AN APPRAISAL OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY THRUST FROM 1960-2023

SUNNY MENE PIATE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, AKWA IBOM STATE UNIVERSITY, OBIO AKPA CAMPUS, ORUK ANAM L.G. AREA, sunnypiate@aksu.edu.ng, Sunnymenepiate@gmail.com

EMMANUEL SUNDAY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CALABAR, NIGERIA, emmanuelapochi254@gmail.com

BARILEDUM KIA
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY, RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY
beriledum.jia@ust.edu.ng

KEYWORDS
African Centred piece, citizenship Diplomacy, Economic diplomacy, Foreign policy thrust, National Development, Non alignment, Regional Integration

ABSTRACT
The study appraised thematically (administration by administration) Nigeria's foreign policy thrust since 1960 till 2023. The justification for adopting this approach is to review how each Nigerian government undertook the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy and how it has translated to economic security and prosperity of the Nigerian State-cum-citizenry whose interest foreign policy is expected to serve. The central proposition of the study is that for Nigeria's foreign policy to be perceived as legitimate, its implementation must be seen by Nigerians to advance the domestic national development. The study adopted three theoretical frameworks, the decision-making model, the power approach and the linkages theory in the analysis of the discourse. The utility of the Decision-making model is that it seeks to uncover the underlying motivations and values that push decision makers towards preference a certain course of action. The utility of the power approach to the discourse is that states in international relations are always possessed by the national interest which nations attain only by improving upon the element of their national power relative to other states. The linkage theory emphasizes the interconnection between the domestic economy of any country and its foreign policy. Findings from the study revealed that Nigeria allowed the system goals to take precedence over actor's goals that would have reverberate in greater economic opportunity and prosperity for the people. That this confusion over what constitutes Nigeria's national interest and the procedure for its realization vividly explains why Nigeria's foreign policy since independence until date has witnessed enormous cost without any corresponding dividends. The study recommended,

among other things, that Nigeria's foreign policy thrust should be more inward focused, aimed at adding value to Nigeria's development.

Introduction

The term Foreign Policy is nebulous in the sense that scholars of international relations have not been able to formulate a universally acceptable definition of the concept given the changing nature of power politics in the international system. But the consensus among scholars is that foreign policy is that conscious behaviour of a nation state towards the external environment (Piate, 2020). Foreign policy is that instrumentality through which state seek to influence at the international arena in order to attain those objectives that are in consonance with their perceived national interest. Arising from this, Nigeria's foreign policy can be conceived as those explicit objectives which Nigeria seek to pursue and achieved in her external relations.

Foreign policy thrust refers to the primary or overarching goals and objectives that a nation aims to achieve in its interactions with other countries. It's essentially the strategic direction a country takes in its international relations. It is a reflection of its unique circumstances, historical experiences and political culture. It guides its interactions with the international community and shapes its global standing. Key components of Foreign Policy thrust includes national interest which is the core goals that a nation seeks to protect or advance (they can include economic prosperity, national security, ideological promotion or regional influence), priorities (the specific areas of focus within the broader national interest for example, a nation might prioritize economic ties with certain countries or security co-operation with regional allies), strategies (the methods and tactics used to achieve these goals – this could involve diplomacy, economic engagement, military power or international organisation) and values (that is the underlying principles and beliefs that shape a nation's foreign policy – such as human rights, democracy or environmental protection). Nigeria's Foreign Policy Thrust has evolved significantly since its independence in 1960. It has been shaped by various domestic and international factors, including economic considerations, political ideologies and regional dynamics.

Nigeria's foreign policy is anchored on certain ideals as enshrined in Section 19 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), popularly known as foreign policy objectives which guide the formulation and implementation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy and which successive Nigerian governments have remained faithfully to these articulated objectives of foreign policy. While some were assertive, critical and vibrant, others were cautious, conservative, timid and subservient (Gambo, 2021). This must have been the reason Asobie (2012) argued that the first half of a century of Nigeria's diplomatic history may be divided into five distinct periods. The first period, 1960-1974, may be characterised as the age of innocence. The second, 1975-1984, was the era of awakening. The third, 1985-1992, was the epoch of realism. The fourth, 1993-1998, was the Dark Age and the fifth 1999-2010 maybe described as the Renaissance.

Nigeria's external relations since 1960 till 2023, has not been generally remarkable in terms of its productivity and overall impact on people's wellbeing especially when assessed in the context of the economic dividends it has generated by way of attracting foreign investment, wealth creation and poverty reduction or political dividend in Africa where greater investment has been made. Foreign policy of any nation must be based on the premise of national interest. This is because, it is the yardstick that one could use in assessing the success or failure of any foreign policy. An exploration of Nigeria's Foreign Policy in the past decades reveals that Nigeria has consisting been pursuing her domestic development goals independently of its foreign policy. The conduct of the nation's foreign policy has not been translated into a source of national development. Consequently, the nation suffered serious development challenges. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the years since independence; most governments often adopt policies in their foreign policy that appeared inconsistent and contradictory to the country's domestic development. From Belewa to Buhari, Nigeria's Foreign Policy has never been directly related to the needs of the masses of its people. Rather, this policy has been formulated, articulated and implemented in highly elitist

circles, reflecting the needs and aspiration of national elite. Hence, the history of Nigeria's foreign policy has been related to some extent, a quest for national consensus behind the major goals and objectives of its external relations (Gambari, 2008; Mustpha, 2008 and Piate, 2022).

A perusal of Nigeria's Foreign Policy since 1960 till 2023, shows an inversion of tertiary objectives over primary objectives that would have resulted in greater economic opportunity and prosperity for the people and the state. This has accounted for the huge deficits in the overall Nigeria's foreign policy over the years. Since independence, whether under civilian or military dispensation, the leader's disposition significantly affected the outcome of foreign policy decision. Pronounced policies were zealously executed with hardly any review or input from professionals in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and less inclined leaders have presided over more inert foreign policy formulations. It is within this context that the study seek to appraise thematically (Administration by Administration) Nigeria's foreign policy thrust since 1960 till 2023. The justification for adopting this approach is to review how each Nigerian government undertook the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy and how it has translated to economic security and prosperity of the Nigerian State in general and average citizenry in particular, whose interest foreign policy is expected to serve. The central proposition of this study is that for Nigeria's Foreign Policy to be perceived as legitimate and supported at home, its implementation of the policy must be seen by Nigerians to advance the domestic national development agenda (Piate, 2013). In view of these, the study seek to answer this question, to what extent has Nigeria's foreign policy thrust since 1960 till 2023 influenced its domestic development goals.

Theoretical Explication of the Discourse

The study adopted three theoretical frameworks, Decision making model, Political realism otherwise known as the power approach and Linkage theory in the analysis of the subject matter. Decision making models in foreign policy analysis are frameworks used to understand how states make choices regarding their international interactions. The basic postulate of this theory is that foreign policies are not made by states but by official decision-makers who act on behalf of the state. State actions is the action taken by those acting in the name of the state. Therefore, the key to the explanation of why the state behaves the way it does lies in the way its decision making as actor define the situation. A common assumption is that decision-makers are rational actors who strive to maximise their nation's interest or goals. This implies that they have clear objectives, consider all available information and weigh the costs and benefits of different options before making a decision. Ogwu (2005) posits that every foreign policy decision maker operates within an environment defined by three critical variables which include psychological, the domestic and the external variables. The psychological component of the environment deals with the idiosyncrasies of a leader, that is, what are the likes and dislikes of a leader? Is the leader a pacifist or a belligerent? The seek to uncover the underlying motivations and values that push decision makers towards preference a certain course of action to others.

The power approach is the school of thought that explains international relations in terms of power politics. Realism as the traditional orthodoxy in the understanding of international relations from the point of view of the national interest has an intellectual pedigree in classical scholars like Hans Morgenthau, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Thucyclides. They see power as the prime motivation of political life in international relations. It derives its relevant from two basic assumptions: human weakness and the anarchical nature of the international system. Given the structure of the international system which is devoid of any effective enforcement authorities, every state must always be in the business of accumulating power. Its arsenal must be continually updated as that is the only assurance for its existence to achieve its national interests. For this theory, power can be possessed for actual deployment or deterrent purposes in defence of national interest. The utility of the theory to the study is that states in international relations are always possessed by the national interest which nations possessed by the national interest which nations attain only by improving upon the elements of their national power relative to other states.

The linkage theory posits that state can influenced the behaviour of other states by connecting unrelated issues in negotiations. This theory, popularised during the cold war, suggest that states can use leverage in one area to gain concessions in another. The theory assumes that

states are strategic actors that can use their bargaining power to achieve their foreign policy goals by tying together different issues. That is propositions that link the stability, functioning, institution and goals of national political systems to variables in the external environments is system actually developed. The utility of the theory to the study is that it emphasizes the interconnection between the domestic economy of any country and its foreign policy.

The Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Administration (1960-1966)

At independence in 1960, there was the need to accelerate the economic development of the country but the choice of strategy for development became the major challenge. This informed why the leaders settled for dependent import-substitution strategy as a means of attaining industrialization. The thinking was that Nigeria's foreign policy could be use as a means of attracting net inflow of external financial resources and technical assistance from a variety of international actors (Asobie, 2002). Nigeria's foreign policy during this period was geared toward attracting foreign investment. This period coincided with the cold war era. So the first major challenge was the needs to mobilize external resources in a world that was split into two ideological camps. Balewa recognised that reliance on the great powers involved in ideological rivalry entailed some political risk for a weak and undeveloped state like Nigeria. This informed why Nigeria officially adopted non-alignment as a cardinal principle of her Foreign Policy.

The Balewa administration adopted non-alignment as its foreign policy thrust primarily due to the following reasons: Independence and sovereignty. Nigeria, having recently gained independence from Britain, sought to assert its sovereign and avoid being drawn into the cold war rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The policy thrust allowed Nigeria to maintain its freedom of action and pursue its own national interests without being beholden to either superpower. On National Interest, the Balewa's administration believed that a non-aligned foreign policy would best served Nigeria's national interests. By avoiding alignment with either superpower, Nigeria could maintain diplomatic relations with a wider range of countries, access foreign aid from various sources and promote its economic development. On African Unity, Nigeria, as a leading African nation, sought to promote African Unity and decolonization. Non-alignment was seen as a way to strengthen Africa's voice on the international stage and to support the liberation struggles of other African Countries. Finally, on Domestic concerns, the Balewa's administration was also focused on domestic issues, such as economic development and nation building. By avoiding involvement in foreign conflicts and maintaining a non-aligned stance, the government could concentrate its resources on domestic priorities. While Nigeria's Foreign Policy during the Balewa era was generally non-aligned, it was not always strictly neutral. The administration did maintain closer ties with western countries, particularly Britain, due to historical and economic factors. However, Nigeria also sought to developed relationships with countries in the East and South, demonstrating its commitment to non-alignment. In conclusion, the policy of non-alignment was a response to the geopolitical realities of the cold war, providing a means for newly independent nations to protect their sovereignty, pursue economic development, and contribute to global peace.

`While non-alignment allowed Nigeria to diversify its economic relationships, it is also meant that the country did not fully benefit from the economic advantages offered by either the western or Eastern blocs. The non-aligned policy sometimes led to a lack of strategic direction in Nigeria's foreign policy, as the country struggled to balance its interests with the demands of international diplomacy. Finally, Nigeria's non-aligned stance make it vulnerable to external pressures from both super powers particularly during times of crisis or conflict.

Balewa maiden address to the 15th session of the United Nations General Assembly, made pronouncement of Nigeria's Foreign Policy to include the maintenance of friendly relations with all nations and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of and peaceful co-existence with all countries; development of cultural cooperation as a means of strengthening political ties with all African countries and commitment of African Peace, development, co-operation, decolonization and fight against racism and apartheid. Hence, African as a centre piece of Nigeria's Foreign Policy was evolved.

At the dawn of political independence in 1960, Nigeria had tried to show the world that she was the leader Africa needed. This is why the country took upon itself to champion a lot of

issues bordering on Africa's progress and development. This claim of manifest destiny to lead Africa was made against the background of domestic, continental and global challenges, which Nigeria was to handle, based on the country's high potentials on human and material resource. Being the most populous Black Country in the world may have compelled her to shoulder, wittingly or unwittingly, the leadership of the black world. This led to Nigeria's Feeling that she had a responsibility far beyond her boarders. Some might say beyond her means. (Omelle,2004; Osuntokun, 2005). In the same manner president Obasanjo during an interactive session in 2001 at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs opined that even before independence, Nigeria has been pre-determined to play a leading role in Africa on the basis of its manifest national endowments. Such national endowments included its geographical size, population, its human and natural resources (compared to other black African States). These efforts, according to him, were demonstrated in Nigeria's policies on the Congo Crisis, the formation of OAU, the atomic test ban in the Sahara, the anti-apartheid struggle and international peace keeping under the United Nations (Obasanjo, 2001).

The strong Afrocentric bent in Nigeria's external relations was derived from and is fed by the prestige of continental leadership. One obvious source of the prestige illusion derives from Nigeria's role in offering and mobilizing support for the eradication of colonialism and apartheid from Africa, expansion in Nigeria's diplomatic space, global recognization as a leading nation in peace keeping operations, commensurate influence in international organisation such as ECOWAS and AU. Whether Nigeria's support was actually decisive in shaping the eventual outcome and/or the extent to which Nigeria's support was really valued or appreciated by the recipients is yet to be fully established in literature. Put in another way, the impact of the Afrocentric policy has been the subject of contention. While some see nothing wrong in such commitment, others see it as having negative impact on Nigeria's national interest. For those scholars, who see such commitments as having a negative impact on Nigeria's national interest, argued that African alone should no longer be the one and only reason for the existence of a foreign policy in Nigeria. Their argument is predicated on the fact that Nigeria has sacrificed a lot for African countries without anything in return. On his path, Reuben Abati, posits that Nigeria has been extra ordinarily naïve by restricting its foreign policy to Africa as its cornerstone. For him, Nigeria has given so much to ensure the implementation of that foreign policy. The implication according to him, has been the sacrificing of the true national interest of Nigeria on the alter of region leadership role. The central line of argument of this school of thought is that there has been displeasure with Nigeria's African Policy and Nigerians had expressed concern on what they considered the unrewarding African Policy of the Nigerian State, not being created on any firm principle of reciprocity. Ate (2011) corroborated this position by arguing that Nigeria at independence did not have the means to sustain an assertive-cum-robust foreign policy but rather was playing adjunct leadership role for the west. For him, the notion of an African-centredness of Nigerian foreign policy as such did not stem from a strategic choice made by Nigeria's new political leadership on the basis of the fundamental national interests of the country, but was indeed a derivative of enormous influence exerted on it by the western powers, principally Britain and the United States in the context of their cold war priorities in Africa. The point being emphasized here, is that, the pre-occupation by Nigerian government on regional issues of political liberation, peace keeping operations, conflict resolution, institutionalized the Africa-Centredness syndrome without the leadership ever assessing seriously, the development benefits to Nigeria's economy arising from its Foreign decisions. In other words foreign policy initiatives were never linked originally, to the requirement of transforming the national economy, nor were the reality of a weak domestic economic capacity ever considered as a fundamental constraint on such initiatives (Piate, 2017). In the end, the pay-off of an Africa-centred foreign policy was the perpetuation of under development, corruption, poverty and mismanagement of governance. This is why, the foreign policy record of the Nigerian political leadership was after fifty years adjudged to be anti-development.

General Yakubu Gowon (July 29, 1966-1975)

Nigeria's military rule which began on January 15, 1966 was a child born in crisis and for the next six-months. General Ironsi battled with the internal squabbles such that he had little time left to think of any concrete foreign policy for the country, which unfortunately also consumed

him in a counter coup of July 29, 1966. Unlike his predecessor Balewa, Ironsi neither had domestic nor foreign policy because of the relative shortness of his tenure as Head of State. General Gowon succeeded him as the Head of State.

General Gowon upon assumption of office, was confronted with the challenge of overcoming the Biafran irredentism, which eventually resulted in a 30 months civil war (1967-1970) with foreign policy demands outside diplomatic moves to end the civil war put at the back burners. The focus of government policy under Gowon, was the defence and protection of the country's territorial integrity, cessation of hostilities and peaceful resolution of the conflict. The experiences acquired in prosecuting the war and eventually restoring peace affected the country's foreign policy. So Gowon foreign policy thrust after the Nigerian civil war was the defence of the country's territorial integrity and continued friendly relations with the rest of the world, especially countries that supported her during the civil war. The importance of the OAU as an instrument for peaceful resolution of conflicts became manifest and appreciated, the policy of good neighbourliness paid off with many countries in the subregion supporting Nigeria in her efforts at preserving her territorial integrity, independence-cum-sovereignty and the need for greater regional co-operation was brought to the fore (Olusegun, 2011; Osita, 2011; Kunle, 2021 and Olagunju, 2021). So the Gowon regime's foreign policy could be classified into two eras, the period of war and the period of reconciliation at home with the secessionist and the period of rapprochement with countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Ivory coast and Gaban who had recognised Biafra. This was the basis of his Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction after the war. Other achievements in his foreign policy was the establishment of ECOWAS in 1972, the reinvigoration and revitalization of OAU, direct financing for liberation movement during his OAU chairmanship.

Mohammed and Obasanjo Regimes (1975-1979)

The foreign policy thrust of General Murtala Mohammed could be inferred from his speech during the African Heads of State and Government Conference at Addis Ababa where he Lampooned. Some African countries that he described as Lackeys of erstwhile colonialists, accused them of supporting apartheid policy and advocated for the establishment of liberation movements. Unfortunately, he was brutally assassinated in counter-coup led by Lt Col Buka Dimka on February 13, 1976 and was succeeded by General Obasanjo his second in command who pursued and continued the dynamic and radical foreign policy as conceived by his predecessor.

It was under these regimes that the anti-colonial and racist posturing of the nation's foreign policy assumed a forceful, radical and uncompromising dimension. The regimes went to great lengths in giving Africa and African Affairs pride of place in foreign policy and foreign relations. Though Nigeria had always asserted that Africa is the cornerstone of its foreign policy, it was only during the duo regime that the country maintained a militant oriented foreign policy which sought to dictate the pace and direction of progress on the continent. That is the new Nigeria's African policy became much more articulated during their regime. This commitment was informed by the glaring behaviour of the remaining colonial regimes in countries like Angola, Mozambique, |Southern Rhodesia and Apartheid South Africa that never wanted to grant them independence in a hurry.

It was the resolute support of this regime of the popular movement for the liberation of Angola (MPLA), that led to Angola's independence in 1975. Demonstrating the same assertive Pan-African disposition, the Obasanjo regime opposed British arrogance over Zimbabwe's independence which led to the nationalization of the shell. Bp. Nigeria's tough stance at the conference of commonwealth prime ministers that hastened the Lancaster House negotiation which led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1970. Under Obasanjo, Nigeria Launched the South African Relief Fund (SARE) in December. 1976 and donated ₦2.5 million to this fund. Nigeria also co-sponsored the world conference for Action Against Apartheid (WCAAA) in Lagos between 22-27 August 1972 (Osita, 2011).

Nigeria's relative self-reliance and independence in the execution of its African policies during this era was as the result of the factors stated below:

First, its western partners had stunningly refused to provide the Federal Government with the required military assistance necessary to suppress Biafra's rebellion in the Eastern region

of the country. Ironically, the USSR, the west arch enemy in the cold war, fulfilled that need, this bringing home to the post war governments that it was fool-hardiness for the Belewa government of the first Republic to rely exclusively on western support for its security and development requirements.

Second and more crucially, post-war Nigeria was awash in petrol dollars. Nigerian governments no longer needed. Western financial assistance to execute their national development plans, and hence the pressure to conform to western demands in bilateral and regional relations no longer existed.

The question remains in a world where loyalties do not extend beyond sovereign borders, why do countries extend the hand of generosity to others? Simply put, countries extend help to others on the basis of calculated self-interest. For instance, china provides assistance for infrastructure projects in many African countries as part of a package of its investment activities in oil and mining. Nigeria's African centerpiece policy has remained essentially altruistic; it has essentially been a fruitless exercise in charity. Nigeria's avuncular policies and programme in Africa were (and are) never requited. Writing in the new Nigerian newspapers of September 28, 1986, Mohammed Haruna attributed Nigeria's unrequited favours in Angola and Zimbabwe to the country's conservative and Anglophile policies. Haruna, in explaining what might have informed the MPLA government in Angola failure to acknowledge Nigeria's assistance in getting its independence and the frosty reception that Joe Garba got in Lauda, averred that in the initial days of the struggle, Nigeria, through Garba, was hardly enamoured of the MPLA. Preferring instead the so-called government of national unity, and the Angolans knew it. A semblance of an ideological position was only taken by Nigeria when apartheid South Africa moved into Angola, promoting Nigeria's recognition of the MPLA. The same scenario, played out in Zimbabwe. It was Nigeria's Anglophile tendencies, for the country under General Obasanjo was for a long time hostile to Mugabe and supportive of Nkomo, presumably on account that the British preferred him. What this mean is that Nigeria's policies in these countries were marred by the country's initial lack of decisiveness in its actions or positions, the nebulousness and cloverleaf nature of its initial positions might have angered the so-called beneficiaries of its assistance. Thus, not being consistent to follow through a single policy position has been the albatross of Nigeria's African Centrepiece policy (Piate, 2022).

Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979-1983)

The foreign policy thrust of the Shagari's administration, can be inferred from his speech during the conference at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs on October 20, 1980. Under Shagari, Africa remained the centre-piece of the country foreign policy. That is, Nigeria still professed its commitment to Africa such as strengthening of African solidarity, promotion of peace and stability in Africa, support of the rights of peoples to self-determination and unwavering support for the eradication of apartheid in South Africa. The administration inherited a radical foreign policy and this posturing therefore became the parameter for measuring the administration foreign policy. Shagari appointed foreign affairs advisers to complement the role of experts on foreign policy but didn't valued their advices which led to series of mistakes by the government in the handling of the country's foreign policy. The administration was accused of frustrating the efforts of African leaders towards decolonization in western Sahara, allowing herself to be used by the United States and France in effecting the withdrawal of Libyan troops from chad in other to install Hissene Habre and blamed for denying Libya under Muammar Gaddafi chairmanship at the 19th summit of the OAU in Tripoli (Osita, 2011). Part of poor diplomacy on part of the administration, clash of objectives between Nigeria's interest of acting as a big brother and objective of attaining her desired goals make France to reject the idea of granting loan to the Nigerian government and openly campaign against debt relief or wavers by international community when Nigeria found itself is poor financial situation and needed to obtain loan from the European Union to cushion the austerity at home (Olagunju, 2021). In conclusion, Shagari's Africa Policy lacked direction as opposed to the dynamism of the Murtala/Obasanjo regime and his ouster in December 31, 1983 by the Military put an end to whatever ambition the government had of its foreign thrust.

General Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1985)

The Buhari/Idiagbon administration like the others, still professed Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy and clearly articulated this in the concentric circles theory. The regime recognised the MPLA in the power struggle in Angola and reiterated its commitment to the anti-apartheid cause in South Africa, recognised the polisario government in Western Sahara against the background of opposition by some African States and the Saharawi Arab Republic and backed its admission into OAU (Kunle, 2021).

Generally, the Buhari's administration inherited foreign policy commitment that were over-ambitious in scope especially when the Nigerian economy was on the brink of collapse. To save the country from total collapse, his administration had to re-order Nigeria's priorities to cope with available resources, but his option according to Okoro (2002) and Osita (2011) was contradictory to Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives. For them, Buhari administration foreign policy was characterised by hostility to Nigeria's neighbours, undefined objectives, confrontational diplomacy, a demoralised foreign service and contracted instrument of diplomacy. Several factors seem to corroborates their position. First action Buhari administration took was to reduce the members of the Nigerian diplomatic mission. Second, he ordered the closure of Nigerian borders and the expulsion from the country citizen from Nigeria neighbour who were pejoratively labelled "illegal aliens" thereby destroying Nigeria's relation with her neighbours, including the policy of good neighbourliness. Again, in its attempt to punish those allegedly accused of contributing to Nigeria's economic predicaments, strained the country's relations with Britain when efforts were made to illegally repatriate from Britain Umaru Dikko, Shagari's former transport minister in the second republic. Although the Buhari's administration did not make much impact to achieve Nigeria traditional principles and goals of Nigeria's foreign policy, it clearly demonstrates how strong a country's domestic factors are in determining focus of foreign policy behaviour.

General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (1985-1993)

The Babangida administration on assumption of office was confronted with two major problems. The first was an economy that was in Shambles, second was an uninspiring foreign policy which was based on the theory of "concentric circle", a concept which was the brain child of Ibrahim Gambari, the then external affairs minister during the Buhari era. His foreign policy thrust can be inferred from his maiden address to the nation in August 27, 1985 depicting that he did not deviate much from Nigeria's Afro-centric foreign policy. Hence, there was continuity in the pursuit of objectives and major policy thrusts. Babangida conceived the idea of medium power as a means of curtailing the excesses of the then two rival world powers, United States and USSR. The project suffered a setback due to the replacement in a cabinet reshufflement of professor Bolaji Akinyemi the progenitor of the project and the successor did not have the same interest towards the project.

In continuation of the Afro-centric foreign policy, the Babangida administration established the technical aid scheme in 1987, where qualified Nigerians in various fields were recruited and sent to aid African countries in their various developmental efforts. The Technical Aid Corps Scheme (TAC) as a foreign policy tool was to promote goodwill and foster social and economic development in partner countries. As it turned out to be, the amount that was expended on the programme remains shrouded in mystery. Another great achievement of the administration foreign policy was the founding of the West African Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in dire response to festering crisis that erupted in Liberia. The reason for this initiative could be broken down into two broad categories: objectives and subjective conditions. The objective conditions include Nigeria's size, population, resources, the size of its military and colonial experience (which makes it wary of allowing external powers free rein in the sub-region). The subjective condition, in a world dominated by a handful of global powers, projecting regional power status was more feasible for Nigeria than claiming world power status or projecting global power. Other condition includes fear of the so-called domino effect that is, destabilization spreading from hotspots to another countries in the sub-region, concern over the possible influx of refugees and the pressure it would put on resources.

While Nigerian leaders point to national interest, humanitarian considerations and regional stability as reasons for intervention in peace-keeping in Africa, but Nigeria's interventions through ECOMOG cannot be said

to have been solely motivated by the pursuit of national interest, perhaps this partly explains the lack of fellow up or peace dividends Nigeria never realises. It appears that the Babangida administration did not have a clear-cut idea of the nature of the national interest in its decision to intervene in Liberia and Sierra-Leone, this is because Nigeria has been a party to many peace keeping operations with so many sacrifices, yet no explicit or implicit post policy dividend has ever been derived from such military exertions. When the United State invade irag and topple saddam Hussein, Halliburton and the entire defence sector were positioned for the post conflict reconstruction in that country. In the case of Nigeria in Liberia and Sierra Leone under ECOMOG, no such post-conflict reconstruction engagement ensued to the benefit of the Nigerian state. This is a clear example of the fruitlessness of the Nigeria's foreign policy within the context of the national interest (Piate, 2022).

Economic development also dominated the Nigeria's foreign policy under the Babangida's administration. Thus, economic diplomacy was invented as a major element of Nigeria's foreign policy because of the successful stories of the economic miracles of South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. The policy was predicted essentially on four tools – export promotion, inflow of direct investment, inflow of capital and debt rescheduling. But any policy in which capital outflow systematically exceed capital inflow is based on faulty econometric or theoretical foundation. Such a policy which may stultify an endogenous development process and frustrate national aspirations is a sure road to recolonization-cum-contradiction of an inward-looking development strategy. Economic diplomacy rather than bring about development, growth, domestic security and public welfare, had led among other things to a situation of no profit in the industrial sector, no investment, no growth, and therefore no increase in employment, at best the strategy was a constructive destruction. Economic diplomacy as a foreign policy tool did not translate to domestic economic development. The only new development was that the adopting of the policy strategy only signals an attempt to completely shed off the radical pan-Africanist elements in the country's post-colonial foreign policy during the oil boom years even with its broad pro-western orientation.

The annulment of the presidential election in June 12, 1993 and the subsequent domestic crises tended to erode whatever achievements that stood in the administration credit and further marred. Nigeria's aspirations as an influential country within the sub-region and Africa.

Chief Ernest Shonekan/Sanni Abacha/Abdulsalami Abubakar (1993-1998)

Chief Ernest Shonekan became the head of interim National Government due to the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election and given the circumstance of the period and short duration of three months in office, he could not initiate any foreign policy that could be pointed to his credit. The same fate befell Sani Abacha, who sacked the Shonekan administration in a palace coup and assumed the reign of power. His administration was largely pre-occupied with maintaining power or regime survival, and therefore did little on the foreign scene. The government by its actions or inactions turned Nigeria into a pariah nation amongst the comity of nations as a result of its poor human rights records. As an act of survival, it made a policy shift away from the west to Asia courting countries like China, North Korea and Libya (Osita, 2011). The sudden demise of Sani Abacha led to the emergences of Abdulsalami Abubakar. Abubakar unlike, this predecessor, focused more on domestic than foreign issues. He avoided taking any step that could destabilise the programme of his return to civil rule.

Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007)

The immediate foreign policy agenda of the Obasanjo regime, was to tackle Nigeria's credibility problem and the ignoble reputation and status of a pariah state as a result of the human rights record under the Abacha regime (Adeniji, 2005). One of his first foreign policy objectives was to make Nigeria safe for foreign investors particularly in those areas that suffered neglect under the protracted military rule (Olusegun, 2011). Generally, Obasanjo entered the presidency with a clear-cut ideas of how he wanted to run the foreign affairs of Nigeria because of his personal experience, preference, orientation, perception threshold and interpersonal relations. His foreign policy was reintegrating Nigeria into the world, renaissance of Africa, recovery of looted monies and management of Nigeria external debts. Under

his administration, Nigeria once again resumed its leadership rule in Africa which was a continuation of centre piece of Nigeria's foreign policy.

This was exemplified in its contribution towards the management and resolution of the conflict in cote d'Ivoire, use of diplomacy to avoid a disguised military coup in Togo, ensure that a democratically elected government is maintained in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) , re-instate the democratically elected government in Sao Tome and principle, formation of NEPAD, a framework that seeks to develop an integrated socio-economic development strategy for Africa, peace keeping missions in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Sudan and instrumental in the evolution and enactment of Article 4 of the AU charter, which declared unlawful takeover of governments in Africa as illegal.

The administration also launched a campaign for debt relief. The Obasanjo's administration before securing a debt relief adopted a number of strategies to overcome the obstacles, which includes, being more regular in external debt repayment, taking measure to reduce corruption and rent seeking, improving transparency and accountability in governance, creating and nurturing democratic institutions, engaging in active advocacy under the aegis of the commonwealth of nations, the African Union and the New Partnership for African Development. In October 2002, Nigeria and the Paris club announced a final agreement for debt relief worth $8 billion. The creditors had cancelled $18 billion and Nigeria repaid $12 billion.

Despite securing debt relief, successive government especially the last Buhari's government continued on borrowing spree and as at today, Nigeria's public debt is N121.67 trillion ($91-46 billion) | (Dmo, 2024). It appears nothing has really changed in the country to project the debt relief as an outstanding achievement. This is because the environment that led to huge debt accumulation remain intact, as the entire 2024 budget is through borrowing. The follow-up actions after the debt relief were secured ought to have been the elimination of the grounds for more debt accumulation.

Another achievement of the Obasanjo's foreign policy was the settlement of the Bakassi border issue between Nigeria and Cameroon. The Bakassi peninsula judgement handed down by the International Court of Justice (ICT) in 2022, had several significant effects on Nigeria's development. First is the loss of territory and resources. Nigeria ceded a significant portion of its territory, including the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon. This resulted in the loss of valuable natural resources, particularly oil revenue, which could have contributed to Nigeria's economic growth and development. Second was the displacement of Residents. The judgement led to the displacement of Nigerian residents living in the Bakassi peninsula, causing significant social and economic disruption for those affected. Many residents were forced to relocate and rebuild their lives in new areas, often facing challenges in finding employment and housing.

Umaru Musa Yar Adua and Goodluck Jonathan (2007-2015)

Yar Adua would have made tremendous impact and achievements on foreign policy but for the untimely death that robbed the nation of his impact. He was succeeded by Goodluck Jonathan the then Vice president. Jonathan like his predecessor was bogged down by domestic issues such as the Boko Haram Insurgencies, Banditry and Herder-Farmers clashes. Both He continue the foreign policy thrust of Yar Adua which was citizenship Diplomacy. This policy thrust was announced by the then minister of foreign Affairs, Chief Ojo Madueke on Monday July 30, 2007 while addressing the opening ceremony of the conference on Foreign Policy and Nigeria's economic development organised by the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA). The following were the major pillars of Nigeria's citizen diplomacy: Nigeria and Nigerians should be at the centre of Nigeria's Foreign Policy; Nigeria's Foreign Policy must meet her development aspiration and objectives in a manner that impacts more directly on the lives of the country and Nigeria's Foreign Policy must seek a synergy with domestic policy to ensure that the former benefits ordinary Nigerians. Indeed, the boundary between domestic policy and Foreign Policy has collapsed into national security for collective well-being of Nigerians. Some other contents of the Nigerian's Foreign Policy as expressed in citizen diplomacy include the desire to ensure that Nigerians travelling or resident abroad are treated with respect by other nations, the growing number of Nigerians in the dispora invest their resources in the development of the Nigerian economy, the

images of Nigeria and Nigerians are improved abroad and Nigerian dispora who seek consula assistance receive sufficient and timely diplomatic attention.

The appraisal of citizen diplomacy under the two regimes was not entirely satisfactory given the cases of maltreatment of Nigerians both at home and abroad. This is because, as a foreign policy thrust, citizen diplomacy was to put the interest of the Nigerians at home and abroad at the centre of the country's national interest. This is why one may be cynically assumed that Nigerian government has ever been more security concerned about the protection or wellbeing of every Nigerian at home let alone those outside the shore of the country. There have been several instances of Nigerians in several countries languishing in prisons, on death row, deported, marginalised, detained, tortured and most of the time, the reasons are unknown. The inhuman treatment meted out on Nigerians abroad also replicates itself right here in Nigeria. A good example is the Nigerian Police Force vested with the responsibility of maintaining internal peace and security have in all ramifications become agents of terrorism engaging in extra-judicial killing, arrest and detention of innocent citizens, extortion of multifarious dimension and brutality. Against this backdrop, citizen diplomacy as a foreign policy thrust didn't translate to economic development of the Nigerian state, at best, it was only to lauder, rebrand and positive projection of the country's international image.

Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023)

Upon assumption of office, the Buhari's administration realised that domestic or foreign policy will amount to nothing except there is a concerted effort to win the war against Boko Haram and that this cannot be possible except with the support and collaboration of Nigeria's neighbouring countries. Arising from this, his foreign policy thrust aimed to enhance regional influence and co-operation, promote regional integration and stability, and strengthen Nigeria's position as a key player in regional affairs. However, internal challenges such as insecurity and economic difficulties impacted on the effectiveness of this Foreign Policy.

Some of the Key aspects of Nigeria's foreign policy during this period included regional integration. Under the Buhari's administration, Nigeria actively participated in regional organisations like ECOWAS and the African Union, advocating for stronger regional co-operation and integration. This was aimed at fostering economic growth and stability with the region. Nigeria also played a leading role in regional security initiatives, particularly in the fight against terrorism and insurgency. This involved collaboration with neighbouring countries and international partners to address security threats. Nigeria sought to strengthen economic ties with other countries, particularly through trade and investment agreements. This was aimed at diversifying the economy and attracting foreign investment. The government also recognised the importance of the Nigerian dispora and sought to engage with them to contribute to the country's development.

While these efforts were made, the internal challenges faced by Nigeria, such as insecurity and economic difficulties, limited the effectiveness of its foreign policy. Again, lack of clear and consistent implementation strategies hindered the achievement of foreign policy goals. This was evident in the areas like regional security cooperation, where initiatives like the Multinational Joint Taskforce (MNKTP) faced challenges due to funding issues and coordination problems. The prioritization of domestic issues. Particularly security challenge like Boko Harman insurgency at the expense of foreign policy initiatives led to a reactive rather than proactive approach to international relations. These challenges diverted resources and attention away from foreign policy initiatives, hindering Nigeria's ability to fully realise its regional aspirations.

Conclusion

The study appraised thematically (administration by administration) Nigeria's Foreign Policy Thrust. Since 1960 till 2023. The justification for adopting this approach is to review how each Nigerian government undertook the conduct of Nigeria's foreign Policy and how it has translated to economic security and prosperity of the Nigerian state in general and average citizenry in particular, whose interest foreign policy is expected to serve. The study concluded by demonstrating that the chronic inability on the part of the country's leadership to foster a dividend yielding foreign policy that is sufficiently people-oriented or citizen-centric, suggest that Nigerian leaders are yet to appreciate the fact that the articulation of

the national interest of any nation is inexorably dualist in character in the sense that involves first, the resolution of the conceptual problem and second, the consideration of the strategy for its attainment. Nigeria and its past leaders have consistently been pursuing her domestic development goals independently of its foreign policy so that the nation's foreign policy has not been translated into a source of national domestic development, consequently the nation suffered serious development challenges. Given this position, it is apparent that there will be a clash between the assumed primary aim of foreign policy vis-à-vis external roles and domestic livelihood. This confusion over what constitutes Nigeria's national interest and the procedure for its realization vividly explains why Nigeria's foreign policy since independence until date has witnessed enormous cost without any corresponding dividends.

The way forward is that Nigeria's foreign policy thrust should be more inward focused, aimed at adding value to Nigeria's development. That is, the Nigerian people should be the focus of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust, which should be tailored towards energizing the domestic economy, creating jobs and generally reducing unemployment.

References

Adeniji, O. (2005). "Costs and Dividends of Foreign Policy"., In presidential Advisory Council on International Relations publication (ed), Foreign Policy in Nigeria's Democratic Transition. Lagos: Printserve Limited.

Asobie, A. H. (2010). Fifty years of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: An Overview. In EzexOsita (Eds) Beyond 50 years of Nigeria's Foreign policy: Issues Challenges and Prospects. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

Asobie, H. A. (2002). "Nigeria: Economic Diplomacy and National Interest – An Analysis of the Politics of Nigeria's External Economic Relations". In Joy, O. and Adebayo, O. (eds) The Economic Diplomacy of the Nigerian State. Lagos: Frankad publishers.

Ate, B. E. (2011). "Nigeria's Foreign Policy: From the cold war to the Era of Globalisation" In Maduagwu, E. (ed) Nigeria's 50 years of Nation-Building: Stock taking and Looking Ahead. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

Gambari, A. (2008). "From Balewa to Obasanjo: The theory and practice of Nigeria's Foreign Policy" In Adebayo, A and Mustapha, A. (eds), Gullivers Troubles: Nigeria's Policy after the cold war. South Africa: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press.

Gambo, A. N. (2021). "Nigeria's Era of Diplomatic Diversification: Reflections on General Sani Abacha's Diplomatic and Foreign Policy Diversification 1993-1998" in Akinboye, S. O. and Basiru, A. S. (Eds) Six Decades of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Old Visions, New Issues. Lafos: Unilag Press and Bookshop Ltd.

Kunle, A. (2021). "Nigeria and Liberation Diplomacy in Africa: A Reflection". In: Akinboye, S. O. and Basiru, A. S. (eds) Six Decades of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Old Visions, New Issues. Lagos: Unilag Press and Bookshop Ltd.

Mustapha, A. r. (2008). "The three faces of Nigeria's Foreign Policy", In Adebayo, A. and Mustapha, A. R. (eds), Gullivers Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the cold war. South Africa: University of Kwazulu-Natal press.

Obasanjo, O. (20019. "Nigeria's Security and Development Interest in Africa", Paper presented at the Interactive in Africa", Paper present at the Interactive Session at Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, Lagos. Pp 2-5.

Okoro, J. (2002). Understanding Nigeria Foreign Policy. Calabar: CATS Publishers.

Olagunju, S. (2021). Nigerian Foreign Policy Since 1960. Ibadan: SABIC publishers.

Olusegun, B. J. (2011). "Global Outlook for Nigeria's Diplomacy in 2011: Achievements, opportunities and challenges" in: Osita, A. (ed) Survey of Nigerian Affairs 2011. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

Omelle, C. (2004. Ä perspective on the Regional Leadership Question in Africa: The case of

Nigeria". Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, 30(1): 120-132.

Osita, A. (2011). "Overview of Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Engagements" In: Osita, A. and Ogaba, O. (eds) Nigeria in the global Arena: Past, Present and Future. Lagos: FOG Ventures.

Osuntokun, A. J. (2005). "Historical Background Survey of Nigeria's Foreign Policy". In Oguw U. J. (ed). New Horizons for Nigeria in World Affairs. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

Piate, S. M. (2007). "Nigeria's Foreign Policy, Regional Leadership and the Crisis of Neo-Colonial Development, 1960-2016-Socialscientia, Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vol. 2, No. 1, Page 49-68.

Piate, S. M. (2013). "Domestic challenges confronting Nigeria's Foreign Policy". ABSU Journal of Arts, Management, Education, Law and Social Sciences, (JAMELESS) – Sponsored by Tetfund, Vol. 3, Page 91-116.

Piate, S. M. and Eyo, O. E. (20220. "Nigeria's Foreign Policy, 1960-2015: An Appraisal". Socialscientia, Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vol. 7, No. 1, pages 36-39.

Section 19, 1999 CFRN (as amended).