THE POLITICS OF APPOINTING POLITICAL AND CARREER DIPLOMATS' IN NIGERIA: Understanding the Nexus

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KEYWORDS
Ambassadors, Diplomacy, Foreign officers, National interest

ABSTRACT
Diplomatic appointment in Nigeria is an elite phenomenon and shrouded with many secrecies. The process of selection and confirmation of ambassadors for onward posting to their receiving states is a complex process. Though, there are literature on diplomacy and international relations with respect to foreign policy, but there are limited literature on the selection and confirmation process of ambassadors' in Nigeria. This paper examines the complex process of ambassadorial appointments and their role in promoting national interest of their respective states in foreign land. The paper also examines the relationship that exist between the two categories of ambassadors and the rights and privileges they enjoyed while discharging their duties in foreign land. The author used content analysis and interview of some professional experts in the field of law making and international relations. The findings of the paper shows that diplomatic appointment in Nigeria is complex. Both political and career ambassadors are deployed by the federal government of Nigeria through the ministry of foreign affairs in foreign land for representation and promotion of national interest. Diplomatic appointment in Nigeria is exclusively preserved for the President. However, it requires legislative (Senate) confirmation and security clearance. The paper recommends that the Nigerian government need to review the application of federal character principle and quota system in the appointment of ambassadors.

Introduction

Nigeria attained independence status on 1st October, 1960, from her erstwhile colonial power, Britain. It is essential to know; only independent nations have the right to operate foreign services or missions. However, before the actual independence, British started preparing Nigeria for international relations in 1957 when some selected group of people (12 in number) were carefully selected for special training with respect to international diplomacy and foreign relations in Britain (Saliu, 2016). Therefore, in a nutshell, Nigeria foreign service was a product of British policy that was deliberately planted during the colonial period through the independence. By foreign service, the author means a defined instrument for implementing foreign policies of nation states (Saliu, 2016). Diplomats are special people or members of foreign services of various nations of the world who work to connect their host nations with their parent countries. All countries around the world operate foreign services with

diplomats well train to serve and protect the interest of their mother country. They connect and stabilize relationship between nations around the world. Diplomatic missions are extremely important in the world in projecting the power and influence of countries. They equally facilitate the realization of national objectives of most or all modern states.

Diplomats are of two categories in Nigeria's foreign relation activities; there is what is called Career diplomats' and Political diplomats'. These two set of people are appointed by President of the federal republic of Nigeria to manage the country's national embassies overseas. Both political and career diplomats required the screening of the Nigerian Senate after been selected and recommended by the President of Nigeria. Career diplomats grow through the civil service career from the foreign Affairs Ministry to become Ambassadors. Career diplomats are trained professional. While on the other hand, political diplomats are people selected from among politicians who contributed to the emergence of the President and his party to power. There are many literatures on diplomacy and Nigerian foreign policy from inception of independence to date. But there are limited literature on the relationship that exist between the Career diplomats and Political diplomats. In the military era, the political diplomats were a silent issue because, there was no need for Senate approval and hence, not much was heard of this category of diplomats. But Career-professional diplomats have been in the existence since the creation of Nigeria.

Nigeria has long recognized the need to show more appreciation for the role of diplomatic missions in the execution of her foreign policy. This according to Saliu (2016) informed the establishment of one hundred and four missions represented in embassies, high commissions, permanent missions and Consulate General etc that the country has across the world which cut across 94 countries (Embassies, 2023).

In essence, this paper intends to examine the two categories of diplomats in the realm of foreign relation in Nigeria, with a view to establishing their relationship and how they operate side by side seamlessly. Additionally, the paper will examine the role, rights, privileges and opportunities accorded to diplomats in our modern world of today.

British colonial master began the process of training Nigerians on the activities of foreign service missions around the world even before independence. In 1957, a number of people were selected from the legal and teaching professions for specific training on International relations matters (Adeniji, 1990). The first batch of these foreign service officers were recruited and returned to Nigeria for take-off in 1958 and 1959 (Saliu, 2016; Akinyemi, 1989; Adeniji, 1990). All foreign service activities before 1957 was organized under the watch, supervision and approval of British government. However, by 1957, when regional autonomy was granted to the Western and Eastern regions, showed a clear road map that Nigeria will soon be release from colonial exploitation and therefore, to be entrusted with full powers of conducting her international diplomacy free from United Kingdom interference.

In this regards, the department of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations was first created in 1957 under the office of the Prime Minister of Nigeria (Fafowora, 2008). This office serves as a gateway to all foreign service activities of Nigeria until the attainment of Independence in 1960. The Prime Minister maintained the external affairs and commonwealth relations under his watch through his Secretary until 1961 when a substantive Minister was assigned (Saliu, 2016; Gambari, 1980). The first Minister of the External Affairs was Dr. J. A. Wachukwu. The first 12 indigenous foreign officers trained by the British before independence are; D. C. Igwe, Soji Williams, Prince Adedokun Haastrup, Philip Asiodu, M. A. Sanusi, C. C. Chukwura, Leslie Harriman, E. O. Ogunsulire, John Ukaegwu, Chuks O. Ifeagwu, Olumide O. Omololu and John Garba (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023).

From 1960 to date, Nigerian government successfully expanded her coverage of the world with her embassies and consulates general across many nations around the world. Similarly, Nigeria connected herself effectively at the level of international Organizations and also led in the formations and emergence of several international organizations in Africa and third world nations across the globe.

Categories of Diplomats in Nigeria

Nigerian political landscape recognized two set of people eligible for appointment to head her foreign missions around the globe. These two set of people are classified as political diplomats' and career diplomats'. Political diplomats are selected by the President of the

country from the crop of the politicians to head missions in foreign lands after passing legislative screening and security checks. While career diplomats are civil servants who rise to the rank of ambassadors or envoys to head missions or embassies of their home country. They are trained professional who grow from the lowest rank in the civil service to the peak of their career to be appointed as ambassadors. The supervising ministry of most professional diplomats is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with few exception coming from the generalist perspective (Saliu, 2016; Gambari, 1980).

In general terms, the primary responsibilities of a diplomat involve representing and protecting the interests and citizens of their home state abroad: initiating and facilitating strategic agreements, negotiating treaties and conventions, exchanging information, fostering trade and commerce, and pursuing friendly international relations.

The distinction between career diplomats and political appointees or diplomats' is important. Although any person may be appointed by a government to conduct its relations with other states or international organizations, many states, including Nigeria, maintain an institutionalized group of career diplomats, who are selected competitively and maintain a steady professional connection to the country's foreign affairs ministry. Both career diplomats and political appointees or diplomats' serve the same functions and enjoy the same diplomatic immunities under international law, but there are some differences between the two.

The 1999 Nigerian Constitution as amended captured the role of the President in the selection of qualified people with proven integrity to represent the country in foreign nations. Section 171 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria says,

1) Power to appoint persons to hold or act in the offices to which this section applies and to remove persons so appointed from any such office shall vest in the President.

2) The office to which this section applies are, namely-

3) Ambassadors, High Commissioner or other Principal Representative of Nigeria

4) An appointment to the office of Ambassador, High Commissioner or other Principal Representative of Nigeria abroad shall not have effect unless the appointment is confirmed by the Senate.

5) in exercising his powers of appointment under this section, the President shall have regard to the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity.

6) any appointment made pursuant to paragraph (a) and (e) of subsection (2) of this section shall be at the pleasure of the President and shall cease when the President ceases to hold office.

(1) CAREER DIPLOMATS'

Career Diplomats are professional officers who usually grow in the civil service (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) through the ranks by undergoing competitive examinations and interviews and eventually if successful will reach the peak of their career and be crown as an ambassador by the President of Nigeria.

Career or professional diplomats are set of foreign service officers who are usually recruited by Federal Civil Service Commission through the traditional ways of recruiting staff of other sister ministries. The successful candidates are posted to serve in the foreign affairs ministry and other foreign missions around the world. These crop of officers are professionally trained from the scratch and grow in that line to the highest level of 15-17 to become career diplomats. While some people among them may not get appointed due to many factors which may include policy or institutional illogicalities (Saliu, 2016) of federal character principle and quota system.

Similarly, other nations around the world including Nigeria still maintain two ways of appointing diplomats, that is institutionalized group of professional diplomats that is public servants with a steady growth in the country's foreign ministry who specializes in the art of diplomacy throughout their civil service career. They are assumed to be professional and possess more expertise and prerequisite of conducting foreign relations. Foreign relations is a complex phenomenon that requires people with not only expertise but equally experience to relate

diplomatically in advancing national interest of their home country globally and specifically in countries of their posting. Former US Congress man, (Bera, 2019) says,

> *"while it is true that some political appointees contribute a wealth of professional experience, many individuals have little or no prior diplomatic experience. During a time of increasingly complex global challenges and national security threats, the United States must have our most qualified and experienced public servants representing the country around the world".*

However, in Nigeria career diplomats passes through several hurdles before reaching their peak dream of been appointed as a diplomat (Saliu, 2016). Career progression for foreign services personnel was never easy. Apart from institutional contradictions and environmental factors other notable factors affecting career progression of professional diplomats are Quota system and the Federal Character Principle (FCP) of Nigeria Federal Civil Service. Many staff of the foreign service were affected on the basis of quota and federal character principles. An officer on grade level 17 who is most qualified eligible for appointment as a diplomat may not get appointed, but an officer on grade level 15 may be appointed instead. This often happen when quota system and FCP is applied. This habitual skipping of the most qualified because of the quota and FCP promotes frustration and lost of morale among the foreign service officers (Osuntokun, 2005; Saliu, 2016).

(2) POLITICAL DIPLOMATS'

Political diplomats as the name implies, means diplomats who are appointed by Mr. President amongst his political associates who apparently contributed to his electoral victory. Political diplomats are not necessarily experience diplomats and therefore people are chosen on the basis of their relationship with parties in power and their political contributions. Political patronage is the guiding principle in the selection of political diplomats. In Nigeria, it is a tradition since the inception of the county at independence, political diplomats are appointed by the President principally on the basis of partisan support, electoral influence, campaign support and funding of party in power. These people are sometime referring to as non-career diplomats because they never served in any foreign service as officers but their political sagacity and social influence in the political landscape of Nigeria earn them this coveted position of diplomatic office.

Ambassadorships are often used as a form of political patronage to reward important supporters of the President, who contributed immensely to his electoral success through donations of money and political support (Saliu, 2016). Sometime, politicians who loses elections are compensated by political appointment of ambassadorship. The President of Nigeria is constitutionally empowered to select people whom he deems qualified and of high integrity and send their names or list to the National Assembly for screening and confirmation.

The senate will subject these people to reasonable screening to unravel their capabilities and competences to represent the country abroad. Similarly, security agencies are expected to investigate the history and social background of candidates to ascertain their patriotism and integrity in furthering the interest of Nigeria without an iota of compromise. The essential of security clearance cannot be overemphasize because diplomats are expected to be hundred percent loyal to their home state and friendly to his country of posting.

Both political and career diplomats serve same function of protecting and promoting the national interest of their home country without necessarily hurting their host country. Therefore, diplomats are national representatives who work tirelessly in facilitating national interest of their parent country through the instrumentality of foreign policy.

At the beginning of Nigeria's foreign service relations, career diplomats were predominantly appointed by the Balewa administration. This trend also followed through some military regimes of Gowon, Murtala and Obasanjo era. Nigerian government of previous years considered professional diplomats more often than political diplomats. However, the Shagari administration reverse the trend by rewarding and compensating politicians with political appointments including ambassadorial appointment (Saliu, 2016; Adeniji, 1990; Akinyemi, 1989). This inclination of given priority to political diplomats continues till date which affected the morale and prospect of professional career diplomats as many who are ably qualified are not appointed because of political exigencies

to satisfy cronies and associates (Saliu, 2016; Adeniji, 1990; Akinyemi, 1989). The civilian government of President Olusegun Obasanjo which lasted between 1999 to 2007 was noted to have appointed almost hundred percent non-career diplomats (Azeez & Oshewolo, 2021). This policy of given preference to unprofessional instead of career diplomats had actually lowered the morale of foreign service personnel who dreamt to reach their peak and hopefully retire as ambassadors is been shattered every day (Saliu, 2016; Fawole, 2003; Fafowora, 2009)

Presentation and Receipt of Letter of Credence

Nominated diplomats irrespective of their categories (professional or political) will be presented with a formal letter called 'letter of credence' which signifies his or her appointment as a diplomat and also indicating his or her country of deployment by the President of Nigeria or his/her representative.

Similarly, in Nigerian tradition and customs, letter of credence is usually presented to the prospective ambassadors by the President of Nigeria in a ceremony marking their initiation into the foreign service responsibilities.

However, it is essential to know, all people nominated and confirmed by Senate to serve as diplomats in foreign missions of Nigeria must pass screening and eligibility status in the country of their designate. Meaning, the resume of the prospective diplomat will be sent to his/her country of posting for investigation and approval. The home country where the diplomats is about to be posted has the right to give approval for his coming or otherwise. After receiving positive signal, the potential diplomats would be given his/her letter of credence formally by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In this regards, on the presentation of this letter to all appointed diplomats, they are expected to proceed to the home country of their posting and make a formal presentation of these letters to their President(s). The President or Prime Minister of the receiving nation or any of their representative is equally expected to organize a formal ceremony by welcoming the newly posted diplomat and received their letter of credence. Upon receipt of this letter by the President/Prime Minister or any of their representative, the diplomat is ready for resumption of work (Fawole, 2003; Fafowora, 2008, Osuntokun, 2005, Landsberg, 2008).

The two ceremonies (Presentation and Receipt of Letter of Credence) as explained above are significant events in the history of diplomatic relations as the activity confer recognition and legitimacy on the newly appointed ambassadors (Saliu, 2016, Fawole, 2003; Fafowora, 2008, Osuntokun, 2005, Landsberg, 2008). The aforementioned scholars buttressed the point that presentation of letter of credence and the receipt of the letter by the receiving state is a very crucial activity in the history of diplomatic appointment not only with Nigeria but it affects all nations around the world based on 1961 Vienna Conventions. In essence, before any appointed ambassador become substantive and functional, he must pass through these two ceremonial stages.

Roles and Duties of Diplomats

Diplomacy can be an exciting and fulfilling career path for those who want to influence foreign affairs of their nations through their work. These individuals represent their host country abroad. A diplomat is a foreign policy leader who facilitate the interest of his/her country's at the global stage. They work hard to further promote and protect the national interest of their home countries without jeopardizing the interest of their host country. Therefore, diplomats are expected to possess some unique features that would allowed them navigate the difficult path of satisfying both his home state and host country. They may do this by evolving and upholding peaceful relations with the host country's leadership or by enabling an exchange of information to help their home country and their host country to better understand each other (Ziegler, 2023).

Consequently, being a diplomat is a precious job in international relations because it allows an individual to have a great impact on foreign services. Diplomats are generally involved in solving international issues through collective solutions. Diplomats strike a balance between their own home government's interest and those of the other nations by negotiating contracts that are seen advantageous to the two states.

Generally speaking, recently the world has become more globalized as a result of information technology, therefore, diplomats are assigned more crucial roles in determining how international relations will explore in the near future (Ziegler. 2023).

Moreover, diplomacy is a fulfilling career and specifically exciting profession where they engaged in safeguarding their people's interest and diplomatically involved in reconciling conflicts at the international level. They are also pioneers in formulating and implementing foreign policy of their nations. Building cultural relationship among nations of the world is also one major duties of diplomats around the world (Azeez & Oshewola, 2021).

Ziegler (2023) says, diplomats are entrusted to do the following; protect the interest of their home state, protect the citizens of their home state in the country they are serving, promote and build cordial relationship between the two countries, advance and ensure economic, trade and political interest of their home country is not affected, granting visas to nationals of their host countries, promote peace and security regionally and internationally, registering birth of their nationals in the host countries they are serving and handling of treaties and conventions

Diplomatic functions vary from state to state, however, one fundamental objective of diplomats is to ensure promotion of cordial relationship among nations of the world without jeopardizing the national interest of their state. Diplomats in essence are most often dissemblers in their actions. They labor hard to satisfy two conflicting interest under a difficult situation (Gana, 2023).

To sum it up, the functions of diplomats can be discussed under the following identified headings (Ziegler. 2023);

a) **Consular Services:** the consular office of missions deals with day-to-day travel problems like lost of passports and provides essential services to citizens in need. They also issue Visas to national of their serving countries. Diplomats in their host nations offers urgent services to nationals going abroad. Most of the citizen needs are attended to by the consular office.

b) **Trade Services:** The trade office promotes the interests of the country's corporations and firms by introducing them to helpful networks, informing them of business opportunities, providing guidance for visits, and necessary information they can use. Trade office is virtually responsible for advancing the economic interest of their home state at the international level by building, managing and sustaining cordial economic relationship with other countries.

c) **Political Services:** A political office usually reports on local developments and advocates for support for the country's interests. They are promoters of national interest of the parent country in the foreign land. Their role is most crucial in sustaining relationship among nations of the world. Political office in diplomatic relations is responsible for communication between nations. They support the government by providing necessary guidance and efficient analysis on strategies of achieving national objectives. They are responsible for initiating policies and programs for achieving constructive current affairs and other global issues that will bring positive outcome to their home state. They respond to investigations made in person and others including written communication and international connections. Another crucial diplomatic duty of political office is to maintain a relationship between their host country and their home country. This might involve communicating with government officials from the host country or networking with citizens of the host country. They may then communicate what they learn about the political and social situations back to their home country's government.

d) **Management office:** This type of office is the leadership, and responsible for embassy operations, including budgeting and security. The daily administration of the embassy and routine activities are handle by the management office. This office further control departments and assigned duties to all departments including their spending limits

e) **Public diplomacy office:** This office works with academics, think tanks, government official and several others who are assume to have knowledge of diplomacy and

international relations in promoting national interest and foreign policy objective of their home state. This office most of the time are occupied by expertise and professional foreign officers for the purpose of initiating policies that will stand the test of time and achieved national objective. They are most often hidden (Ziegler, 2023).

Rights and Privileges Accorded to Diplomats

Diplomats as noted earlier in the previous sections of this paper as people who reside in foreign land and act as representatives of their sending nations. They act as a link between the country that dispatched them and by whom they are accredited.

Diplomatic relations among nations in the world has been a tradition followed by states since ancient time and there several conventions and treatise covering on diplomatic relationship (Sharma, 2019). The international law covering on diplomatic relations was reviewed after the emergence of United Nations Organizations (UN) in 1945. It was in 1961, the Vienna Convention was approved by the UN General Assembly and it became one of the instrument that guide most of the activities of diplomats around the world (Saliu, 2016; Sharma, 2019). Under the 1961 Vienna Convention, diplomats are classified into; Ambassadors, envoys, ministers and charges d' Affairs

In addition, ambassadors and all diplomats enjoys certain rights and privileges as they work in the foreign land. The international law as captured in the Vienna Convention of 1961 confers diplomatic immunity on diplomats from exercise of jurisdiction by the receiving states (Sharma, 2019). The 1961 Vienna Convention lays down the following as rights and privileges to be enjoy by all diplomats around the world;

1. **Inviolability of Diplomatic Agent**: The principle of inviolability is conferred on all diplomats as recognized by international law. Article *29 of the Vienna Convention* states that *"the person of a diplomat agent shall be inviolable"* meaning, all diplomats are not in anyway liable to any form of arrest or detention and the home state he is serving as ambassador shall treat him with all due respect and take all reasonable measures to ensure he is prevented from attack on his personal freedom and dignity (Sharma, 2019).

2. **Inviolability of the Staff of the Mission:** Staff of the mission in the receiving country are also covered from local laws of the country. This law is captured under article *37 of the Vienna Convention.* The administrative and technical staff also enjoys immunity from criminal jurisdiction, inviolability of residence, exemption from taxes and duties, and immunity from civil and administrative jurisdiction during performance of their duties.

3. **Family members of a Diplomatic agent**: family members are also covered based on the Vienna Convention of the 1961. Family members of diplomats who are not nationals of the receiving state and not permanent resident are equally covered with immunity. All household members of diplomats are by this law to enjoy all rights and privileges conferred on the head of the family, who is the ambassador.

4. **All premises of diplomatic mission are also covered:** Under the inviolability law of the Vienna Convention, The receiving state is expected to provide a befitting environment. The office housing diplomat any where in the world is covered from any form of harassment and intimidation from police or any agent of the receiving state. However, this law can stop to exist where the diplomatic office violate the rule of using the office by operating anything that contradict it original intended purpose (Sharma, 2019). Meaning, the inviolability of the office premises is not absolute. Article 41 of the Convention says, *"premises of the mission should not be used in any manner as incompatible with functions of mission or by rules of general international Law".*

5. **Inviolability for serving as a Witness in a Court of Law:** All diplomatic agents are covered with immunity from appearing in a court of law as a witness for either civil, criminal or administrative case. The receiving state cannot forced diplomatic agent or their family member from appearing in a court of law. Article *31(2)* of the Vienna Convention states that *diplomat agents is not obliged to give evidence as a witness* in a Court of law.

6. **Diplomats are also immune from the inspection of their personal and diplomatic baggage:** Personal baggage of diplomats are exempted from inspection by the receiving state and their agents at any point of either entry or exit. Article 27 of the Vienna Convention states that *diplomatic bag should not be opened or detained.*

7. **Immunity from Taxes and all Custom Duties:** Diplomats and their family members are again immune from all form of taxes and duties charge by the home state they are serving. *Diplomatic agents shall be exempted from all dues and taxes, personal or real, national municipal or regional.* This was stated under article ***34*** of the Vienna Convention.

8. **Diplomats are free to communicate any information for official purposes:** communication is one essential tool of polishing and grinding the work of diplomats. They are free to communicate any official information in the country they are serving. However, they are not allowed to make unnecessary comment on political matters. Free flow of information helps in strengthening diplomatic relations among nations and that is why Vienna Convention under article 27 recognized it importance and thereby lay it as follows; *the freedom of communication are also involves the use of code, messages and couriers.*

9. **Diplomats are also covered to worship any religion they profess:** Article 3(1) of the Vienna Convention recognized the freedom of diplomats to practice any religion of their choice without any hinderance. The International Law under the Vienna Convention recognized freedom of religion for all diplomats and there members of the family in their office premises or their residence. However, they are not allowed to invite nationals of the receiving state to practice their religion, nor are they allowed to preach that religion in the country.

10. Diplomats are also covered under the International Laws under the Vienna Convention of the 1961 to move freely in the country of the receiving state.

However, it is good to note that, upon all these rights and privileges accorded to diplomats and their agents, it cannot be absolute all the time. Where diplomats and their family members fail to conform to international laws, they are likely going to lose their immunity and laws will catch with them. Therefore, diplomats are expected to be people with high integrity and sense of belonging. Diplomats must handle stressful and difficult situations calmly and adapt quickly to changing situations. They work with people from other cultures with different values, political beliefs, and religions. So, diplomats must have good judgment and high integrity, and they need strong analytical skills.

By and large, diplomats are expected to be skillful and tactful in their approach to duties. In summary as captured by Sharma (2019), skills expected of diplomat are; An interest in foreign affairs, other countries, and cultures, communication skills, constructive and innovative thinking, proactive approach to work, resourceful, the ability to build relationships, decision-making skill, attention to details, commercial and financial awareness, the ability to work under pressure, taking on the responsibility, flexibility and desire to learn and improve

Nexus between Political and Career Diplomats

At this moment is good to note that both political and career diplomat perform the same role of representation on behalf of their country in the receiving state. They act to promote and safeguard the national interest of their country. The two categories of the diplomats usually pass through the rigorous screening of the Senate and upon confirmation they are expected to receive letter of credence from the head of state in a mini ceremony organized by the office of the president. They are also expected to deliver same letter to the President of the receiving or accrediting state, who is also expected to received them in a mini ceremony to be organized by his or her office.

Similarly, all ambassadors appointed and confirmed by the Senate must pass through the investigation of the security agencies. The security agencies are expected to investigate all nominated ambassadors by finding out their social background and also ascertain their national patriotism. Moreover, ambassadors are people with special status who stand for the President of their country's in the receiving state. Therefore, their national patriotism

cannot be in question. They are supposed to be people with high level of integrity with excellent judgement both local and international issues.

In addition, both political and career diplomat are expected to serve not more than 3-4 years in the country of their posting (Saliu, 2016). The president has the right to recalled ambassador(s) anytime as enshrine in the constitution. In other word, ambassadors whether political or career has no defined term of office. Their appointment ends when the President of the country decide to recalled them.

Also, political and diplomatic ambassadors enjoys all the privileges outlined in this paper as enshrined in the 1961 Vienna Convention. The Vienna Convention did not make difference between career or political diplomats. They are treated equal by the receiving country in the discharge of their ambassadorial duties.

Similarly, political and career diplomats are affected by FCP and quota system in Nigeria. Political appointees are affected during their selection process while career diplomats are affected during their career progression in the Civil Service.

However, it equally worthy of note, that political diplomats are most of the time beginners in the business of international diplomacy. They are appointed by the government simply because of political inclination. Political patronage is the reason for their appointments. Usually political ambassadors are recruited from the rank of politicians who the President deem politically indebted to. But, career diplomats are trained people who grow steadily to reach the peak of their career through the routine civil service bureaucracy. Career diplomats are trained people with essential expertise for negotiation and prerequisite knowledge of diplomatic relationship. They posses the required experience that will propelled conducive relationship between and among nations. They needed little or no training at the point of resuming duty after appointment by the President. But political appointees are most of the time naive of international proceedings and international diplomacy in particular. They are expected to undergo some training to prepare them for the task ahead.

Performance of political diplomats and career diplomat may vary. According to people interviewed, and by objective measures, political nominees are often less qualified than professional foreign service personnel, which raises controversies surrounding competence and fairness of political appointees. Diplomats should be accorded to men and women having clearly verified competence and vibrant capacity to perform ambassadorial duties. Previous literature revealed that, the merit-based system in diplomatic appointments improves performances of the bureaucracy by cultivating valuable expertise.

Furthermore, a merit-based system ensures that diplomats are hired, promoted, and fired based on the quality of their work as civil servant rather than their involvement in politics. During a decades-long service career at the MFA, one gains valuable expertise by grasping the administrative rules and regulations, learning the details of international relations, unraveling the intricacies and complexities of the interagency process, and building relationships with a wide range of international actors. In contrast, political appointees have been derided as outsiders and total strangers in the field to which they are assigned (Diplomacy).

Research gathered though personal contacts and interview of some experts revealed that, career bureaucrats are on average more effective in discharge of their duties as diplomats. Career foreign service officers and ambassadors tend to have better equipped with higher educational qualifications and experience, including better language skills, more international expertise, and better leadership when compared with political appointees. Quoted in Azeez and Oshewolo (2021)

> *Expressing his displeasure about the current situation in Nigeria's diplomatic appointment, retired Ambassador Oladapo Fafowora (one of Nigeria's finest career diplomats during his time in active service and a former president of the Association of Retired Career Ambassadors of Nigeria) noted that an arrangement in which the number of non-career diplomats exceeds that of the professionals would undermine professionalism, weaken the Foreign Service, and hurt Nigeria's image abroad. He therefore noted that the ratio of 60 non-career ambassadors to 40 career ambassadors under the current government of President*

Muhammadu Buhari was not justifiable.

This opinion hereby affirmed the need for government to consider appointing career diplomats more in number than political diplomats. Career diplomats poses the prerequisite experiences and the skills needed to pursue national interest of their state to a logical conclusion. Foreign policy formulation and implementation is a complex process as argued by Gambari (2008), therefore, experience is a major ingredients to actualizing the objectives of states at the international level.

Similarly, for bilateral engagement where complex issues require specialist knowledge and an understanding of diplomatic distinctions, most people believed, career diplomats are more preferable compared to political appointees. They also agreed that professionals had the edge in multilateral diplomacy. Additionally, those in favor of career diplomats also said appointing professionals to top offices was important for morale and career progression in foreign services (Saliu, 2016; Azeez & Oshewolo, 2021). The argument of Saliu (2016) on the appointment of career diplomats is very clear that government need to consider professionals because of their career progression. He contended that, civil service is live long career built by staff. In the process they grow through many stages and levels and ultimately to attained the status of ambassadorial position. Where they are not considered, it create frustration and depression.

In contrast, the tradition of appointing political ambassadors to lead missions and organizations around the world is a useful tool in the hands of the executive in controlling their government and all appointees. This need arises because the same mechanisms that protect career diplomats from political pressure makes them less responsive to democratically elected officials. Therefore, for the executive arm to control and enforce laws with absolute loyalty is to appoint politicians who are loyal to them and will be willing to promote their interest at all cost. Validating this opinion, Osuntukun (2005) argued that government at all levels need to control people who work under them. Hence, the mechanism controlling and ensuring complete subordination is to appoint political ambassadors to head mission abroad. He further says, political ambassadors are more loyal and answerable to the chief executives than career appointee who sees himself or herself as a civil servant covered by the bureaucratic rules and regulations.

Party-political appointees are more valuable to the Presidents in many respects. Appointees often have personal relationships with the President that can help that official cut through difficult bureaucratic red tape. Indeed, the bureaucracy is often described as slow to respond, resistant to innovation, inflexible in the face of new problems, and risk-averse. Further argued by Osuntukun (2005) "Political appointees may bring new ideas, management practices, or priorities from their experience to bear on the foreign policy objectives of the country." In essence, political appointees help the Presidents ensure that their agenda (foreign policy objective and national interest) will be designed and executed according to their desires and needs. Saliu (2016), also buttressed his point by supporting the appointment of political ambassadors, he says, they may also help bring new ideas and innovation into government programs and policies. Political diplomats may also have a better sense for national politics of their country than bureaucrats. The knowledge deposit of their national politics is a good ingredients and substance that lubricate international politics.

Buttressing the point in favor of appointees, one Ambassador, who is a career diplomat but has served as an appointee, warned that professional diplomats had a tendency to avoid risk in difficult situation, avoiding difficult decisions that might damage their career prospects. Because an appointee's post is unlimited, they are more willing to engage in bold diplomacy. Thus, according to the ambassador, political appointees are useful for special projects or during times of rapid political change, he said

In sum, both political and career diplomat are relevant and required in building and promoting the national interest of their country. Historically speaking, nation-states have some consideration in posting their diplomats to certain particular countries around the world reflecting purely on the traditional history and social relations between the two countries. Some missions are better represented by professional cum career diplomats than political diplomats. From the interview conducted, a serving career ambassador of Nigeria says, Nigeria since inception had never deployed non career diplomat in the Republic of France. he contended that, France has been a major rival of

Nigeria in the power struggle in Africa. France refused to allow her African colonies to survive freely even after many years of independence. Nigeria as a giant of Africa continue to struggle for the liberation of African countries from colonial exploitation and apartheid regimes, especially in Southern Africa. however, France as a major power in global politics continue to maintained her presence in most African countries for purely economic and political exploitation. Therefore, Nigeria is very much aware of this historical antecedents of France and perhaps the reason why she constantly maintained only a career diplomats deployed to France all these years (Gana, 2023).

Most people interviewed and written documents surveyed shows that there is no one-size-fits-all system. An ideal ambassador, professional or political, has leadership; a blend of a modern executive, and someone skilled in statecraft. The type of ambassador chosen for a mission also depends largely on the nature of diplomatic relations between the two states. Equally important to note, is the team of diplomats supporting an ambassador in all missions and offices. Ambassadors are supported by team of professionals career staff of the embassy at all time. A good political appointee that is open to suggestion, supported by a good team can perform effectively.

Conclusion

Diplomacy and international relations is a serious business for all nations around the world. All independent sovereign nations operate on same scale at international level. It is believed that nations cannot live in isolation (pariah). Therefore, the need for international collaboration and diplomatic relations.

Diplomats are national representatives who promote and protect the national interest of their home land in a receiving state. It is expected that diplomats are people with high sense of belonging and analytical reasoning. There are two set of diplomats; career and political appointees who function primarily to promote, guard and defend national interest of their countries of origin in a foreign land without necessarily jeopardizing the national interest of their receiving state.

The 1961 Vienna Convention spelt out the rights and privileges of all diplomats irrespective of their categories. That instrument covered and extended immunity to all diplomats and their family members while serving in foreign land.

Political and career diplomats are both needed in the discharge of foreign relations of nations. It is argued that in some states/missions, career diplomats are must needed than political because of historical and political exigencies.

In conclusion, diplomacy in Nigeria is a field shrouded with much security and not open in public domain. Much of their activities is not available in public, therefore little is known about their resources and intervention for national development. One principal problem noted in this research is the issues surround the appointment of diplomats. They are mostly hindered as a result of FCP and quota system. A considerable number of qualified and refined people are affected with these policies in favor of less qualified and poorly equipped people. Federal government of Nigeria need to jettisoned the FCP and quota system in favor of quality than other trivial issues.

In this regards, the responses of most of the interviewees in this study demonstrated how important government should consider increasing the percentage of career diplomat in appointing ambassadors to foreign missions. Career professional diplomats are seen to be fully trained and possess reasonable experience in projecting the national interest of their countries. The life long building of career diplomats is very essential ingredients in advancing national interest. The international political system is a complex discipline that require people of outstanding understanding of certain historical and economic issues that will favor their nations. Therefore, Nigeria is hereby encouraging to consider career diplomats in her selection and appointment of ambassadors in the near future for the overall benefits of the country and her citizenry.

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