaining good relations with its immediate neighbours. The result of this was an improvement on the counter-insurgency war which led to decimation of Boko Haram.

Nigeria-United States Relations

Unlike his predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari enjoyed somewhat better relations, the grudge between Obama Administration and Goodluck Administration over the handling of BokoHaram insurgency especially the kidnap of Chibok girls and Human Rights abuses committed by the military. Relations between both countries under Buhari administration started with a high-level diplomatic meeting between Obama and Buhari which held at Oval on the 20th July 2016. President Obama committed that the United States will assist the government of Nigeria, tackle the growing threats of Boko Haram and countering violent extremism. President Buhari also requested Obama's administration to assist the government in curtailing corruption which has continued to plague the country, also seek the assistance of the government towards improving the economy which included reforms in the energy sector by stopping oil theft. The meeting was followed up by a meeting with Vice President Joe Biden where it was agreed that the US would assist Nigeria to root out corruption, ensure stability in the economy and also the policy with special reference to a Northern region of Nigeria which is the heartbeat of the Boko Haram insurgency. The trip also afforded president Buhari an opportunity to meet Treasury Secretary, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch and Bob Work the Deputy Defense Secretary (Abegunrin 2020). Under the administration of Donald Trump, nothing seems to have changed, as US Department of Justice recently filed a civil complaint for the forfeiture of money (\$144 million) which are from corrupt proceedings by former Nigerian minister of petroleum Diezani Alison-Madueke.

The DOJ was said to have accused the former minister and two accomplices in the name of Olajide Omokore and Kola Aluko of fronting for the former minister through oil lifting contracts which were awarded to the duo without due process. The DOJ seeks the forfeiture to return these assets to benefit the populace which is harmed by this corrupt practice (Campbell, 2017) agreed and stated that US government officials saw the election of Buhari as an avenue to aid the government's anti-corruption drive and on the larger extent improve bi-lateral relations This action can be linked the agreement between Buhari administration and DOJ under Loretta E. Lynch for collaboration to fight corruption and assist Nigeria to recover its loots domiciled in the US and other western countries. The Trump administration also demonstrated efforts to aid Buhari administration in his fight against Boko Haram with the proposed sales to military equipment to Nigeria, Nigeria was earlier blacklisted under President Jonathan; this led to declining for a request for the purchase of military equipment. The proposed sale included 12 Embraer A-29 Super Tucano aircraft. The proposed arms sell also got the approval of

Senators in US Congress who had earlier blocked the sales under Obama administration citing Leahy law which prohibited the US from selling arms to countries where their militaries have cases of human right abuses (Irogbu 2016 and Gional 2017).

Nigeria-China Relations

China has been termed the fastest growing economy and the second largest economy in the world and Nigeria have been trying to establish a balance of power with China in economic and diplomatic relations. Both countries share demographic and geographic significance in their continent. With China continuous aggressive expansion regarding commercial, technical and economic matters Nigeria has become an important player in Africa with regards to China new strategic expansion. Owing to its large population Nigeria is considered a large market. On the hand also, Nigeria and other Africa countries, considers China a partner in development due to infrastructure loans which it provides at interest rates lower than what is obtainable from Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund). The importance of China has been affirmed by a wide range of analyst and academics, CNN asserted that the US is the most significant nation on the world stage, but China is de-facto leader of the global economy in the 21st century (Aja 2020).

Barely one year after assumption of office, President Muhammadu Buhari visited China; the visit was on the heels of invitation by Chinese president Xi Jinping. The visit was aimed at solidification of both countries trade, diplomatic and economic relations between both countries. The visit led to the signing of the framework to enhance infrastructural development and industrial activities in Nigeria between National Development Reform Commission of China and Ministry of Industry, Trade and investment of Nigeria; Technological and Scientific Cooperation between both countries, the visit lasted for one week. In the aftermath of the visit, a number of the loan was granted to Nigeria especially to finance the deficit of 2016 budget, infrastructure loan for trains, among others. The rail project as argued by the government was aimed at solving the infrastructure deficit in the country, also provide needed jobs for the populace, and most importantly stimulate the economy.

The government took a bold step towards breaking the hegemony of USD in the Nigeria market by signing a deal which allows for Chinese currency Yuan to be used for transaction in the country. This will facilitate inclusion of Yuan in the country's foreign reserve and also allow banks to allow Yuan transaction from foreign and local investors alike. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China also provided \$2 billion to Aliko Dangote for funding of his cement factories. Apart from Economic relations between both countries, the countries also enjoy good diplomatic relations between both countries, China recently stated it full support for Nigeria's quest for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, Chinese parliament speaker Zhang Dejiang made this known during a meeting with his Nigerian counterpart Yakubu Dogara, this was part of effort to reform the UN and accommodate countries from another region. (Tijani 2019). Achievement and Summary of President Buhari Foreign Policy 2015-2022:

1. In two years of the government has been able to improve its foreign relations with Nigeria neighbours which are ECOWAS and LAKE CHAD Commission members. These as also helped the government achieved some level of success in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency which has taken an international dimension.
2. The administration has been able to forge important diplomatic and economic relations with China, which is a growing economic power house in the global economy. This relation has provided the country with needed funds to cushion the effect of the infrastructural deficit and needed foreign direct investments.
3. On the international scene, Nigeria has gained more respect under Buhari administration this is largely attributed to his personality and committed fight against corruption and insecurity in the country. This was evident at the invitation of President Buhari to G7 meeting immediately after he was sworn in.
4. President Buhari assumed leadership in negotiation for the peaceful return of democratically elected government in the Gambia. This has however led to the President being appointed to lead AU anti-corruption drive in the region.
5. President Buhari unlike his predecessor was able to improve on Nigeria and the United States relations which improved collaboration in the fight against Boko Haram and corruption which has become endemic in the country.

Factors Affecting Nigeria Foreign Policy under the Democratic regime

According to Northedge (2020) who asserted that the foreign policy of a country is "a product of environmental factors both internal and external.." Therefore, the environment of policy formulation is important in order to have assertive foreign policy that is able to achieve the country's national interests. In foreign policy studies, both the domestic and external environments play a role. There is a relationship between the two environments, as events at the domestic level often determine and shape foreign policy, while the events at the external, global level affect and/or determine events at the domestic environment of the country. In this section, we examine these environments of foreign policy formulation and implementation and explore how the new democracy has brought positive changes in the foreign policy formulation and conduct of Nigeria's external relations.

As noted earlier, Nigeria was confronted with harsh domestic and external environments in the formulation and conduct of its foreign policy under military rule. This is due to both internal and international opposition to the authoritarian rule of the government of the day. With the advent of civil rule, the domestic environment of policy formulation witnessed a complete transformation, as due process is now followed, while such institutions as the presidency, National Assembly (which is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate), federal ministries, federal executive council, foreign service, and research institutes such as the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Parastatals, among others have their roles in the conduct of foreign policy as articulated in the constitution. The president runs the country on a daily basis, and foreign

policy is his domain. In his capacity as the president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, he is the principal actor in both domestic and foreign policies formulation.

The president sets the foreign policy agenda in line with his visions and party's manifesto; this is in accordance with the dynamics of international politics. However, the president is not the only actor in foreign policy making and implementation, for he is assisted by a number of ministries and Parastatals. (Fawole,2021). Unlike the situation during military rule, under civilian administration, the power of the president are not absolute. It is subject to constitutional checks of the National Assembly. For example, the president is empowered to appoint ambassadors and high commissioners, but he must seek the approval of the National Assembly (Section 171 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria). The National Assembly also exercises control over the ratification and renunciation of international agreements and treaties negotiated and signed by the president, his ministers, or envoys on behalf of the Nigerian state (Sections 11 and 12). Such agreements/treaties can only enter into force after they have been ratified and passed into law as an Act of the National Assembly, among others. Another area in which the National Assembly exercises control is finance.

The executive arm of government must request and receive the National Assembly's approval before any money can be made available for spending, even in matters relating to foreign and defense policies. Sections 59 and 80-82 of the constitution state that before any money can be withdrawn from the Consolidation Revenue Fund of the Federation for any purpose, it must be approved by the Nigerian National Assembly. The National Assembly's power and control over finance and government spending can easily abet or hold back the chief executive's ability and capability to conduct foreign policy. Informed public opinion (such as civil society organizations, mass media, and organized labor) is now, to a large extent, in support of the civilian administration, unlike the situation under the preceding military regimes.

The favorable domestic environment of policy formulation is boosted by the personality and psychological factor. This idiosyncratic variable should not be overlooked, for it has an overbearing influence on the conduct of Nigeria's foreign relations. The personality and psychology of a leader (the chief executive officer in particular) determines the policies formulated. Therefore, the policies of the government are reflective of the leader's worldview and his personal traits; how he sees and defines the situation are functions of his psychology. As an erstwhile Nigeria's External Affairs Minister,

Akiyemi (2021) poignantly puts it: "The constitutional provisions form the skeleton: they are the bare bones. It is the personality of people running the system that puts the flesh on the skeleton, giving us the recognizable form". Under the civilian administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the president was (and he is still, after leaving office) a man of international clout and respect who brought some degree of respect to the Nigerian state and presidency in particular. As a former military ruler of Nigeria (1976-1979), Obasanjo voluntarily handed over power to a civilian administration in 1979, and since then, he has been at the forefront of the struggles to democratize Africa's political environment. In this respect, Omotola and Saliu (2020) argue that Obasanjo came in as president with impressive, if not intimidating credentials. This, according to Omotola and Saliu, directly contrasts the inexperience of Abacha. Obasanjo's impressive credentials were supported by the personality of his foreign affairs ministers. Of particular importance is that of Foreign Affairs Minister Alhaji Sule Lamido, who displayed a high level of maturity, skills, dexterity, and good mastery of the job (Omotola & Saliu, 2020).

Thus, the democratization of the hitherto militarized and constricted political space has brought unquantifiable improvement to the domestic base of Nigeria's foreign policy formulation and implementation. At the global level, the transfer of power in Nigeria from military rule to civilian authority in May 1999 ended the pariah status of the country, and Nigeria was welcomed back into the comity of civilized nations, as it conducted its external relations according to the accepted norms of international society. This singular event witnessed the relaxation of strained international relations between Nigeria and the outside world, especially western countries, and subsequently, the major powers/industrialized nations lifted political-economic and military sanctions that had been imposed on Nigeria. The international skepticism of Nigeria became a thing of the past.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is qualitative and as such the historical research design was adopted to examine Nigeria's Foreign Policy under the Democratic regime. The researcher relied heavily on secondary data. These data were sourced from the internet, academic publications, Libraries, Governments Bulletins, Textbooks and periodicals relating to Nigeria's Foreign Policy under democratic dispensation. In this study, data were analyzed qualitatively by adopting the content analytical methods which extract contents on the reviewed literature to answer the research questions stated.

Major Findings

Based on the analysis of the secondary data, the following findings were observed:

- That Nigeria's foreign Policy under the Democratic dispensation starting from Obassajo to Muhmmadu Buhari is hinged on Africa Liberation
- That Nigeria's Foreign Policy under the democratic dispensation was centered on the restoration of Nigeria battered image through shuttle diplomacy and economic diplomatic relations with powerful nations
- That Nigeria's foreign policy under democratic era was to promote friendly relations among nations and international organizations. This was focus on debt relief and handling of global issues
- That Nigeria's foreign policy was hinged on providing adequate funds for improving the welfare of Nigerians in Diaspora
- That Nigeria's foreign policy was designed to diversify the Nigerian economy through the partnership with world trade organizations and other financial institutions.

- That Nigeria's foreign policy was targeted on recovery of looted funds by Nigerians through the partnership with different nations across the globe
- That all the democratic dispensation in Nigeria was focus on achieving the national interest of Nigeria in the international arena.

CONCLUSION

Africa had continuously been the center-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy basically. But that is where it ends. There has however been consistency in veering off from the avowed principles and objectives over the decades as currently being seen in the still nebulous "Citizens Diplomacy" thrust of the Yar'Adua's administration. Foreign policy must be defined in terms of the goals a nation needs to officially seek to attain abroad, the culture and values that bring about those objectives and the instruments necessary to pursue the goals while taking into account other nation's prevailing foreign policies that may be established against our national interest. Nigeria in the present regime is not following this global tenet and it is hurting Nigeria badly among the comity of nations shown by the lack of interest in Nigeria despite our huge human and material resources; lack of development; dwindling economic fortunes as businesses are moving away from Nigeria to a more stable Ghana and Togo and other neighbouring nations that are supposed to be kowtowing to us. But they have seen that our foreign policy thrust presently is rudderless and so are taking advantage of that to rubs into our faces the fact that we are not 'giants' as we erroneously keep thinking we are.

Moreover, they have discovered that they could gain from us in our delusion of grandeur as 'Big Brother' mentality while they snub us when we need them. Thus, the research paper is of the opinion that Nigeria's foreign policy needs an injection of people with vision to propel the nation and the aspirations of its citizens forward so that we can change from the fast-changing world that does not suffer unserious people gladly. We must move with the trend and realize that there is nothing very special about us now that our neighbours are getting almost all that we used to boast with before. The discovery of oil in Ghana is a lesson. Obama, against the age-old tradition, visited Ghana and not Nigeria because they have a stable economy, a stable government and they have oil too. The only way we can regain our respect in the international scene now is to ensure that we have credible elections, focused and committed leadership and taking the pains to put square pegs in square roles in the administration of the foreign policy of Nigeria. Until we do this, we shall continue the downward spiral in our foreign policy as it is always the domestic environment that determines the foreign environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

- In view of the critical importance of national interest in the formulation of a country's foreign policy and the increasing need for nation-building as well as economic development and the welfare of the Nigerian citizens the philosophy "Africa is the Centre-piece of Nigeria's Foreign Policy" should be thinker with to facilitate more gains for Nigerians. A good government is known by how much it is able to satisfy the needs and yearnings of the citizens and not by how much it helps citizens of other countries.
- Nigeria's African policy should proceed from a domestic setting that is in all considerations (national, moral, economic) supportive of the country's greatness and well-being of the citizenry. Enhancing the quality of life of the Nigerian citizens should take the Centre stage in the country's foreign policy formulations and executions. This can be pursued effectively without abandoning Africa as the Centre-piece of her foreign policy.
- As Africa's regional power, it is necessary for Nigeria to use the ongoing war against insurgency and all forms of insecurity to increase her military capability profile in order to remain relevant in the power equation in Africa. Her military capability profile, her hegemonic potentials and status in Africa and the rest of the international community.
- Nigeria should pursue goals of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights at home to ensure its leadership role is credible abroad. It should do this through the AU, ECOWAS, and NEPAD.
- Finally, there is the need for a strong strategic plan and long-term projection of the nation's foreign policy posture with a view to fashioning out a roadmap for Nigeria's diplomacy. And without any contradiction, Nigeria's foreign policy in contemporary context must be premised solely on national interest with emphasis on national security and welfare, regional and global peace, as well as robust multilateral diplomacy that is tailored along strong strategic partnership with friendly states in the global arena.

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