



AN EXAMINATION OF NIGERIA AND UNITED STATES RELATIONS: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: *The diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the United States over the years have been marred by ups and down, progressive and regressive character. This paper examined the diplomatic relations between both countries under the Goodluck Jonathan and General Buhari's administration (2011-2021). The paper focused on both countries diplomatic relations specifically on pandemic response and health, bilateral economic engagement, educational and cultural exchanges and peace and security engagement. Anchoring the paper's theoretical review on trait theory of the leadership, the paper reviewed the collected historical data and conducted a comparative analysis of Goodluck's administrations' foreign relations with the United States (2011-2015) and that of his successor, President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2021). The review revealed that Goodluck and Buhari shuttle diplomacy is yet to achieve a convincing impact on the international community in terms of establishing a strong foreign relation with the U.S and the challenges of Nigeria's foreign relations is how to overcome its integrity crisis, and thereby securing the desired respect for its citizens internationally. This paper further revealed that Buhari's foreign relation with the United States has more impact on Nigeria's economy than that of Goodluck administration, even though the challenges are still present in the Buhari administration such as the Boko-Haram insurgency, unemployment, farmers-headmen crises, kidnapping, police brutality, and so on. The paper recommended that for Nigeria to promote a viable national interest it must pursue and promote a dynamic and assertive foreign relation with the United States and other big nations of the world.*

KEYWORDS: International relations, Nigeria-US foreign policy, Foreign military financing, Strategic partnership, Terrorism, Boko-Haram insurgency.



INTRODUCTION

For more than five (5), the United States (US) and Nigeria both have fun-strong security partnerships and friendships. The United States-Nigeria relations stands as the best in sub-Saharan Africa, because of Nigeria's status as Africa's most populous country, having the largest economy, a leading oil producer, and the shared democratic values between the U.S. and Nigeria. The United States has closely worked with Nigeria, both at the bilateral level and in regional and multilateral level such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS, and the African Union (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020).

Over the years, US-Nigeria joint efforts have focused on increasing cooperation in maritime and border security, military professionalisation, counterterrorism against general insecurity such as the Boko Haram insurgent and ISIS-West Africa (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020; Akwaya, 2019). The nations of West Africa are still characterised by varying levels of stability and socioeconomic concerns among which is the ranging terrorism in the sub-region (Medu, Sanubi & Orhero, 2023). These relations have also spread to trade relations and enhance governance in the country. Diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the US between 1999 and 2021 have been riddled by ups and downs. From 1999 to 2003, Nigeria-US relations improved and were cordial; while from 2003 to 2004, the relations plunged into a full scale diplomatic tussle occasioned by the US led invasion in Iraq, which Nigeria saw as inappropriate (Gional, 2021).

From 2005 to 2009, both counties relations improved and became cordial that translated into robust and increased economic activities for Nigeria. However, from the 2009 to 2010, Nigeria-US relationship was badly affected resulting from Nigeria's inclusion on the terror list by the US government; and from 2011 to 2013 (Goodluck Jonathan Administration, which period the study also covers) both countries relations became more stable and they entered into a new phase of strategic partnership to fight against insurgency and terrorism. But from 2013 to 2015 this boosting relations reduced drastically as US felt constrained due to the alleged widespread violations of human rights, systemic corruption and lack of political will to advance the living conditions of ordinary Nigeria citizens. Soon after the Goodluck Administration (from 2011 to 2015), Nigeria was faced with a severe economic and financial crisis resulting in the suspension of the purchase of crude oil by the US from Nigeria.

From 2016 to 2018, the diplomatic relations with the US improved considerably resulting from the near transparent election that brought the opposition party of People Democratic Party (PDP) that is the All Progressive Congress (APC) into power (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020; Gional, 2021). The relation with the US was also strong due to the resolute will of the Nigerian APC-led government under President Buhari to tackle corruption. Ever since then and in recent times, the US-Nigeria relations have been strengthened through mutual benefits for both countries and the struggle against international terrorism. As part of the US contribution to Nigeria towards fighting insecurity, the U.S. Department of State obligated \$6 million of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding for the Nigerian military from 2016- 2020 (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020). As a partner in the Africa Military Education Program (AMEP), Nigeria has benefited over \$1.1 million since 2016 to support instructor and/or curriculum development at Nigerian military schools (Gional, 2021).



Furthermore, between 2016 and 2020, \$1.8 million granted to Nigeria for foreign military financing was to render support towards maritime security, military professionalisation, and counterterrorism efforts. Nigeria, as an active member of the Trans-Sahara Counter-terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) has benefitted from the \$10.6 million worth of training, equipment, and advisory support for counterterrorism efforts between 2017- 2020 (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020; Akwaya, 2019). The \$1.519 billion government-to-government sales cases under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) system are another area where the United States has helped Nigeria. The significant sales cases include the \$997 million purchase of up to 12 AH-1Z Attack Helicopters in 2022, the \$497 million purchase of 12 A-29 Super Tucano aircraft to support Nigerian military operations against Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa, and the \$25 million funds allocated for institutional and technical assistance to the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN). Additionally, they gave the Nigerian law enforcement authorities specialised training on the Law of Armed Conflict and International Humanitarian Law (Gional, 2021).

An agreement to exchange common forms of assistance, such as food, fuel, transportation, ammunition, and equipment, was struck by the US and Nigeria in 2016 (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020). Therefore, from 2000 till date, despite the ups-and-downs diplomatic relations between the US and Nigeria, the United States has had a Status of Forces Agreement with Nigeria establishing the legal framework under which US military personnel may operate when present in Nigeria. In the context of this paper, The US- Nigeria diplomatic relations are a primary driver of economic motives which has in turned sharpen the relationship between the two countries not only for West African countries, but also foreign powers that believes that Nigeria's leading role in Africa growth would provide the motivation for other African Countries (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020). So, it is of importance to know the role played by the Goodluck and Buhari administrations in strengthening the diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to examine the US-Nigeria relations. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To offer an overview of the US.-Nigeria relations;
2. To evaluate the Goodluck Jonathan's administration's foreign relations from 2011-2015; and
3. To assess the Buhari's Administration's foreign relations from 2015-2021.



REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

U.S-Nigeria Relations: A Chronological Background

After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria established its external ties with the rest of the world under the direction of the late Alhaji (Sir) Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, its prime minister. The goals and guiding principles of Nigeria's foreign policy place a strong emphasis on Africa as the focal point of the country's overall foreign policy (i.e. preoccupation with Africa issues). It may be noted that before becoming independent, Nigeria was ruled by the British. "At independence, the British influence and interest in Nigeria was overwhelmingly active as to allow for any obvious role for the Americans," Saliu and Aremu (2006) said. There was no significant desire to alter the status quo because the United States and Great Britain were (and still are) close allies. As a result, in terms of commerce, aid, and technical assistance, the United States placed third in Nigeria immediately following independence, behind Britain and Germany (Gional, 2021). But several things happened in 1960 and 1961, respectively, and in the late 1970s that collectively predetermined the unavoidable pattern of Nigeria-United States ties in the years to come (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020).

First, on October 1, 1960, the United States officially recognized the Federation of Nigeria in a message of congratulations to the Nigerian people that was broadcast on Voice of America radio by Secretary of State Christian Herter. In 1960, the United States and Nigeria also established diplomatic ties. In order to await the delivery of his letter of credence on October 4, 1960, Joseph Palmer II assumed command of the American Embassy in Lagos on October 1, 1960. The pattern of Nigeria's diplomatic relations with the US closely matched the external economic pattern, and in fact reinforced it, as Ate (1986) pointed out. Nigeria gave the US and the UK its utmost diplomatic attention, and the two countries worked closely together on important modern African concerns. Through the help of the US, a Nigerian named Dr. Jaja Wachukwu, who served as Nigeria's temporary permanent representative to the UN, was chosen to lead the UN Conciliation Commission on the Congo on November 17, 1960. President John F. Kennedy of the United States announced an offer of \$225 million as long-term economic assistance for Nigeria on December 12, 1961 (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020).

Nigeria had bilateral ties with the United States for the first six years of its independence, from 1960 to 1966, and this had significant political repercussions for its foreign policy. For the 1962–1968 National Development Plan, the US in particular contributed \$949.2 million, or more than 50% of the total. Nigeria-US ties underwent a significant and pivotal change at the commencement of the Nigerian civil war in 1967. Osaretin and Ajebon (2012), observed that "America's support for Nigeria was delicate and complicated. American developed pro-Biafran sympathies and rallies with the secessionist movement". To put it another way, contrary to the perception that the US supported the Nigerian government, there was benign sympathy for the Biafran cause in the US (Lyman, 1988). Thus, Nigeria's odd fascination with the former Soviet Union was sparked by American disinterest and perceived reluctance to back the Nigerian government during the conflict. As a result, when the US imposed an arms embargo on both sides, the Soviet Union quickly emerged as the Federal Military Government of Nigeria's primary armaments supplier (Akwaya, 2019). As a result, Nigeria's relationships with the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc were promptly normalised and strengthened after the war. It also led to a re-affirmation of and stronger attachment to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of states as well as non-alignment in Nigeria's external affairs (Saliu & Aremu, 2006; Gional, 2021).



Numerous things happened after the Nigerian civil war, significantly straining ties between Nigeria and the US. The US Information Service's main office was seized and occupied by the Nigerian military in 1975. Following this, the Nigerian government declined three times to meet with US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Demonstrators also attacked the US Embassy in protest of what they claimed was American involvement in the Angolan civil war and the killing of General Murtala Mohammed (Lyman, 1988). However, after Nigeria's shift to civil rule and adoption of the American-style presidential and federal systems in 1979, American interest in Nigeria was once again piqued. The military overthrew Alhaji Shehu Shagari's civilian government in 1983. (Gional, 2021). The long period of military administration in Nigeria, which lasted from 1983 to 1999, was marked by a pervasive lack of goodwill toward the United States. To preserve Nigeria from foreign invasion, the military juntas took a number of acts that put the country squarely in opposition to the US (Idahosa & Adebayo, 2021).

From 1999, when Nigeria entered into a democratic governance, the US relations with Nigeria began to gain relevance and momentum as the US saw Nigeria having similar political structure as the one operated in the United States (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020). Since the inception of democratic governance in Nigeria, the United States Government has entered into different diplomatic and strategic partnerships with Nigeria in different areas of the Economy. A look at the strategic partnership will provide a clear picture of the U.S.-Nigeria Relations over the years. It is worthy to note that this strategic partnership also covered the Goodluck and Buhari Administrations under comparison by this study.

Nigeria-United States Foreign and Strategic Partnership

The different strategic partnerships that the United States of America have entered with Nigeria are as follows:

The U.S.-Nigeria Relations: With Africa's largest population, democracy, and economy, Nigeria stands as the US most important partner on the continent. Nigeria has served as the largest source providing immigrants from Africa to the United States, with more than 500,000 Nigerian-born American citizens and legal residents in the US (Okoro, 2002).

Pandemic Response and Health Diplomacy: Nigeria and the United States have worked closely together to fight the COVID-19 outbreak. On the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, more than 60 interagency officials from the US Mission collaborated with their Nigerian counterparts to prepare and combat the disease. Equipment and technical support for COVID total more than \$73 million in contributions from the US. This involves providing a mobile field hospital, 200 ventilators, personal protective equipment, fast response teams, epidemiological COVID detection studies, training for over 200,000 military and civilian employees on COVID-19 control measures, and technology transfer for virtual training. More than 60 million Nigerians are served by ongoing US health programs, which include training public health workers and increasing access to high-quality drugs, vaccines, medical facilities, and reproductive health supplies. Since 1997, the United States has directly sponsored polio surveillance and polio campaigns that have virtually completely reached Nigeria's 33 million children under the age of five. This has helped Nigeria become polio-virus free in the wild by the year 2020. As part of a \$690 million contribution to malaria control in Nigeria since 2011, the US President's Malaria Initiative has purchased more than 60 million insecticide-treated nets, 46 million rapid diagnostic test kits, 87 million malaria treatment courses, and 20 million doses of malaria prophylaxis during pregnancy. The mission approved \$3.4 million in 2020



GHSA funding for capacity building programs to strengthen zoonotic surveillance labs, infection-prevention control, antimicrobial resistance, and risk communication, with Nigeria continuing to be a key U.S. partner in the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) (Saleh, 2006).

Bilateral Economic Engagement: The US claimed that Nigeria is their second largest trading partner in Africa; two-way trade between U.S and Nigeria expanded to over \$10 billion in 2019. One of the biggest foreign investors in Nigeria is the United States. The U.S. support for economic growth includes funding \$8.5 million in feasibility studies and technical assistance in 2020-2021, extending loan guarantees worth up to \$80 million, and coordinating development finance in important sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, renewable energy, and information and communication technology. These activities have supported bilateral trade and investment ties while building more modern and sustainable infrastructure across Nigeria. Through “Feed the Future”, a US government program aiming to combat global hunger and ensure food security, the US have supported private sector expansion of markets, as well as introduced techniques to increase productivity, strengthen resilience, and improve nutrition for more than two million farmers and their communities.

Educational and Cultural Exchanges: With over 100,000 travellers to the United States each year, Nigerians boost American businesses, colleges, and universities. More than 8,800 Americans and Nigerians who participated in exchange and educational programs have graduated. Nigeria is the tenth largest source of international students to the United States and sends more students to American schools and institutions than any other country in Africa (Olukoshi, 2012). To promote early grade reading, the United States distributed more than 9 million teacher's manuals and books in five of Nigeria's most popular languages.

Striving for Peace and Security: Northeast Nigeria has become one of the world’s most challenging and complex humanitarian crises; the United States happened to be the largest humanitarian donor in response to the crisis, thus providing \$1.45 billion since 2015 and supporting almost two million conflict-affected households. Since 2017, the Department of State and Department of Defense security have assisted Nigeria with \$650 million, including \$500 million in Foreign Military Sales. The United States has delivered twelve A-29 Super Tucano aircraft to Nigeria. Nigeria also has one of the largest US-assisted International Military-Education and Training (IMET) programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. The United States has promoted strong and broad collaboration between government and civil society at all levels, including civil society organisations led by women and members of marginalised groups. The US provide technical assistance, and train and equip law enforcement and judiciary professionals to address a wide range of priorities, ranging from stopping banditry to protecting intellectual property rights to more effectively addressing trafficking in persons and gender-based violence. Law enforcement programming focuses on building capacity for civilian security actors, particularly the Nigeria Police Force. All these, and many more are what the strategic partnership between the US and Nigeria have brought into Nigeria and the U.S. By implication, both countries are mutual benefactors of the strategic partnership.



Theoretical Framework

There are several international relations theories that can be useful when analysing a nation's foreign policy since they give us frameworks and schemes to attempt and fit a nation's activities into, allowing us to categorise them as belonging to one type or another. Theories, in essence, give us a way to categorise a nation's foreign policy. Some fundamental theoretical traditions in international relations revolve around interpreting foreign relations. The Structural Leadership theories are appropriate for the study because it is the style of leadership that determines the extent of attraction of foreign relations to any nation. As in the case of Nigeria, the study looked at two similar but distinctive administrations. Therefore, we are going to be looking at two structural leadership theories, which are the Great-Man theory and the Process Leadership theory.

Great-Man Theory

Since most civilizations depend on heroes to describe their triumphs and provide an explanation for their failures, efforts to identify common characteristics of leadership have been ongoing for centuries. In 1847, Thomas Carlyle said that "universal history, the history of what man has accomplished on this earth, is at the bottom of the history of the great men who have toiled here." He said this for the benefit of the heroes. Carlyle claimed in his "great man theory" that leaders are born and that only those men who are endowed with heroic potentials could ever become the leaders. He opined that great men were born, not made. Sidney Hook, an American philosopher, elaborated on Carlyle's ideas by emphasising the difference between the impact that an eventful individual could have and an event-making man (Dobbins & Platz, 1986). He suggested that the historic situation was complicated but not actually decided by the eventful individual.

He argued, however, that the event-making man's activities had an impact on how things turned out because they could have gone quite differently if he hadn't been involved. The development of "the results of remarkable capacities of brain, will, and character rather than the actions of differentiation" as the basis for man's function in society. The Great Man notion, however, was called into question when it became clear that this idea of leadership was ethically faulty, just like that of Hitler, Napoleon, and others of a similar calibre. These brilliant men lost their relevance, which stunted the organisations' growth (MacGregor, 2003). The great man, who with his intelligence and foresight could rule with dictatorial authority as the head of a developing institution but inadvertently slowed democratisation, has received the final blow from the passing years. The notion that leaders are born or are destined by nature to be in their function at a certain time was subsequently replaced by a reflection of certain features that foresee a potential for leadership in the field of leadership theory.

Process Leadership Theory

Servant leadership, learning organisations, principle-centred leadership, and charismatic leadership are more theories of leadership with a process orientation; new ones are always being developed. In the early 1970s, Greenleaf introduced servant leadership. Early in the 1990s, there was a noticeable upsurge in the conversation around servant leadership. Servant leaders were urged to pay attention to their followers' concerns and to sympathise with, care for, and nurture them. Someone who was a servant by nature received the leadership. "The servant leader focuses on the needs of the follower and helps them to become more



autonomous, freer and knowledgeable”. The servant leader is also more concerned with the “have-nots” and recognizes them as equal (Greenleaf, 1996). The steward (servant) of the organisation's vision, not its members, is what leaders in leading organisations are expected to do.

Leaders in learning organisations clarify and nurture the vision and consider it to be greater than one-self. The steward (servant) of the organisation's vision, not its members, is what leaders in leading organisations are expected to do. These process leadership theories and others that have emerged often suggest that the work of leaders is to contribute to the well-being of others with a focus on some form of social responsibility. There appears to be a clear evolution in the study of leadership. Leadership theory has moved from birth traits and rights, to acquired traits and styles, to situational and relationship types of leadership, to the function of groups and group processes and, currently, to the interaction of the group members with an emphasis on personal and organisational function of groups and group processes and, currently, to the interaction of the group members with an emphasis on personal and organisational moral improvements (Yammarino, 1999).

According to these views, whether a leader is unyielding, a workaholic, or a patriot determines whether an administration will succeed or fail. For instance, due to the fearlessness and tenacity of the military during the military administration, Nigeria adopted an extremely aggressive and vibrant foreign policy (Akwaya, 2019). However, under a civilian government, the opposite is true because Nigeria's foreign policy regressed. According to this thesis, Nigeria's development therefore depends on the moral integrity of Nigerian leaders. Meaning that the bartered image of Nigeria will be revived if the leader is patriotic, hardworking, incorrupt, and shows resolute effort in confronting problems of image crises of Nigeria, and vice versa.

RESEARCH METHOD

The historical approach was used in this paper's data collecting and analysis, with a focus on secondary data sources and qualitative data analysis. The study used a comparative methodology, comparing the foreign policy of the Goodluck administration (2011–2015) with those of his successor, President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2021).

DISCUSSIONS

The following are the critical issues that were discussed: Nigeria-United States relations under the Goodluck and Buhari’s administrations

U.S.-Nigeria Relations: General View

Nigeria's relations with the US have been riddled by regular swings of ups and downs but with significant records of assistance in the followings such as the military professionalism and security sector reform, the fight against terror, trade and investment and debt relief and financial assistance. On military professionalism, the Nigerian army (armed forces) needed to be “professionalised” in order to institutionalise respect for civilian control in the new democracy”. This became a top priority for succeeding administrations, and US support was



sought for the project. This ultimately resulted in Nigeria and the U.S. signing a military agreement known as the "Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)" or "The Nigeria and US Military Pact"

According to Omoruyi (2001), a private US company, Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), was invited to train members of the Nigerian Army under the terms of the agreement, which is officially known as the Millennium Action Plan. MPRI was specifically given the following tasks: implement a plan to install civilian control over the military; redesign the military's three branches; trim the bloated forces; and develop a strategy for dealing with the officers who lose their jobs. The US supplied 3.5 million dollars for the agreement's implementation, and the Nigerian government was required to equal that amount with 3.5 million dollars to be paid to MPRI. This suggests that the two nations worked together to put the accord into effect. Recall that the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact was rejected in 1959, just before Nigeria gained independence, for two reasons.

First, it would unjustly prevent the impending independence of Nigeria. Furthermore, it was thought that the Defence Pact would unnecessarily bring Nigeria into a military conflict that would be against its interests (Akwaya, 2019). The pact's implementation began with the formation of Operation Focus Relief (OFR), which included a training facility in Serti, Nigeria, and a number of components primarily designed to maintain civilian control over the military as one of the safeguards for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria (US Department of State, 2022). However, its implementation attracted diverse reactions. As the then US Ambassador in Nigeria, Howard Jeter clearly observed, "Operation Focus Relief was unprecedented in Africa. And it really speaks to the importance the United States places on its relationship with Nigeria both as a partner for peace, and force for stability in Africa".

According to Lt Gen. Victor Malu, who served as the then-chief of the Army staff (quoted in Saliu and Aremu, 2006), "MPRI came into the country to help re-professionalize the nation's Armed services. We objected to certain of their programs when they were being developed because they threaten national security. We have a responsibility to protect our country since we are a sovereign one. They don't have to explain the plan to us. Malu objected to the agreement, saying that "your best friend today could be your worst enemy tomorrow," and that it represented American military adventurism in Nigeria. It is vital to note that President Olusegun Obasanjo forced and prematurely retired Gen. Victor Malu from the Army in response to the aforementioned protest.

However, there were significant protests from Nigerians, particularly the military, for three reasons, according to Alao (2011). Many initially perceived it as a sort of foreign dominance. Second, the enormous sum involved, especially at a time when many Nigerians were living in poverty and where essential infrastructures like water and electricity were failing. Third, the implementation of such an agreement would require Nigeria to transition from relying on North Korea and the former Soviet Union (now Russia) for its armament to US military systems. The National Assembly, which has a responsibility to play in matters relating to the deployment and employment of armed troops domestically and abroad, was not consulted prior to the President's decision to join the treaty, which was perceived by Nigerians as one of the President's unilateral actions. In the end, the agreement was broken in 2003. (Akwaya, 2019). Therefore, it is evident that the US's involvement in Nigeria's military and security reform cannot be justified in light of the doctrine of sovereignty, which maintains that every nation, regardless of size, is unquestionably in charge of its internal affairs and forbids foreign nations



from meddling in those affairs (US Department of State, 2022). Under the pretence of assisting in security sector reform, the US may have been doing its customary cynical calculations to advance its interests.

Regarding the fight against terrorism in Nigeria, a significant blip in relations between the US and Nigeria occurred in December 2009 when a Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, was detained during an unsuccessful bombing attempt on Northwest Airlines Flight 253, which was flying into Detroit from Amsterdam. Following the arrest, the world's attention turned to the international community, and the US's first move was to add Nigeria to its "Terror Watch List." As a result, Yar'Adua/Goodluck Jonathan's administration began to worry about it and made it a priority in terms of foreign policy. Nigeria must join in a public condemnation of terrorist acts wherever they occur in the world, Nigeria should take immediate action to address security lapses at its airports, Nigeria must be a party to an agreement to deploy air marshals on all US-bound flights originating from Nigeria, and Nigeria's anti-terrorism bill, pending at that time, among other requirements. As Ameh and Ibrahim (2010) have pointed out, the US gave the following conditions for dropping Nigeria from the terror list (Akwaya, 2019). The Nigerian Senate has now approved this legislation.

It is also important to note that these conditions were established following numerous diplomatic efforts between the US and the Nigerian government (US Department of State, 2022). The "Terror Watch List" is a list of nations that the US believes to be supporting terrorism or terrorists, which should also be noted. The list also included Pakistan, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Algeria, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan at the time that Nigeria was included. However, Kaarbo & Ray (2011) suggested that the moral stigma associated with the term "terrorism" has led to political actors using the classification of organisations as terrorists (or states as supporting or funding terrorism) as a tool to assess the legitimacy of their alleged adversaries. As a result, the US State Department's decision to include a country on the list of governments supporting terrorism is solely political and is not based on any objective criterion (Long, 2000). This study notes that by imposing the terms of the criteria, notably by encouraging Nigeria to approve an anti-terrorism measure immediately, the United States was meddling in Nigeria's internal affairs and law making process in addition to prescribing for or imposing its decisions on a sovereign state (US Department of State, 2022).

Nigeria had prioritised commerce in its relations with the US in terms of the trade and investment that came from the US government into the Nigerian economy. Trade ties between the two countries have expanded (US Department of State, 2022). The core of Nigeria's strategy was to enhance the connection in order to boost its economy. US investment in Nigeria has also been repeatedly demanded. Currently, Exxon/Mobil, Chevron, and Western Geo-physical were the principal US investors in the Nigerian oil sector. British American Tobacco Company, a tobacco company, and CitiBank, a bank, are two further US corporations operating in Nigeria. The majority of the nation's commerce with the US is, as to be expected, cantered on oil, and Nigeria continues to be one of its main exporters of crude oil. The US and Nigeria signed a Trade & Investment Framework Agreement in the year 2000. (TIFA). The following US-Nigeria trade facts are revealed by data from the Office of the United States Trade Representative (accessed October 2, 2019): With \$7.8 billion in total (two-way) goods trade in 2019, Nigeria is now the 54th largest goods trading partner of the US. Exports of goods totalled \$3.2 billion, while imports of goods came to \$4.6 billion. In 2019, the US and Nigeria had a \$1.4 billion goods trade deficit. Nearly all of Nigeria's exports to the US were crude oil.



Nigerian imports into the US in 2019 made up 17.9% of all US imports (Akwaya, 2019). The top five import categories in 2011 were: Rubber (\$28 million), Cocoa (\$61 million), Special other (returns) (\$26 million), and Food Waste (\$6 million). Mineral Fuel (oil) ranked first with \$4.4 billion in imports, followed by cocoa (\$61 million), rubber (\$28 million), and food waste (\$6 million). In 2011, Nigerian agricultural exports to the US came to \$107 million.

Cocoa beans (\$56 million) and rubber (\$28 million) are the top two categories (US Department of State, 2022). Additionally, Nigeria participated in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The US passed the Act in May 2000 to grant 6,400 items from sub-Saharan African nations duty-free and quota-free market preferences through 2015. Shrimps, ginger, gum Arabic, cocoa goods, cashew nuts, shear butter, and indigenous delicacies are among Nigeria's top AGOA non-oil exports to the US (US Department of State, 2022). But it appears that Nigeria has not benefited from AGOA as much as it might have (Akwaya, 2019). This is due to the products' lack of commercial viability in the US. The challenges a company faces while registering in Nigeria also seem to have diminished its prospects of gaining from this endeavour.

An Overview of Goodluck Jonathan's Administration's Foreign Relations (2011-2015)

Former President Goodluck Jonathan was named acting president of Nigeria after former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua passed away on May 5, 2010, and served in that capacity until he was elected president of Nigeria in 2011. He largely upheld Yar'Adua's foreign policy objectives but also used economic and shuttle diplomacy with the United States in an effort to entice foreign investment (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2020; Boma-Lysa et al., 2015). In accordance with his administration's domestic relations initiative, known as the "Transformation Agenda," President Jonathan ordered a review of the Foreign relations document with the U.S. after becoming convinced that significant changes had occurred over the course of Nigeria's foreign relations thrust's 50-year history. The Jonathan administration's foreign policy was widely seen as a continuation of his predecessor's foreign policy emphasis (Idahosa & Adebayo, 2021).

However, the administration's efforts to improve its foreign ties, particularly with the United States, were vital to realising its Transformation Agenda. Ituma (2012) states that the macroeconomic framework and economic direction, job creation, public expenditure management, governance, justice and judiciary, legislature, education, health sector, labour and productivity, power sector, information and communication technology, Niger Delta, transportation, foreign policy, and economic diplomacy were all objectives of this Transformation Agenda (Idahosa & Adebayo, 2021). These goals were not achieved despite Jonathan's efforts due to domestic unrest, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency; in fact, this time period was the most tumultuous in terms of unrest that Nigeria has ever known (Akwaya, 2019). To be clear, Ishiekwene (2016) stated that it does indeed seem as though "the chickens have gone home to roost," as Nigeria is currently dealing with what is maybe the most challenging internal security issue in its history, in addition to the challenge of the greatest economic downturn in 25 years.

The terrorist group Boko Haram's and other groups' activities have made this nation's affairs appear to be moving backward. In a similar vein, Jacob and Akintola (2014) claimed that the terrorist actions of the Boko Haram sect had a significant negative impact on Nigeria's foreign relations and its ability to conduct business internationally, which had substantial negative effects on the nation's economic development (Idahosa & Adebayo, 2021).



The forging thus affected the government's reception of foreign investments and military aids from the US. US foreign investors found it difficult to invest in Nigeria as a result of insecurity and pervasive corruption. On the side of international support to help Nigeria to fight against terrorists of Boko Haram, Nigeria was not highly welcomed because of its lackadaisical nature it showed in eradication of insecurity in the country. Infact, the administration's relationship with the US left much to be desired. Little wonder the US Government refused to sell arms to Nigeria to aid in the fight against Boko Haram, thus prompting Nigeria to turn to Russia (Akwaya, 2019). More so, increased poverty in Nigeria has also smeared Nigeria's foreign relations.

Consequently, Nigeria's foreign relations with the US under the Jonathan administration were not one that was very palatable because of the government's weak and somewhat ineffective and inefficient ties with the U.S. (Duke, Agbaji, Charles, Akhabue & Alaga, 2020). Also, the inability of the government to crush the Boko Haram insurgents cast a dark cloud on the Jonathan administration's domestic and foreign policy agenda, though the government worked assiduously to ensure the delisting of Nigeria from the US terror list (Odubajo, 2016).

An Overview of Buhari Administration's Foreign Relations (2015-2021)

Muhammadu Buhari, who beat incumbent Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party, won the presidential election on March 28, 2015. When Buhari took office, Nigeria was dealing with some of its most pressing political and economic issues in recent memory. President Buhari adopted the same "Shuttle Diplomatic" strategy as his predecessor, which focused on foreign direct investment. President Buhari made a number of trips abroad, particularly to major international powers including China, the United States, Russia, Britain, and the United Arab Emirates in a bid to reduce insecurity and the economic slump that had damaged relations with Nigeria (Idahosa & Adebayo, 2021). Buhari requested the support and cooperation of the international community during his tours in order to combat insecurity, particularly Boko Haram.

In this regard, the United States of America significantly aided Nigeria in its fight against insecurity. The US's sale of 12 Embraer A-29 Super Tucano aircraft to Nigeria seemed to indicate that Buhari had been successful in improving US-Nigeria relations, which had significantly deteriorated during the Jonathan administration when Nigeria was blacklisted. The Buhari administration also reaffirmed its partnership with the US in the battle against corruption, which resulted in the repatriation of properties and money that had been stolen and concealed there (Iroegbu, 2016; Gional, 2017). The president has made an effort to pitch Nigeria as a refuge for business prospects to governments and corporations throughout the world in an effort to address Nigeria's economic challenges. In fact, by not making any distinctions against any region of the world based on ideology or religion, the president has left a lot of room for interpretation. As he negotiated bilateral and multilateral agreements with the United States of America, China, United Arab Emirates, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, and other friendly countries, this, according to Duke, Agbaji, Charles, Akhabue and Alaga (2020), has had a favourable effect. The Buhari government deserves praise for its invitations to the G7 and G20 Summits, receptions in foreign capitals, and the absence of any significant foreign policy blunders in accordance with the country's economic international relations emphasis (Idahosa & Adebayo, 2021). This proved that Nigeria's foreign relations have improved somewhat as a result of its engagement in cordial interactions with other nations throughout the world (Akwaya, 2019).



Comparing the foreign policy strategies of the Jonathan and Buhari governments revealed that, as the trait theory explains, the style and approach tend to vary. This reflects their individual quirks, as Jonathan's foreign policy was centred on the Transformation Agenda, whereas Buhari's foreign policy was centred on luring FDI and enlisting the support of the international community to aid Nigeria in its fight against insecurity, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency. The resemblance is that the foreign policy goals of the Jonathan and Buhari administrations' foreign relations are very similar (Idahosa & Adebayo, 2021). The peculiarities of both presidents (Jonathan and Buhari) must be contrasted and evaluated. This will provide a clear explanation of why one administration is more successful than the other, which will naturally assist other leaders learn from both of them and make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

A nation's ability to interact with other nations reflects its acceptance internationally. For Nigeria, an evaluation of civility in terms of behavioural conformity with international legal principles cumulates to global acceptability. Nigeria has been working hard for years to repair its damaged international connections, which are the result of poor leadership, insecurity, a failing economy, etc. The Goodluck and Buhari shuttle diplomacy has failed to make a significant impression on the international community in terms of forging solid diplomatic ties with the United States. The difficulties Nigeria faces in its international relations include how to resolve its integrity dilemma and so win the required respect for its citizenry.

Although the challenges faced by the Buhari administration, such as the Boko Haram insurgency, unemployment, farmers-headmen crises, kidnapping, police brutality, etc., are still present, this paper showed that Buhari's foreign relations with the U.S. have a greater impact on Nigeria's economy than those of the Goodluck administration. This essay makes the case that in order for Nigeria to advance a legitimate national interest, it must pursue and advance a robust and assertive foreign relationship with the United States and other major international powers. Because that is the foundation for American support and investment in the Nigerian economy, Nigeria should make purposeful efforts to reduce insecurity, crime, and corruption through strengthened institutions of governance and effective surveillance based on resource provision and judicious management. Finally, the Nigerian government must work toward democratisation, good administration, and the protection of human rights.



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