

An Appraisal of Democratic Governance and Nigeria's Foreign Policy, 1999-2019

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Abstract. This paper examines Nigeria's two decades of uninterrupted democratic experience and the relationship between democratic governance and the conduct and administration of Nigeria's foreign policies. This is anchored not only on the perceived conduciveness of democracy to peaceful foreign relations as espoused by liberalism and democratic peace theory, but also the inclusive democratic environment capable of influencing foreign policy making and implementation. Therefore, this paper investigates how democratic practice has influenced Nigeria's foreign relations, as well as how the domestic environment, as typical of democracies, influences her foreign policy options. The paper adopts qualitative and descriptive methodology with data derived from secondary sources only. We found that decades of democratic practice notwithstanding, Nigeria is yet to imbibe the culture of robust popular participation (of eminent professionals and relevant institutions) in its foreign policy output, and only pretends to sample public opinion when it best serves the wishes and interests of the few ruling elite. It is concluded that to firmly establish its leadership role in Africa and globally, Nigeria must pursue a dynamic and proactive foreign policy targeted at improving the welfare of the citizenry and promoting her national interest. To achieve this, we recommend, among other things, that Nigeria should jealously guide her democratic governance with necessary restructuring that will promote inclusiveness and keep all forms of autocracy perpetually out of power; Nigeria should equally embark on diversified, independent and industrialized economy capable of driving her foreign policy goals.

Keywords: Democracy, foreign policy, national interest, public opinion, liberalism.

1. Introduction

Democratization – the deepening of democracy – is a key liberal assumption towards peaceful and mutually progressive international relations. To be sure, these assumptions consist in complex interdependence, the role of international institutions, processes of integration, and paths of democratization which contribute in their separate ways to foreign policies that are more orientated towards peaceful relations for mutual benefits. This is inextricably linked to the established potency of the domestic environment in influencing the course of a state's foreign relations and which policy or policies to pursue in furtherance of its national interests.

Democracy, therefore, typifies by its openness, constitutionalism and participatory posture provides a fertile ground for robust deliberations and inputs from concerned agencies and specialized institutions in foreign policy formulation. It also means that the contagious spread of democracy as the preferred mode of governance in contemporary African states should translate to more peaceful foreign relations edged on diplomacy, dialogue and compromise than force. Hence, Nigeria, the 'giant' of Africa, has been so perceived historically as a frontline state and peace vanguard in Africa, enabled by her huge human and material resources and the reality of her destiny as the most influential country in black Africa. Little wonder then, Nigeria, for a long time has proclaimed Africa as the centre-piece of its foreign policy – a major thrust that shapes Nigeria's relations with African states till today.

The domestic determinants of Nigeria's foreign policy include the nature and structure of the economy, the political structure of the country and domestic political situation, country's geo-strategic location, character of the political class, demographic factors, the size and strength of the military, among other. These factors notwithstanding, the well-

established principles of Nigeria's foreign policy include, but not limited to, respect for sovereignty and sovereign equality of all state, commitment to self-determination and independence of other states, especially African states, commitment to peaceful coexistence, settlement of disputes and international cooperation and, even though it is no longer fashionable, non-alignment to any geo-political power blocs.

Conceptually, foreign policy refers to the policy directed to the management of external relations and activities of states, as distinguished from their domestic policies. Foreign policy involves goals, strategies, measures, methods, guidelines, directives, understandings, or agreements by which national governments conduct international relations with each other and with international organizations and non-governmental actors. Akinbobola (1996) defines foreign policy as the actions of a state towards the external environment with the ultimate imperative of achieving specific goals towards the enhancement of the national interest. All national governments, by the very fact of their sovereignty and separate international existence, are obliged to engage in foreign policy directed at foreign governments and other international actors.

Foreign policies consist of aims and measures that are intended to guide government decisions and actions with regard to external affairs, particularly relations with foreign countries. Managing foreign relations calls for carefully considered plans of action that are adapted to national interests and concerns. Policy making therefore involves a means-end way of thinking about goals and actions of government. It is an instrumental concept concerned with the pending problem or goal and the appropriate solution or approach available to address it.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to establish that the practice of democracy should enhance inclusive foreign policy process and peaceful (as opposed to militaristic) foreign relations globally. Thus, to critically understand the interplay between democratic governance and foreign policy making and implementation in Nigeria, this chapter is divided into seven parts starting with the introduction. Part two is a theoretical examination of liberalism, democratic peace and foreign relations. Part three bothers on the conceptualization of democracy and democratic governance in Nigeria, while part four examines Nigeria's foreign relations in historical context. Part five attempts overview of Nigeria's foreign policy including the process of foreign policy making and implementation, while part six

investigates the nexus between democratic governance and Nigeria's foreign policy. The last part is the conclusion and recommendations towards proactive and dynamic foreign policy options.

2. Liberalism, Democratic Peace and Foreign Relations

As antithesis to realism, liberalism posits the possibility of world peace and mutual understanding among states and non-state actors in international relations. In fact, liberal theorists believe the relevance of friendship/morality and economic interdependence as antidote to wars and crisis in the international system. Hence, the drive for international cooperation and mutual gains underscores peaceful foreign policies and relations. To this end, scholars of liberalism, including Woodrow Wilson, believe in the establishment of international institutions, pursuit of free trade and consolidation of democratic practice (otherwise referred to as "liberal democracy" in the literature) as imperatives for peaceful relations between states.

Democracy as an ideology and practice is, therefore, equated with freedom, equality, consultation/negotiation, participation and consent which the liberals believe would engender understanding and lessen confrontation among states. The existence of international institutions will serve to mediate between states and act as checks against the irrational tendencies of states in relations to others. Thus, a state is inclined to pursue peaceful foreign policy with other states with which it has mutual trade and investment interest. Liberals, including neoliberals like Nye and Keohane (Kegley & Blanton, 2011) would conceive that greater economic interdependence and integration between and among states helps to break down the artificial borders behind which states hide to perpetrate evils against its citizens, another state and international society.

In particular, the advancement and spread of democracy post-Cold War is considered intrinsic in ensuring international peace. In fact, as espoused by Kant (1795) and Doyle (1983) cited in Etten (2014), and Doyle (2012) in their writings, the thrust of democratic peace is that democratic states rarely go to war with each other but can, and do, go to war with non-democratic state(s) to propagate and deepen democracy. Thus, the notion that there is an intrinsic link between democracy and peaceful foreign relations carries with it the assumption that democratic institutions and people's consent constitute inherent checks on (foreign) policy makers

which restrain them from pursuing warlike foreign policy with each other. Therefore, while autocratic or authoritarian states are seen to be inherently militaristic and aggressive, democratic states are viewed as naturally peaceful, especially in their dealings with other democratic states (Doyle, 1995, cited in Heywood, 2011). Being unaccountable to domestic public opinion, such aggressive postures of non-democratic states are deployed in dealing with both the domestic settings and the international community thereby endangers international peace and security.

Therefore, the wider acceptance of liberal-democracy and extension of market capitalism create and promote a more stable and peaceful global order. Exponents of democratic peace also associate increased democratization with the creation of ‘zones of peace’ of democracies as opposed to the ‘zones of turmoil’ which characterize the non-democratic states (Singer and Wildavsky, 1993). Democratic governance is a process of compromise and negotiation through which rival interests or groups find a way of resolving differences amicably rather than resorting to force. Thus, governments formed on such understanding will more likely apply such approach to the conduct and administration of foreign policy. In other words, a government formed on the democratic ideals will not only promote peaceful conduct of international relations but also inclusive domestic environment. This is the foundation on which this paper juxtaposes the internal-external dynamics of Nigeria’s foreign policy making and implementation. That is, examining how democratic governance in Nigeria translates to inclusive process of foreign policy making and foreign relations generally.

3. Democracy and Democratic Governance in Nigeria

The concept of democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people has evolved into gradual irrelevance as the realities of the modern states no longer suggest this idealist mode of participation. In that wise, political and social scientists have offered a number of definitions and explanations on the concept. Agbaje (2015) opined that democracy is a term that is used to describe an idea, process or system of government which entrenches and expands the right, ability and capacity of people in any community to take control of their lives through participation in discussion and decision on issues and events that affect them and their community.

Moreover, Eziokwu (2004) maintains that democracy signifies political system dominated by representatives either directly or indirectly chosen by the people. In this wise, Nigeria is deemed to be a democratic state with the restitution of power to the people in 1999 in her fourth republic to periodically elect their representatives in government. While it is a truism that democracy means rule or government of, by and for the people, not even Abraham Lincoln’s classical definition has been able to define who the people are. However, Heater (1964), cited by Enemuo (2015) emphasizes basic elements of democracy which include equality, sovereignty of the people, respect for human life, the rule of law and liberty of the individual. Incidentally, these elements form the fundamental pillars that differentiate democracy from other forms of governance.

The contemporary political arrangement which empowers the people and confers the authorship of legitimacy on them is democracy. Democracy must, therefore, emanate from the people. This is why this form of government is referred to as the government of the people by the people and for the people. Consequently, democracy is a contractual government validated by periodic elections. However, the wholesale adoption and misapplication of Western liberal democracy – which has been reduced to ‘periodic’ election rituals – in West Africa, and Nigeria in particular, has brought with it a series of politically-motivated crises and violence. Democratic government is predicated on popularly elected or appointed representatives charged with the management of the affairs of a given geographical entity commonly referred to as a state (Baker, 1995). A democratic system should be able to recognize and accommodate both the majority and minority rights in any political system.

Citing Ezioku (2004), Jega and Ibeanu (2007) cited by Oni (2020) outlined the following as the basic tenets of democracy:

- The institutions and processes of effective electoral agencies, political parties and their formation, administration and funding;
- Conduct of free, fair and periodic elections and electoral processes;
- Broad based participation by the electorate;
- Observance of rule of law;
- Protection of fundamental Human Rights;
- A free and unfettered press;
- A healthy civil society; and
- Government based on the consent of the people.

Furthermore, Ekemam (2013) conceptualized democracy as the form of government in which the

generality of the people are engaged in the affairs of state and are able to take decisions without internal or external interference. He identified the following as qualities of democratic government. These include popular consultation, political equality, decision by majority, rights of dissent, free press, popular representation, popular accountability and political representation. Oni (2020), citing Agarwal (2014), is of the position that democracy is a form of government that allows people to rule over their affairs and consequently able to take binding decisions. He identified the following as basic driving principles of democratic government: liberty and equality, fraternity which he describes as a peaceful atmosphere, people as the utmost source of power and political sovereignty, and independence of the judiciary for fair adjudication. In sum, a careful look into the common denominators of democracy and democratic government in the above definitions should reveal the crucial importance of the people as the author of sovereignty. Having attained the democratic status since 1999 – the fourth experiment since independence in 1960 – Nigeria still struggles with actualizing the lofty ideals of democracy espoused above, especially pertaining to recognition of the centrality of the people to democratic consolidation.

4. Nigeria's Foreign Relations in Historical Context

Part one of the second schedule to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) places the task of foreign relations within the exclusive preserve of the federal government. That is, only the federal government (as against the governments of the supposedly coordinating units) has the ability to formulate foreign policy to relate with other sovereign states. Although the institution for foreign relations was set in motion in 1957, Nigeria was under firm British colonial rule for most part of the 20th century and, therefore, could not independently conduct foreign relations until 1960 when she became a sovereign state.

The guidelines for Nigeria's foreign relations was first articulated at independence by the then Prime-Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, in his first address to the United Nations General Assembly on 7th Oct, 1960. These guidelines (the "Balewa Doctrine") inform the foreign policy objectives and remain essentially the bedrock of Nigeria's foreign policy. As a regional power, Nigeria's external relations since independence have been characterized by a focus on the three imperatives of national interest, Afrocentrism and world peace. Akinboye

(2015) posits that the peaceful nature of the attainment (through negotiations and conferences) of Nigeria's independence greatly influenced her foreign policy at independence. In fact, the foreign affairs ministry retained the pre-independence appellation of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations to show Nigeria's friendship and alliance with Britain. This was to change to Ministry of External Affairs at the first republic in 1963.

The change of nomenclature and acclaimed profession of nonalignment notwithstanding, Nigeria's foreign policy under Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa was manifestly ultra-conservative and pro-Western, with very strict restraint on relations with Eastern Europe. The ban on literature from Eastern Europe, allegedly to prevent the infiltration of communist ideas in Nigeria as well as the signing of the later-to-be-abrogated Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact bear testimonies to the pro-Western posture of the Balewa government. The military regime of General Aguiyi Ironsi that succeeded Alhaji Tafawa Balewa after the failed bloody coup of January 15, 1966 could not effect any substantial change from Balewa's foreign policy footstep. Not only was the regime engrossed in repairing the domestic political damages, it equally reinstated Nigeria's commitment to Africa and Africa's liberation from colonialism.

The liberal pro-Western posture of Nigerian foreign policy was to be adjusted as a result of the unfortunate and prolonged 30-month civil war that erupted during General Yakubu Gowon's regime, following a series of political unrest cum ethnic-based violence that greeted the early years of Nigeria's independence. Thus, the refusal of the Western allies to support Nigeria with the requisite military and material assistance needed to effectively prosecute the war makes it inevitable for the government to embrace relief and help in terms of military and personnel assistance from the East, and then Soviet Union in particular. It was also an enviable opportunity for the defunct Soviet Union to assert its influence in Africa, and it did that so well that Nigeria maintains good relationship with Russia till today. Nigeria was able to utilize the platform of the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) to secure goodwill and sympathy from the international society during the war. It would be recalled that the enabling Charter of the OAU absolutely prohibits interference in the domestic affairs of member states.

The oil boom in the 1970s (post-civil war) enabled Nigeria a pride of place internationally, and this made her to fully assert her relevance in Africa, especially as a formidable force against slavery, colonization

and apartheid in the continent, an activity that earned her the appellation of “the frontline state” in Africa (Akindele, 1988). The succeeding regimes of General Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo were more radical and proactive in foreign policy orientation. One could recall series of intervention it made nationally and internationally on behalf of Africa. The regimes, however, maintained and reinforced the Afrocentric dynamism of Nigeria’s foreign policy with the adoption of the recommendation of Adebayo Adedeji’s Commission to the idea of Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria’s foreign policy. For such commitment, the Murtala/Obasanjo regime took a distinct and decisive stand in support of the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola [*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA)] to prevent the installation of a colonial stooge government in Angola. This declaration came in direct confrontation with the United States and South Africa-backed coalition government of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola [*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* (FLNA)] and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola [*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA)] in Angola in 1976. This caused a major strain in Nigeria’s relations with the United States. Reinforcing this radical stance, the Obasanjo regime nationalized British oil firms and Barclays Bank in protest of British long stay in Rhodesia. Those were the golden days of foreign policy in Nigeria. Therefore, for maintaining a principled stand against all forms of colonialism in Africa, Nigeria exerted herself as the champion of Africa’s interest.

However, the period of 1979 to 1983 (Shagari era) reclined to the Balewa’s conservative and low key foreign policy, although it provided incentives in form of financial aids to some countries (like Zimbabwe) and independence movements like South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia. Crude oil was also given in concessional prices to ‘poor’ countries that needed them for survival. In all of these big brother roles and donations, nothing was mentioned of Nigeria’s economic leverage or benefit. The Shagari administration was however criticized for betraying the spirit of African unity when it expelled illegal immigrants (mainly Ghanaians) in 1983 (Aluko, 1990). “Ghana-must-go” became the popular aphorism reminiscent of the historic incident. Equally, the somewhat cordial Anglo-Nigerian relations suffered a setback with the ‘austerity measure’ (intended to revive the economy) which necessitated the closure of Nigerian borders and attempt to ‘kidnap’ Umaru Dikko from London,

where he had fled, by the Muhammadu Buhari regime. The recognition of the Saharawi Republic also generated diplomatic row with some African countries, particularly Morocco, but it was a plus for the regime in pursuit of Nigeria’s foreign policy stand against decolonization.

The succeeding government of Ibrahim Babangida embarked on economic diplomacy, liberalized the economy and promoted export-led economy through the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). He also visited many countries in Asia, Africa and Europe in search of partners. He reopened the borders and established the Technical Aid Corps to provide needed technical manpower assistance for African states (which horizon later extended to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries) to garner goodwill for Nigeria (Olusanya & Akindele, 1986). Nigerians occupied strategic positions in different international organizations. For instance, Chief Emeka Anyaoku became Commonwealth’s Secretary General; Joseph Garba elected the President of the United Nations General Assembly and Dr Rilwan Lukman the Secretary General of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The Babangida regime was a period of intensive foreign relations and Nigeria played prominent roles in the formation and funding of ECOWAS Ceasefire Operation and Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which intervened in the lingering war in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Ogidan, 2012).

General Sani Abacha’s regime also left significant impact on the country’s foreign relations by consolidating Babangida’s economic policy with uncompromised posture on Nigeria’s prestige. Abacha was known for his firm, assertive and militaristic approach, and was able to restore peace and democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone – using the instrumentality of ECOMOG – even as Nigeria was under his firm military rule. However, his high-handedness and gross violations of human rights, culminated in the execution of the renowned environmentalist, Ken Saro Wiwa and other eight Ogonis from the Niger Delta, earned Nigeria series of sanctions, delisting and blacklisting – including suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations in November, 1995. This ugly development affected not only Nigeria’s economic relations but also her foreign image and relations generally, as Nigeria was tagged a pariah state. This burden was to be lifted under the Abdulsalami Abubakar regime through various reconciliation efforts and successful handing over of power to a democratically elected President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999.

Nigeria assumed strategic role in Africa and international affairs with the return to democracy in 1999, with President Obasanjo's 'shuttle diplomacy' to different countries of the world to rebuild relations dented by the previous regimes. Nigeria continued to mediate in the crisis in Congo and Sierra Leone and between Zimbabwe and Britain (over the Zimbabwe's revocation of White's farmland); intensified bilateral and multilateral relations; and participated in the negotiation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001, and the transformation of OAU to African Union (AU) in 2002. The peak of Obasanjo's foreign relations was the securing of outright cancellation of Nigeria's debt to France and Spain in 2000, and rescheduling of about 80% of Nigeria's debts by to the US, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. However, opinions persist that Obasanjo in power (as civilian) was not as proactive as Obasanjo in *khaki* (military Head of State).

The successive administrations of President Umaru Yar'Adua and President Goodluck Jonathan pursued a reclusive, conservative and regional-reach foreign policy. Significantly, Yar'Adua was able to mobilize the African states to reject the siting of African Command (AFRICOM) base in Africa. Equally, Nigeria's relevance in global affairs was enhanced when in 2009 she was elected to the Security Council as a non-permanent member, although she has always desired an African representative on a permanent seat. Although President Jonathan promised to anchor the foreign policy on economic development and stability (through the 'Transformation Agenda'), nothing significant was recorded as the administration was confronted with large scale corruption and intractably prolonged battle with the dreaded Boko Haram terrorist that brought the administration to its knees. As typical of Nigeria's Afrocentrism, during this period, Nigeria was involved in mediating and restoring democratic rule in Guinea Bissau and Mali.

The current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is not an exception to Nigeria's tradition of conservative and Afrocentric foreign policy. The administration, however, maintains a global reach foreign policy as it spreads its tentacles beyond the traditional 'partners' to the far East, Asia and Eastern Europe, especially in economic and military collaborations. This is evident in increased trade with China, and the subsequent agreement to adopt Chinese Yuan (against America's dollar) as medium of exchange between the two countries. In the intensified fight against Boko Haram terrorism, military hardware, equipment and personnel training are being procured from the US, Russia, Israel,

Jordan, among other strategic states, and renewed multinational joint task force with her immediate neighbours. Nigeria also entered into collaborations with notably the US, Britain and Switzerland in the 'fight' against corruption and repatriation of funds stolen and trafficked outside the country. While the outcomes of these relations are adjudged to be yielding positive fruits on the 'war' against terrorism and corruption, same cannot be said about the economy which has become essentially and heavily dependent on foreign borrowing and aid. Again, Nigeria-African relation under Buhari was reaffirmed with Nigeria's decisive action on the Gambia during the Yahya Jammeh saga in 2016/17. However, the political impasse was resolved without the actual use of force through ECOWAS intervention led by Nigeria and Senegal (John, 2017).

5. Overview of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Making and Implementation

A good point of departure in this section is to begin by understanding the task of foreign policy making and implementation. Whereas the bulk of foreign policy making does not pass from the President's table, this task ideally rests not only with the President, but also the National Assembly, Foreign Affairs Ministry and specialized institutes such as the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA). The task of implementing the policy rests with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nigeria's Embassies and Missions abroad. However, these roles are usually being complemented by the predominant personal diplomacy of the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Hence, Thompson and Macridis (1962) posit that policies of states relative to the rest of the world (which defines foreign policies) express the dominant idiosyncratic socio-political values and socio-cultural beliefs of the leaders. The brief regime-assessment of Nigeria's foreign relations above should attest to this position.

In particular, for instance, we recall President Obasanjo's several foreign trips – what is to become known as 'shuttle diplomacy' – ostensibly to woo foreign investors, solicit for the cancellation of Nigeria's external debt and redeem the image of the country battered by the despotic regime of General Sani Abacha. Equally, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, former Foreign Affairs Minister – in pursuance of his citizen diplomacy – embarked on a series of foreign visitations in search of pardon for Nigerians scheduled to be executed for involvement in drug trafficking or other crimes. In the same vein, in the history of Nigerian foreign policy implementation, the impact of the head of state was most pronounced

under late General Murtala Mohammed. The record shows that the regime depended more on the Nigerian Institute of Foreign Affairs (NIIA) – a foreign policy think-tank – than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for advice. Akinboye (2015), citing Fafowora (1984), maintains that the (Murtala/Obasanjo) regime was generally impatient with bureaucratic procedures in the Ministry and often acted with dispatch by dealing directly with the Institute. Perhaps, this was what informed the radical decision to recognize the MPLA government in Angola in contradiction to the hitherto America-backed unity government by the contending groups, and in reaction to South Africa’s invasion of Angola on the side of FNLA and UNITA (Akinboye, 2013).

Normally, in any democratic society, there ought to be legislative input to policy making (including foreign policies). However, the National Assembly’s contribution to foreign policy making has not been well pronounced in Nigeria. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs functions as the principal state machinery and engine room for making and implementing foreign policies, and coordinating the activities and reports of Nigerian foreign missions and permanent representatives for effective policy input. Ordinarily, an important requirement for the efficiency of the foreign policy process would be routine consultations and collaborations with concerned ministries such as trade and investment, finance and budget planning, petroleum resources, defence and information. However, this ingredient – inter-agency collaboration – is effectively lacking in Nigerian foreign policy (Nwoke, 2007).

The constitutional provisions on the subject matter of foreign policy are explicit and worthy of examination here. One of the issues addressed by the 1999 Constitution (as amended) is how the foreign policy responsibilities are to be shared particularly between the executive and legislature to minimize institutional conflicts and rivalries between the two arms of government. In other words, the Constitution guarantees the democratic ethics of popular participation through the legislature with institutional checks and balances in foreign policy making and implementation in Nigeria.

Such areas of shared responsibilities include the power to prepare for war, power to declare war and power to wage war. Section 217(1) of the Constitution authorizes the creation and existence of the Armed Forces of the Federation while section 218(1) designates the President as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The powers of the President in that regard are subject to legislative input and check. For instance, section 5(4)(a) prohibits the

president from declaring a state of war with another country without the approval of both houses of the National Assembly nor deploy any member of the armed forces on combat duties outside Nigeria without the approval of the Senate [5(4)(b)]. Equally, although the negotiation and conclusion of treaty is the exclusive responsibility of the President, section 12(1) mandates the ratification or codification of such treaty by the National Assembly before it has the force of law. This is what is usually meant by “domestication or non-domestication” of international instrument or law.

On the appointment and conduct of foreign relations, sections 147(2) and 171(4) respectively clothes the Senate with the power to ratify and confirm the appointments made by the President, of Ministers (in this case, the Minister of Foreign Affairs), Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other principal representatives of Nigeria abroad. It is important to emphasize that while such appointments require Senate confirmation, termination of same is exclusively at the pleasure of the President [171(2)(c)]. Again, the constitution seeks to secure and safeguard the divergent interests and components of the federation by directing the President in section 147(3) to be guided by the federal character principle when exercising his power of appointment under the foregoing. By so doing, the 1999 Constitution seeks to give vent to participatory and inclusive decision making by giving the component states access to foreign policy processes through their representatives.

Moreover, section 19 of the Constitution provides for Nigeria’s foreign policy objectives, hereby quoted *ipsisimaverba* as follow:

- Promotion and protection of National interest;
- Promotion of African integration and support for African unity;
- Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discriminations in all its manifestations;
- Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation and conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and
- Promotion of a just world economic order.

The first objective is noteworthy here because, as noted earlier, it underlines the principal goal for which states conduct foreign relations. Components

of Nigeria's national interest should include the following primary, secondary and tertiary interests:

- Defence and preservation of the country's independence, sovereignty, corporate existence and territorial integrity;
- Promotion and improvement of the economic well-being of Nigerians home and abroad;
- Restoration of human dignity to black men and women all over the world, particular the eradication of colonialism, slavery and apartheid from the world at large; and
- Promotion of world peace, justice and security (Akindele, 1988).

A brief remark on national interest issue in Nigeria's foreign policy is considered necessary here. In the field of International Relations, nation-states remain the most important actors in international system. It is from this position that the concept of national interest, that is, interest of the nation-state, derives its importance in the conduct of international affairs. One of the important, yet most controversial, principles of international relations is national interest.

The concept of national interest covers a category of values that are regarded as paramount to the sovereign state. These values vary enormously from one state to the other and may change over time. There is, however, an irreducible or uncompromisable core values for any state at any point in time. These core values are referred to as vital national interest for which a state is normally willing to go to war in the short or long run to protect. At a minimum, such vital interests include, as noted above, the protection and preservation of a state as a corporate entity (referred to as territorial integrity) and the preservation of its prestige. On the other hand, there is another category of interest which covers various values which the state also holds as important but for which it is not likely to go to war. The International Relations experts, Kegley and Blanton (2011), hold that ideally, in a nation's foreign policy process, contending national interest values are judged against one another in terms of priority, interest and the perceived power of the state to achieve them.

Specifically, it is the contention of this chapter that the core interest for which, if necessary, Nigeria should fight at a war to achieve is the completion of the independence project. This is essentially an enterprise of economic liberation from the shackles of economic underdevelopment; that is, assuming it has already secured its territorial integrity. Securing

economic liberation entails securing the welfare of the masses of Nigeria. If this will be, Nwoke (2013) posits that the country's diplomacy must be designed to fashion out a set of strategies and tactics which apply both implicit and explicit bargaining process to effect a fundamental change in the existing international economic order. In other words, ultimately, Nigeria's diplomacy should aim at establishing a new international division of labour and redistribution of global economic resources, assuming that the Nigerian 'giant' has not been effectively crippled (Osaghae, 1998) by both domestic and systemic forces. The issue now is that successive governments have been satisfied with collection of "rents" emanating from state resources; and nothing substantial is being pursued on the necessity to struggle for, and attain, economic independence.

Furthermore, the above five objectives of Nigerian foreign policy continue to substantially dominate and underpin the conduct of her foreign policy since 1960 with varied degree of focus and emphasis by successive regimes and administrations. Also, the objective on promotion of a just world economic order was only added by the 1989 Constitution (section 20) as a reflection of the Third World quest for a restructured international economy during the Cold War, what is to be known as the New International Economic Order (NIEO), an order that would be more sensitive to their needs, aspirations and interests. However, that drive, as we know today, is effectively dead. So, the question remains why it is still reflected in the 1999 Constitution? Perhaps the answer lies in adopting populist rhetoric to give impression that the popular interest of the masses is being served, what late Ake would call "defensive radicalism" (Ihonvbere, 1989).

6. Democracy and Nigeria's Foreign Policy Making and Implementation

The most important idea in the use of the concept of democratic governance here is participation by a wide spectrum of people and groups. In other words, the broad range of policy stakeholders should participate, at least in policy formulation. However, just as the depth of democracy is not impressive in the formulation and implementation of domestic policy, it is even worse in foreign policy. Thus, the secrecy which naturally surrounds foreign policy process definitely surpasses that of the domestic policy, even in the so-called citadel of democracy such as America. That is why a renowned philosopher called John Locke (1689) made the following observations in trying to underline the

serious limitation between legislative input and foreign policy:

What is to be done in reference to foreigners, depending much upon their actions, and the variation of designs and interests, must be left in great path to the prudence of those who have this power committed to them, to be managed by the best of their skill for the advantage of the commonwealth. (Cited in Gyngell & Wesley, 2003: 173)

This means that the area of foreign policy is so special and it is better lived in care of people who are skilled in it. These include: Ministries of foreign affairs, defence, internal affairs, commerce and trade, national planning and budget; universities and research institutions; mass media and interest groups; and essentially, the personal diplomacy of the president. In Nigeria, however, very few inputs of these formal institutions are sought, accepted or implemented. In other words, there appears a mere pseudo-democratization of the process of Nigerian foreign policy and conduct of external affairs. The executive arm has largely monopolized the process especially with the personalization of diplomacy.

It is important to note that democratized decision making is not when all citizens actually make decision (which is literally impossible) or directly participate in its making; it is rather participation in the political and administrative process through representation of major interests in the state. It is when decision made is responsive to the views, interests and aspirations of the citizens, and when there is legislative check of the executive arm in the policy process. In Nigeria, the tradition of situating foreign policy leadership and activism in the office of the prime minister, head of state or president has become so well established that, very often, the Foreign Affairs Ministry to which the responsibility for the conduct of Nigeria's foreign relations is assigned has not been centrally involved in the making of policy decisions as it ought to be.

One would expect full discussion among all the relevant agencies and organized consultations with interest groups and other such bodies. This has not always been so in Nigeria. What we have had are National Assembly committees (at both legislative chambers) on foreign affairs that essentially preoccupy themselves with endorsing ambassadorial nominees without rigorous screening and questioning, as well as visiting foreign countries with nothing to show for it. Some of these nominees rather enjoyed the tragic privilege to "take a bow and go" as displayed by the National Assembly in the most recent ministerial nominees' screening exercise (2019). This is the sense in which the current

National Assembly has earned for itself the appellation of a "rubber stamp" legislature. The point being emphasized here is that complete discussions on germane foreign policy issues hardly take place in these committees. To repeat, such committees lack the intelligence information and intellectual depth of analysis needed and they are not as proactive as they ought to be.

There have been pretenses to hold all manner of conferences, seminars or workshop on foreign policy, organized by either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the NIIA (Nigerian Institute of International Affairs). Specifically, the NIIA is reputed for organizing conferences on Nigeria's foreign relations as well as engaging itself in research on different areas of international relations. Research shows that the proceedings and communiqué disseminated therefrom have not been properly utilized. For instance, it is on record that neither of the resolutions of the 1961 and 1986 NIIA conferences formed the basis of any foreign policy (Nwoke, 2007). The government simply had its determined agenda and would not accommodate other populist demand. Again, such conferences involve scholars and, sometimes, practitioners, but certainly not a broad based group of Nigerian public.

On the whole, government's responsiveness to the demands of foreign policy consciousness in Nigeria has been inconsequential. It is clear that the wish of the government has always prevailed. One known exception was the abrogation of the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact in 1962 – a position championed by Nigerian students, news media, labour union and Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group party. In fact, when the Ibrahim Babangida regime pretended to seek the opinion of Nigerians to take or reject the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans in 1986, he still went ahead to take the loan notwithstanding heavy public opposition. Unfortunately, such lack of responsiveness was the reason the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) eventually sapped Nigerian economy and impoverished her people (Nwoke, 2010).

Moreover, it is critical to note that Nigeria sent military aircraft and personnel to Senegal to reinforce any military efforts in the Gambia and also sent a warship off the coast to evacuate Nigerians in distress (John, 2017) in January 2017 at the aftermath of Yahya Jammeh's refusal to hand over power; and deployed military expedition to Sudan (Darfur) in 2003/2004. Contrary to democratic and constitutional principles, the resolution of the National Assembly was neither sought nor factored in before such

decision. Also, while Nigeria was commendably involved in restoring peace and democracy to Liberia (2002-2005) and Sao Tome and Principe (2003), the cost and implication(s) of such gestures for Nigeria was never a subject of public discussion.

In the same vein, President Buhari, while attending a peace and development summit in Egypt in 2019 announced the “visa on arrival” policy for African nationals without seeking the opinion/approval of a broad spectrum of Nigerians, legislature or key foreign policy stakeholders. The disputed Bakasi Peninsula was, in the same manner, handed over to Cameroon (sequel to the judgment of the ICJ) regardless of popular opinion against such, and without proper consultations with the legislature – which should constitute the representatives of the people whose opinions remain largely inconsequential in adopting any foreign policy that, in the final analysis, will affect them. The fallout of the border closure (2019/20) and the ‘unfriendly’ Nigeria-South African relations (occasioned by the renewed xenophobic attacks in late 2019) should show the importance of popular inclusiveness in decision making. The series of Nigeria’s ‘big brother’ commitments in Africa have been made solely at the discretion of the President without adequate domestic consultations. In the final analysis, it would be recalled that recently, and against public disapproval and vehement opposition by the concerned professional body, the government of Nigeria invited and allowed some 15 Chinese (which the government described as “medical personnel”) to Nigeria. These Chinese were said to be medical experts who would assist Nigeria to “fight” COVID19 pandemic. Unfortunately, again, the outcome turned ugly and controversial as the government would later reveal that not only were some of them non-medical experts but also were not invited by the government.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has been able to demonstrate that while Nigeria has successfully transitioned from one administration/regime to another since her independence in 1960, and in particular, from one democratically elected government to another since the return to this present democratic dispensation in 1999, these transitions have not resulted in any significant change in the country’s foreign policy scope and modus operandi. Nigeria’s relations with African states, as with other states, have been largely peaceful but the processes of formulating her foreign policies have retained the personality-dominated style of the military era. Activism and dynamism remain scarce ingredients in her foreign policy making and

implementation. The kind of philosophical thinking, deep intellectual orientation and robust popular participation that should guide the foreign policy making and implementation are manifestly lacking. In other words, much of the country’s foreign policy processes are still shrouded in secrecy and bureaucratic logjam. Therefore, it is incumbent on Nigeria to design strategic policies that will ease the challenges of hunger, poverty and underdevelopment while positioning her for the deserved leadership status both within and without the continent Africa.

To this end, Nigeria must pursue a dynamic and proactive foreign policy targeted at improving the welfare of the citizenry and promoting her national interest. In such a critical time as this – with the damaging impact of corona virus disease (COVID-19) – the security and welfare of Nigeria’s citizens at home and in Diaspora should constitute the paramount consideration in any foreign policy designed by the government to cope with the external environment. Premium attention should be given to citizen diplomacy, which will in turn boost citizens’ morale with multiplier effects on the economy and other spheres of national life. The incident of environmental depletion in the Niger-Delta region, increased internally displaced persons, extreme poverty and out-of-school rate must be addressed with all sincerity. This will boost Nigeria’s international image and foreign relations.

Nigeria should jealously guide her democratic governance with necessary restructuring in the polity that promotes inclusiveness and social justice, and keep all forms of autocracy perpetually out of power. Sovereignty should belong indeed to the people in whose behalf the government is instituted. In other words, government must be engineered to serve the greater good of the greatest number of people. There can be no doubt that the dynamics of domestic environment constitutes a very significant influence on the success or otherwise of a country’s foreign policy. Thus, social vices such as political violence, kidnapping and ritual killing should be tackled headlong and sectional politics should be strongly disapproved, as they negatively impact the image of the country.

Nigeria should equally embark on building a diversified, self-reliant and industrialized economy capable of driving her foreign policy goals, supporting her military capability and propelling her to greater relevance in the international realm. It is believed that this will not only increase her contributions to the course of Africa, but also to establish her as a continental power respected by all

other state actors in the continent. Therefore, it is important that Nigeria delink now from any multilateral and bilateral relation or agreement that is not yielding any specific developmental dividends. This will also mean a total overhaul of the nature and structure of Nigeria's foreign policy to suit the reality of the twenty-first century.

Perhaps, the most important requirement for establishing the democratic culture in Nigeria's foreign policy would be the insistence that the National Assembly should exercise power of checks against the executive arm of government in the true spirit of the law which empowers it to actively participate in foreign policy process. Of course, this will assume that the National Assembly is truly representative of the interest of the Nigerian people, free from colonial orientation and unencumbered by personal interest and primitive accumulation.

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