FOREIGN POLICY AND NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA, 1999-2017

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Abstract

In international relations, foreign policy provides the framework through which states influence or seek to influence the external world in order to attain objectives that are in consonance with their perceived national interest. Nation building is simply the search for nationhood. It represents the process of developing national consciousness among groups and individuals who cultivate a sense of love for a given state. Through nation building, impressive elements of organizations are created with respect to political, social, and economic orientations. The study essentially focused on foreign policy and challenges of nation building in Nigeria. In this case, the level of national consciousness in a state normally has implications on the extent of the people's interest or participation on foreign policy issues. In other words, if a nation-state is properly integrated, that will impact on nation building and by extension foreign policy. The study adopted secondary means of data collection and descriptive method of analysis. The pluralist approach shall be applied as theoretical framework. The study reveals that the inability of the Nigerian state to effectively contain some centrifugal forces across the geo-political zones in Nigeria has negatively affected nation building in the country. The paper argues that the determination of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence has remained elitist, as the various agencies involved in its formulation are either hijacked, influenced or manipulated by the powers that be. The paper recommends an overhaul of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives to actually make it more people focused.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Nation Building, Pluralism, Ethnicity, National Interest.

Introduction

Foreign policy has remained a critical component of the public policy of nation-states as it affects their relations with other members of the international community as well as state and non state actors (Ojukwu, 2011). Hence, foreign policy expresses a nation's self interest strategies chosen to safeguard its national interest and achieve its goals within the international relations arena. The foreign policy of nation-states has usually been made to be dynamic as much as possible in line with the maxim in international relations that there is no permanent friend or enemy but permanent interest. For instance, the focus and posture of Nigeria's foreign policy has more or less been changing and passing through different phases since the attainment of political independence in 1960. At Nigeria's independence for instance, the nation's foreign policy was centred more on issues of protection of sovereignty; territorial integrity; national security as well as decolonization of other

colonized African countries. Others included: (i) issues relating to matters concerning national competitiveness in the globalized economy; (ii) promotion and defence of universal rights, (iii) protection of the environment and sustainable development as well as the promotion of peaceful co-existence and democratization (Obi, 2006).

Over the years, the experience from Nigeria's foreign policy posture has revealed the incapacity of the structures and processes of formulating, conceptualizing and implementing foreign policy decisions to meet with the challenges of an ever changing contemporary international system. From independence, Nigeria's foreign policy has been unsystematic, basically idiosyncratic and lacking in ideological and theoretical clarity. Foreign policy studies in Nigeria have generally been narrative inclined, not analytical and offer little basis for a choice of scientific framework to guide conceptualization, implementation and understanding of her foreign policy.

Given the size, population and vast human and natural resources of Nigeria, the country at independence was perceived as one destined to play crucial roles, not just for Africa's development but that of the world in general. Although Nigeria's foreign policy focus at independence was basically pro-western, it did not divorce itself from some active continental and global engagements such as Nigeria's opposition to France's testing of atomic bomb in the Sahara desert and severance of diplomatic ties with the country (Obiajulu & Obi, 2003). Successive Nigeria governments especially the military regimes made efforts to assume an assertive leadership position through foreign policy declarations and actions in the international area. By the mid-1970's, Nigeria military leaders attempted to define the country's foreign policy objective in line with its perceived leadership aspirations.

Nigeria's foreign policy focus as from the 1980's witnessed a shift in focus towards a preoccupation with peace keeping at the sub regional level and economic diplomacy at the international level. The new component of economic diplomacy in Nigeria's foreign policy was aimed at cushioning the harsh effects of the economic recession of the 1980's as well as ameliorating the consequences of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced by the Babangida regime.

The restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 ushered in a new phase of Nigeria's foreign policy. Hence, President Olusegun Obasanjo set for himself a new task of restoring the battered image and lost glory of Nigeria in the international community after several years of military dictatorship that attracted series of sanctions against Nigeria. In his inauguration speech, the President expressed that Nigeria that was once a well respected country and a key player in international bodies became a pariah nation and stressed that the task before the administration would be to pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and play a constructive role in the United Nations Organization (OAU, now AU) and other international bodies (Olasupo, 2015).

Efforts have continued to be made by the subsequent Nigerian leadership to re-define, and re-position Nigeria's foreign policy objectives in line with the challenges of the 21st century. In this vein, Nigeria has remained a key player in regional, continental as well as global engagements. In addition, the country has

intensified international contacts, search for foreign assistance on the war against Boko Haram insurgency and creation of wider market for Nigeria products.

The level of the success recorded in the realization of a nation's foreign policy goals contributes a lot to its nation building efforts. In this case, nation building is described as a work in progress: a dynamic process in constant need of nurturing and re-invention. As a continuous process, nation building never stops and true nation builders never rest because all nations are from time to time confronted with new challenges (Gambari, 2007). By implication, nation building constitutes the efforts aimed at constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. In other words, nation building is aimed at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the discharge of its responsibilities.

Nation builders refer to those members of a state who take the initiative to develop the national community through a number of government programmes (James, 2006; Mylonas, 2012). Nation building is effected through a lot of mechanisms such as the use of propaganda and major infrastructure development in order to foster social harmony and economic growth. Modern nation states such as Nigeria have been faced with myriads of challenges in the process of nation building. The extent to which a nation goes in effectively addressing these challenges significantly determines the level of its greatness. Foreign policy is usually an integral component of a nation's national interest. In other words, foreign policy has remained an instrument through which nation states realize their national interest. Foreign policy formulation and implementation as a tool in the pursuit of national interest is supposed to be people oriented and focused. The extent to which the people are carried along in this regard significantly affects their level of participation and by extension nation building.

The thrust of the paper therefore is to critically examine the nexus between foreign policy and nation building with a major focus on Nigeria. The objectives of Nigeria foreign policy as well as the challenges of nation building in Nigeria shall also be examined by the study.

Theoretical Framework

Pluralism

Pluralism literally "refers to a belief in more than one entity or a tendency to be hold, or do more than one thing" (Iain & Alistair, 2003: 410). This meaning covers all the political and social application of the word. In the late 19th century, pluralism was used to describe philosophical theories or systems of thought which recognized more than one ultimate principle as opposed to those which followed a "monist" orientation. Earlier in the United States, pluralism held the view that the country could legitimately survive more as a distinct ethnic group comprising of the Jewish – Americans, Irish Americans among others. The contemporary meaning of the pluralist model of society holds that the existence of groups gives society its political essence.

The modern view of pluralism was popularized in the works of F.R. De Lammenais who edited the journal "L'Avenir" in France, at the beginning of the 19th century. Lammenais launched attack against both individualism and the universalism of the enlightenment and revolution (Iain & Alistair, 2003). In Lammenais submission, the individual is a mere shadow who cannot be said to exist at all socially, unless as part of one or more groups. Modern pluralists especially Prominent American writers such as Robert Dahl and Nelson Polsby accede to the fact that society consists of competitive groups with political life attempting to influence the other.

Pluralism is often seen as a conservative doctrine when compared with Marxism which tend to portray society as one dominated by elites that exercise influence over the non-elite. For Bruse *et al* (2006:144) "pluralists emphasize the diversity of opinion and the unpredictability of particular political outcomes rather than any fundamental consensus on the form of political and economic order".

Applying the theory to the study, the making of Nigeria's foreign policy has remained a function of a plurality of elite groupings rather than a single power elite. In other words, different elites normally wield influence over a variety of issues such as defence, education, health, economy, security, power, trade, investment, external relations among others.

In the making of Nigeria's foreign policy therefore, the pluralist nature of the Nigerian state has continued to manifest in the sense that apart from the Ministry of External Affairs, the Presidency, relevant committees of the National Assembly; the inputs or opinions of other competitive groups in and outside the country have always been brought to bear. For instance, the re-organization of the External Affairs Ministry in 1981 which was sustained for years showed that foreign policy making has usually been a function of several key policy makers with competing interests. This is illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: The re-organization of the Ministry of External Affairs in 1981.
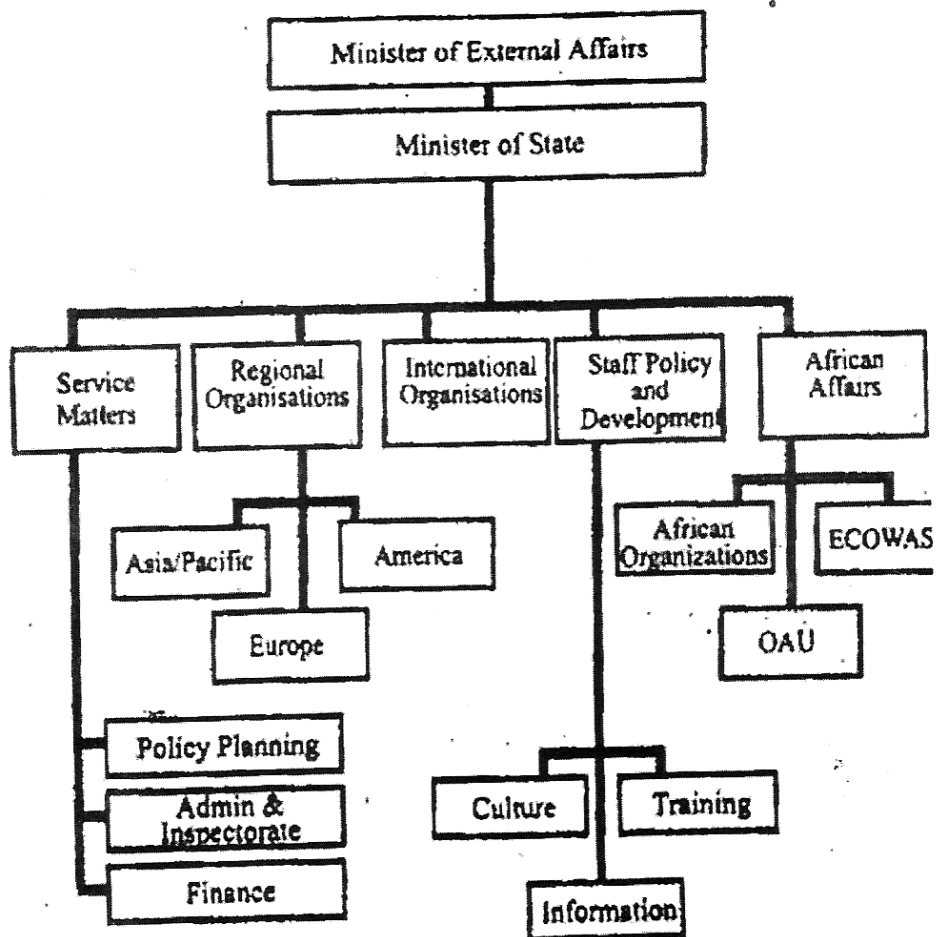
Source: Obi, E.A. (2015), *Fundamentals of Nigeria's Foreign Policy, A Study of the Role of National Interest in Foreign Policy making*, 2nd Edition, Onitsha: Bookpoint

Figure 1 clearly shows that even though the Ministry of External Affairs coordinates the activities of the Ministry, the making of Nigeria's foreign policy has hardly been dominated by one section of the elite. At various levels, the pluralist nature of the Nigerian State usually manifest as the competing groups attempt to exert their influence or relevance on national and international issues.

Conceptual Clarifications

Foreign Policy

The concept of foreign policy has attracted different meanings and interpretations from both scholars and practitioners. According to Aluko (1981:1) "nobody has really formulated a universally acceptable definition of foreign policy and nobody will ever succeed in doing so". Joel (1993) describes foreign policy as the sum total of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations. In the latest century however, different international actors, such as agencies, companies and organizations whose impact in the international system cannot be undermined have entered the matrix of foreign policy relations. Among these are; Multinational corporations; religious organizations and movements; inter-governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations; development agencies as well as charities, have become critical components in the foreign policy discourse (Gebe, 2008).

For Ojukwu (2011: 362-371) foreign policy which is also known as the "international relations policy is a set of political and economic goals that seeks to outline how a country will conduct its interactions with other countries of the world." Generally, foreign policies are designed to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals and economic prosperity. Foreign policy also consists of decisions and actions which involve to a considerable extent, relations between one state and others. By extension therefore, foreign policy lays down general objectives with regard to the world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to realize set objectives. The implication here is the desire of a need to influence the behaviour of other states or international organizations.

Reynold (1980) submits that foreign policy refers to the totality of the external actions taken by decision makers with the intension of achieving long range goals and short term objectives. Illustrating further, Modelski (1962) argues that foreign policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment.

In its broadest view, foreign policy constitutes the outlined objectives or set of attitudes of a state towards the international environment, an implicit plan about a country's relationship with the outside world; a conscious image of what is or ought to be the country's place in the world or some general guiding principles or attitudes determining or influencing decisions on specific issues (Ojukwu, 2011). This view point corroborates Adeniran's (1983) assertion to the effect that foreign policy consists of three elements. One is the overall orientation and policy intentions of a particular country towards another. The second has to do with the objectives that a country seeks to achieve in her relations or dealings with other countries and the third is the means for achieving the stated goals or objectives.

In his simple definition, Northedge (1968: 5) conceptualizes foreign policy as "an interplay between the outside and the inside". This view however does not

properly define the nature or form of this interplay among states. According to Charles & Abdul (1979: 32) "the foreign policy of a state usually refers to the general principles by which a state governs its reactions to the international environment". In one of his works, Joseph (1975) sees foreign policy as consisting of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and another. For Holsti (1995) foreign policy is all about the formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape a state's behavioural pattern while negotiating with other states to protect or further its vital interests.

Contributing, Plano & Olton (1982 :7) contend that foreign policy "is the strategy or planned course of action developed by the decision makers of a state vis-à-vis other states or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in terms of the national interest." William (1997) sees foreign policy in terms of high diplomacy, concerned primarily with other states, with international stability and the rules of the international system. The promotion of the national interest through the cultivation of good relations with other governments, negotiation and maintenance of international agreements usually form the bedrock of foreign policy.

From these scholarly views, it could therefore be deduced that foreign policy represents the instrumentality through which sovereign and independent states influence or seek to influence the international environment. This is to enable them attain those state objectives that are in consonance with what they perceive as their national interest. Hence, Nigeria's foreign policy represents those explicit objectives which Nigeria wants to pursue and achieve in her external interactions.

Major Features of Nigeria's Foreign Policy since Independence

The major features of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence have been noted by Oyediran et al (2005) to include the following:

i.   Friendship and cooperation with other nations that respect Nigeria's territorial sovereignty and independence;
ii.   Non-alignment with any of the power blocs, that is, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or Warsaw Pact;
iii.   Peaceful resolution of inter-state disputes;
iv.   Africa as the centre piece of Nigeria's foreign policy;
v.   Respect for the territorial integrity of other states in Africa based on the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs;
vi.   Eradication of colonialism and racism in Africa (apartheid in South Africa) and support for liberation movement in Southern Africa;
vii.   Joining other states to find peaceful solution to some crisis spots in the West Africa sub-region such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Sudan, etcetra;
viii.   Economic cooperation and expansion of trade in Africa and West African sub-region through the formation of free-trade zone, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Foreign Policy and National Interest

Foreign policy and national interest have remained twin concepts in International relations. Countries engage in international politics in order to protect or preserve their national interest. The sum total of the actions, means, or strategies through which the national interest of a state is pursued constitutes the state's foreign policy (Obiajulu & Obi, 2003). Usually, the foundation of a state's foreign policy is her national interest. In other words, countries essentially engage in international politics with a view to protecting or furthering their national interest. National interest has therefore remained the bedrock of Nigeria's foreign policy making. According to Umeh (2012:66) "national interest refers to those objectives or goals which a state wishes to pursue in both her domestic and foreign policies as a means of furthering its power and the well being of its citizens".

Morgenthau (1952) submits that national interest has to do with those interests that are aimed at promoting national image, prestige and respect of the country, both at home and abroad. He argues that national interest is determined by the political traditions and the total cultural contexts within which a nation formulates her foreign policy. National interest usually play pivotal role in the foreign policies of sovereign states. A state's foreign policy does not operate in a vacuum, hence, the major policy instrument in the conduct of foreign policy has remained the promotion and pursuit of national interest.

National interest serves two broad purposes. As an analytical tool, it serves as a conceptual guide as it provides the objectives considered by a state while weighing an intended foreign policy option. As an instrument of political action, it serves to justify or repudiate a state's foreign policy option and action in the international system (Solomon, 1999). The nexus between foreign policy and national interest led a renowned international relations scholar, Hans Morgenthau to conclude that "no nation can have true guide as to what it must do and what it needs to do in foreign policy without accepting interest as that guide" (Hans, 1973: 6).

Generally, national interest serves as a guide to the formulation of foreign policy. It is a means to an end and not an end in itself. National interest remains a method of reaching a goal, and in formulating such goals, core values and national ethos must be considered (Solomon, 1999). Recognizing the pivotal role of values in defining national interest, Joseph (1976: 76) submits that "value describes the inner element brought to bear by the decision makers upon the process of making decision.

Objectives of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

What constitutes the objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy since her political independence in 1960 have continued to be spelt out by the successive administrations in Nigeria. Just like every other country, Nigeria's foreign policy is principally guided by her national interest. The earlier administrations in Nigeria did not properly articulate what constituted Nigeria's national interest. It was only during the regime of General Murtala Muhammed that the Adedeji commission was set up to handle the assignment. In line with the commission's report, General Obasanjo in June 1976 outlined the objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy as follows:

- The defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;
- The creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time, foster national self-reliance and rapid economic development;
- The promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world;
- The promotion and the defence of justice and respect for human dignity especially the dignity of the blackman;
- The defence and promotion of world peace (Aluko, 1978: 1).

Both sections 19 of the 1979 constitution and section 19 of the amended constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) clearly spells out the foreign policy goals of the nation as follows:

> The state shall promote African unity, as well as total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international cooperation conducive of the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states, and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestations (Section 19 of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended).

In line with Nigeria's constitutional provisions, the state has been making frantic efforts through the instrumentality of foreign policy to secure better relations between Nigeria and other members of the International Community. Hence, concerted efforts have continued to be made towards securing debt relief for the country, bilateral pacts and agreements as well as seeking international collaboration on the fight against terrorist insurgency.

Principles of Nigeria's Foreign Policy
In spite of the different orientation and leadership styles of the various regimes in Nigeria (civilian and military) the principles guiding the conduct of the nation's foreign policy have continued to be upheld. These are summarized below:
- Sovereign equality of states;
- Respect of territorial integrity and independence of other states;
- Non interference in the internal affairs of other states;
- Commitments to self determination and independence of other states;
- Commitments to functional approach as a means of promoting cooperation and peaceful co-existence in Africa; and,
- Non-alignment to any geo-political power blocs (Olusanya & Akindele, 1986:3).

The Determinant's of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

By determinants of Nigeria's foreign policy, is meant "those factors which have shaped or influenced (and still shape or influence) the foreign policy orientation of Nigeria" (Obiajulu & Obi, 2003: 296). Although some scholars have argued that the identification of these factors among African states look like an uphill task as they are relatively new states, Aluko (1981) still believes that such factors exist, only that some of the states in Africa are still grappling with the challenges of nation building and have hardly established any tradition or pattern of foreign behaviour. Secondly, the gap between executive declarations and actions have been quite enormous (Obiajulu & Obi, 2003). In Nigeria for instance, historical analysis of her foreign policy shows that both internal and external factors have been playing some considerable roles in the determination of the direction of Nigeria's foreign policy.

Internal Factors

Solomon (1999: 369) has identified some of the internal factors to include:

(1)   **Political Structure of the Country:** Nigeria federalism reflects multi-ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious setting. Nigeria's political elites have always dominated the country's foreign policy formulation which have been products of the multi-ethnic and traditional forces. Their perception on foreign policy has always been brought to bare as exemplified on the issue of resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel, Nigeria's purported membership of the organization of Islamic conference during the Babangida regime and the acceptance of the world court ruling on Nigeria versus Cameroun border dispute over the Bakassi peninsular in favour of Cameroun in 2002.

(2)   **State or Structure of the Economy:** The state of a nation's economy, either strong or weak significantly determines the extent the country would go in the pursuit or realization of her foreign policy. For Nigeria, her economy largely exhibits a neo-colonial structure with high dependence on export of primary goods and imports of finished commodities. Nigeria's improved economy and oil boom in the latter part of the 1970's enabled her to pursue a dynamic foreign policy; hosting of the FESTAC 77; and playing its big brother role in Africa. The Gulf war wind fall during the Babangida regime also enabled the regime to finance and strengthen the ECOMOG operations which assisted in the restoration of peace in war torn Sierra Leone and Liberia. (Obiajulu & Obi, 2003). However, the economic recession and declining economic fortunes of the country especially after her golden jubilee celebration has almost reduced the status of the country to that of a "limping giant" in the international community.

(3)   **Character of Political Leadership or Idiosyncratic Variables:** Foreign policy actions are more or less personalized in the sense that whatever a regime does is usually a reflection of the individual that occupies the seat of the President or Head of state. Since independence, Nigeria's external relations can be said to be a reflection of the character of the leadership either as civilian or military. In addition, Nigeria's

relations with its neighbouring countries and the world at large have considerably been a reflection of the character of the leaders. For instance, "from Balewa's conservative nature, Murtala/Obasanjo's dynamism; Babangida's robustness; Abacha's criminality and thuggish nature; Obasanjo's sagacity during his civilian regime; to late Yar'Adua's welfarism have remained serious fluctuations in Nigeria's foreign policy over the years (Obiajulu & Obi, 2003: 297). Other identifiable internal factors are "military factor, demographic factor, and internal political dynamics" (Solomon, 2003: 372; Obiajulu & Obi¸ 2003:272).

External Factors

External factors are those factors which a country may not necessarily exercise a direct control over them. That is, these factors in certain ways affect the country's foreign policy from outside its borders. These factors are summarized below:

(i)   **Geographical Location:** A country's geographical location significantly affects its foreign policy decisions. For instance, where a country is surrounded by hostile neighbours, her foreign policy decisions may not always be friendly just like the state of Israel and her Palestinian neighbours.

(ii)   **Civil War or Outbreak of Violent Conflicts:** Where a country is faced with severe national difficulties such as a civil war or such other inter or intra state hostilities, such may affect the direction of the country's foreign policy. Nigeria for instance, encountered the experience following the outbreak of the civil war in mid 1967 which was described as a single factor that had great influence on Nigeria's foreign policy. Hitherto, Nigeria was pro-west in her foreign policy outing, but given the neutral stand of Britain and America (not assisting Nigeria during her period of need) or giving Nigeria the needed military assistance to fight the Biafran secessionists, Nigeria felt disappointed and had to turn to the Soviet Union that readily agreed to give Nigeria the needed military equipment. (Obiajulu & Obi 2003).

(iii)   **The Cold War:** The cold war (1945-1991) which is used to describe the ideological unhealthy rivalry between capitalism and socialism as represented by the two super powers, the United States and the Soviet Union was a major international issue that polarized the international system into two major camps. For most countries such as Nigeria, a policy of non-alignment was adopted (neither pro-west nor pro-East). The policy was made to ensure that countries under the aegis of non alignment would judge every issue on its own merit. Consequently, the non aligned policy became a factor in the foreign policy of most states including Nigeria. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the relaxation of the tension between the former Eastern and western blocs has reduced the relevance of the non aligned movement.

(iv)   **Commitment to Decolonization or end of Colonialism and Apartheid in Africa:** Like some other countries across the globe especially in Africa, Nigeria

demonstrated her avowed commitment to the decolonization of other colonized territories in Africa when it gained independence from Britain. Nigeria's effort to the independence of Angola and Namibia as well as her anti-apartheid struggle led to the labelling of Nigeria as a frontline state despite its geographical location. Late Kwame Nkruma's regime in Ghana also saw total liberation of the African continent as a major component of Ghana's foreign policy. For Nigeria, her African centred foreign policy and opposition to colonialism and white racist regime in Africa conditioned her foreign policy.

(v)   **Membership of Regional or International Organizations and Signatory to International Treaties:** A country's involvement in theses bodies and treaties normally shape and influence her foreign policy since it will be under obligation to honour or respect the provisions of the charter. This has remained the case with Nigeria given her membership and active roles in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the United Nations Organization.

Experience has shown that in the making and pursuit of the foreign policy of modern nation states, due consideration has usually been given to both the internal and external factors. In other words, nation-states demonstrate a high degree of rationality by not treating the factors in isolation in view of the consequences such may lead to.

Nation Building

Dare et al (2015: 52-67) describes nation building as "an act of engaging the resources of the state in working tirelessly towards building a strong nation through the democratic process or military hegemony." In other words, nation building refers to the process of passing through one challenge or the other in a nation's bid to achieve stability. A broader idea of nation building has been offered by James (1996) where he describes nation building as national formulation which he views as a broader process through which strong nations emerge, which implies that the aim of nation building is the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run.

However, Magstadt (2009: 299) presents a comprehensive version of nation building when he argues that "nation building denotes, the process which all the inhabitants of a given territory, regardless of individual, ethnic, tribal, religious or linguistics differences come to identify with the symbols and institutions of the state and share a common sense of destiny." Drawing from this, nation building has to do with the process that involves everyone in a given society. It is a process which brings about the elements of continuity in generating the forces necessary for nation building. This phenomenon requires that the component elements of the nation must in their mutual interest come to identify with the symbols and institutions of the state (Odoemelam & Aisien, 2013). As the scholars argue, identification with the symbols and institutions of the state enables the composing elements to share a common sense of belonging. This common sense of belonging therefore propel members of a country to act in the best interest of their political system. However, this view is far

from what obtains in Nigeria where many Nigerians identify with the national anthem, the pledge, the national flag, the coast of arms and the constitution without demonstrating the needed spirit of national unity required for nation building. Through nation building, efforts are geared towards keeping a nation as an indivisible entity whereas patriotism implore individuals to place the interest of the nation above their personal, group and ethnic interest (Adejumo, 2014; Ogwuonuonu, 2014). According to Gambari (2008:2):

> Nation building has many important aspects. Firstly, it is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory; based on some generally accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. Secondly, it is also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity – institutions such as a bureaucracy, an economy, the judiciary, universities, a civil service and civil society organizations.

Highlighting further, Gambari (2008: 2) contends that "nation building is about building a common sense of shared destiny and collective imagination or sense of belonging among a people." Nation building efforts are centred around building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose and direction. Globalization and rapid international flows of people and ideas in the 21st century are, for instance, aimed at achieving modernity which is expected to enhance the viability of nation states.

Friedrich (1966: 32) sees nation building as a "matter of building group cohesion and group loyalty for purposes of international representation and domestic planning irrespective of what has been the building stones of the past". Similarly, Almond & Powel (1966: 36) submit that "nation building implies a process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages or principalities to the larger central political system." As Obasi (2001: 239) argues, the "central element in nation building is the desire and effort to achieve unity among the multi-ethnic groups that make up a state." In other words, national integration constitutes the core of nation building (Obi, 2006).

Over the years, Nigeria has acquired the ascriptive status of being addressed as the "Giant of Africa" not necessarily because of the quality of her national institutions and values but just because of her large population and oil wealth which is currently facing serious problems. However, national greatness is earned and not just a matter of size or abundance of natural or human resources. For instance, China and India for long had the largest world population but it has not been quite long that they arose as important global players. Similarly, with her few natural resources, Japan has long managed to turn itself into a global economic powerhouse even with the devastation of her two major cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States atomic bomb in the early 1940's.

In the contemporary world, national greatness is measured more by the acquisition of skills, industriousness, productivity and competiveness, not even the

acquisition of nuclear bomb. The 17th century reknowned economist, Adam Smith rightly pointed out that the wealth of a nation is not based on the wealth and opulence of its rulers but on the productivity and industriousness of its citizenry.

Challenges of Nation Building in Nigeria

The relatively new nations in Africa of which Nigeria is among has been grappling with severe challenges in their bid to building virile nation states. One major implication of this has been their persistent crisis of development. Some of these challenges are discussed below:

(i)   **Ethnicity:** For most of the countries in Africa, "ethnicity has remained a major challenge" (Obi & Obikeze, 2003: 150). There has been the problem of integrating the heterogeneous ethnic groups scattered all over the nations in Africa. These groups more or less see themselves as competitors and not partners in development. According to Nnoli (2008: 5) "ethnicity is a social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of the largest possible competing communal groups (ethnic groups) seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system". On the consequences of ethnicity, Nwabughuogu (2016: 52) contends that:

> Ethnicity promotes opportunism as a norm in a nation state. The struggle for scarce resources by the component ethnic groups creates a situation where each group is concerned more with what it can get out of the national cake and not how it can help bake the national cake. This leads to waste of resources which could have been channeled to the promotion of common good.

Other challenges of nation building in Nigeria have attracted the attention of scholars such as Gambari (2008) and Ele (2003). For instance Gambari (2008: 2) identified five main nation building challenges in Nigeria which are "the challenge from our history; (2) the challenge of socio-economic inequalities (3) the challenges of an appropriate constitutional settlement; (4) the challenges of building institutions for democracy and development; and (5) the challenges of leadership."

(ii)   **The Challenges from our History:** In Nigeria, colonial rule left behind some historical legacies, which have continued to negatively frustrate efforts towards nation building. Colonial rule divided Nigeria into Northern and Southern protectorates with different land tenure system, local government administration, education system and judicial systems. This was unlike the case in India and Sudan that had a single administrative system. From the days of nationalist struggle till date, Nigeria politics has continued to be divided along ethnic lines. Although Nigeria's founding fathers adopted federalism and a policy of unity in diversity to arrest this situation, this has not been consolidated. A current manifestation of Nigeria colonial legacy has been the division between "indigenes and settlers' which has been the source of domestic tension and antagonism in the country.

(iii)   **The Challenge of Socio-Economic Inequalities and Contradictions:** For several decades in Nigeria, there has been a serious and worsening disconnect between the socio-economic needs of the citizens and what they actually get from the system. The gap between the rich and the poor have continued to be widened leading to a high level of frustration, poverty and alienation among majority of the citizens. The people have continued to be denied of their basic rights to education, health, security and social services whereas the rich and members of the political class uncompromisingly wallow in luxury and affluence. Consequently, majority of the citizens are disillusioned, inertia and less motivated and patriotic in giving support to government programmes and policies. Instead, acts of sabotage have been the order of the day in certain places by some group of individuals who feel that they have little or nothing at stake to benefit from the country.

In terms of education, poverty level and unemployment, there has been glaring disparities among people of the various geo-political zones in the country. As for the level of poverty in Nigeria, former Central Bank Governor, Charles Soludo in 2006 revealed that while 95% the population of Jigawa State was classified as poor, only 20% of Bayelsa state was so classified. Similarly, while 85% of Kwara State was classified as poor, only 32% of Osun State was so classified (Soludo, 2007). A common nationhood would remain a mirage when citizens are living in pararell lives and when socio-economic inequalities remain a threat to citizens survival.

(iv)   **The Constitutional Challenge:** Since Nigeria's independence, the country has been facing the challenge of drafting a constitution that has the backing and participation of an overwhelming majority of Nigerians. The nationalist leaders earlier battled with the problem by adopting the principle of federalism. However, Nigeria's federal system has assumed a pseudo-style whereby some of its principles have continued to be compromised by the powers that be. Although several efforts have been made by the various regimes (civilian and military) to address the emergent problems, yet, dissenting voices have continued to be expressed on the need to restructure the country.

(v)   **The Challenge of Building Virile Institutions for Democracy and Development:** As Gambari (2008: 3) contends, "one of the greatest challenges of nation building is that of building relevant national institutions capable of managing political, social, ethno-religious and other conflicts effectively and sustaining economic development without creating huge inequalities." Nigeria has quelled into this by establishing certain institutions in this regard such as those for fostering public integrity such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC). Most times however, there has been growing public outcry over the activities of these bodies as they are often used by the executive to hunt members of the opposition and treat loyalists as sacred cows. Another important institution for the consolidation of the democracy and strengthening of nation building is the judiciary popularly known as the "Watchdog" of the other arms of government. The judiciary

not only arbitrates disputes between the various levels of government, it also does so between the government and the citizens and among the private sector agents. Since the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria in May 1999, the judiciary has been very much alive in its role on democratic consolidation. Before now, the level of judicial rascality on electoral adjudication or ruling was much pronounced especially among the lower and even the Appeal Courts. The apex court has however inspired much public confidence and respect because of the quality of its judgment especially in some politically sensitive cases as witnessed between 2015 and 2016 on some gubernatorial electoral disputes in states such as Abia, Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Taraba where the gubernatorial elections where won by the candidates of the opposition party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

(vi)   **Leadership Challenge or the Challenge of Good Governance:** The celebrated novelist, poet and literary icon, Chinua Achebe had once observed that the trouble with Nigeria is that of failure of leadership. Nation building cannot take place when there are no nation builders (selfless, visionary and committed patriots). Gambari (2008) argues in this context that leadership takes two important and related ways. The first has to do with the personal qualities of integrity, honesty, commitment and competence of individual leaders at the top. The second has to do with the collective qualities of common vision, focus, and desire for the development of the elites as a whole. For several years in Nigeria, the pattern of leadership recruitment and performance has left sad memories in the mind of the people.

To realize the Nigeria project and by extension nation building, Gambari (2008:2) submits that:

> We do not need leaders who do not understand the economic and political problems of the country, not to talk of finding durable solutions for them. We do not need leaders who are more interested in silencing their opponents, than in pursuing justice. We do not need leaders who preach on thing and do the exact opposite. We do not need leaders who place themselves above the constitution and the laws of the country, but leaders who lead by upholding and respecting the law, we do not need leaders who have no sense of tomorrow other than that of their private bank accounts.

On the contrary, Gambari (2008: 2) argues that if Nigeria must succeed in nation building:

> We must have a leadership that is committed to the rule of law and has a demonstrable sense of fair play and democratic tolerance, a leadership with ability and integrity; above all else, we must have a leadership that can see beyond the ostentatious pomp of office. We must

have leaders who have a vision for a Nigeria better than the one they inherited. Leaders who will lead by deeds and not by words; achievers, not deceivers. We need a leadership that will not only leave its foot-prints on the sands of time, but one, which by dint of hard-work, fair play, dedication and commitment will live forever in the hearts of Nigerians.

Link between Foreign Policy and Nation Building:

The foreign policy goal of nation states is usually aimed at strengthening state security which is a function of the strength of a given country's leadership. Policies taken may either maintain the status quo or blatant imperialism (Ojukwu, 2011). As Hartman (1983) argues, because a foreign policy consists of selected national interests presumably formulated into a logically consistent whole that is then implemented, any foreign policy can be viewed analytically from the three phases of conception, content and implementation. Conception takes into consideration the strategic appraisal of what goals are desirable and feasible given the presumed nature of the international system. Content is the result and reflection of that appraisal. Implementation considers both the coordinating mechanisms within a state and the means by which it conveys its views and wishes to other states.

In the views of Winker & Bellows (1992) although inefficiencies and failure can be very costly in any of the three phases, conception represents the most critical phase as the realization of the desired goals impacts a lot on nation building. To a considerable degree, the quality of the foreign policy of a nation state significantly affects the domestic front and by extension nation building. In Nigeria for instance, Late Abacha regime's combatant policies especially at the international level only succeeded in making Nigeria "a pariah state" in the eyes of the international community. This attracted series of sanctions against Nigeria from the common wealth, Organization of Africa's Unity, (OAU, now African Union), the United Nations among others which went further to frustrate Nigeria's efforts towards nation building.

With the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria in May 1999, the civilian leaders have been working towards restoring Nigeria's battered image and lost glory among her international partners at both regional, continental and global levels. Concerted efforts are also been intensified to find solutions to some security and economic challenges that have hindered the development of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. For instance, Chief Obasanjo's administration succeeded in 2002 to secure a debt relief for Nigeria to the tone of 27,008 billion dollars which presented Nigeria as the highest indebted country in Africa (CBN, 2002).

Nigeria's foreign policy under Obasanjo's administration also saw the then president being instrumental to gathering African leaders to work towards establishing a code of conduct in economic and political reforms that would satisfy the conditions and expectations of western donors. At the June 2001 Group of Eight summit in Genoa, Italy, President Obasanjo was among the four leading African

Heads of State to initiate a plan called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD was designed to "garner aid from donors in return for African commitments to good governance" (Olasupo, 2015: 58-63).

The present administration of President Buhari has been using the opportunity of series of his foreign tours to strengthen Nigeria's foreign policy and to explain Nigeria's anti-terror efforts as well as the anti-craft war in order to woo investors and other foreign partners to have confidence in doing business in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the nexus between foreign policy and nation building with a major focus on Nigeria. The focus of Nigeria foreign policy since independence has not entirely been consistent in principles and objectives. To a considerable degree, every regime in the country has usually tried to define, re-define and re-shape Nigeria's foreign policy in line with the contemporary challenges, and pressure from the domestic and the external environment. The study has revealed that what is called Nigeria's national interest has not actually been the major motivating factor behind Nigeria's foreign policy. Rather, idiosyncratic variables and leadership interest have taken more precedence over what could be described as national interest. In other words, certain ideals, goals, and values pursued by those involved in the initiation, formulation and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy have remained nebulous and elitist without meaningfully enhancing efforts towards nation building.

Nation building which is concerned with integrative efforts to enable the people have a nationalistic, instead of ethnic consciousness has remained problematic in Nigeria since the attainment of political independence in 1960. The more some centrifugal forces militating against nation building in Nigeria are handled, the more others emerge (Niger Delta Avengers). Recently, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) also arose in the South-East geo-political zone championing the cause for secession from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. There is therefore a dire need for a more determined and concerted efforts on the part of the leadership to effectively address the age long factors that have hindered (and still hinder) Nigeria's quest for nation building.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the paper hereby recommend as follows:

(i)   **Refocusing and re-defining Nigeria's Foreign Policy:** In view of the going economic recession, and security challenges in Nigeria as well as other global challenges of the 21st century, there is therefore a dire need to refocus and re-define the content, principles and objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy for it to overcome the challenges of the times. Nigeria need to consistently expand her external connections strategically, politically and economically in order to attract the needed foreign partners that can assist Nigeria overcome the challenges of terrorism, economic recession and technological backwardness.

(ii)   **The Independence and Strengthening of the Institutions for Good Governance and Nation Building:** In view of the critical role of such constitutions as the judiciary, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), effort should be made without delay to amend the relevant Acts or Laws that established them in order to make them real independent so as to be free from unnecessary executive control and other undue influences that have resulted to public outcry in recent times.

(iii)   **Unbias and Non Partisan Fight against Corruption:** As corruption has been identified as one major cankerworm that has derailed nation building efforts in Nigeria, the fight against it should be intensified without any compromise. There should be no sacred cows. Objectivity and fair play should however be the guiding principles.

(iv)   **Revamping of the Economy through Economic Diversification:** In view of the present sorry state of the Nigerian economy, concerted efforts should be made to diversify the economy through investment in non oil sectors. The national debate on the sale of national assets would only tantamount to sacrificing the geese that lay the golden eggs. Efforts must be made therefore to provide jobs for the teeming unemployed youths perhaps through entrepreneurship. Finally, as the economic recession bites harder government is urged to come up with palliatives to cushion the effects of the on going economic recession as it happened during the days of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The Marxist Leninist economic determinism which emphasizes on "food first" before religion and politics should not continue to be undermined in Nigeria.

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