

Elections, Security Challenges and African Development



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NIGERIA IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Reclaiming Nigeria's Foreign Policy Depreciating Empire: An Insight on Africa Centre Piece Policy (1999-2015)

Aremu Fatai Ayinde, Isiaq Atanda Abdulwaheed
& Aluko Opeyemi Idowu

Abstract

Nigeria has made giant strides in the pursuance of peace and stability in Africa and indeed in the world. Nigeria no doubt in the last four decades had been ravaged with all manner of developmental difficulties such as poverty, communal conflict, corruption, bad leadership, uncommitted followership and impudent advisers. The empire of Nigeria's foreign policy is depreciating due to acute security challenges. The aim of this study is to examine the extent of depreciation in the Nigeria's foreign policy of Africa centre piece policy and proffer ways of reclaiming it to its best status. The question this paper seeks answers to is that what makes Nigeria's Africa centre piece foreign policy unpopular and what can be done to reclaim it back to its best status of operations? The theoretical framework of rational choice theory is adopted to show the rational behaviour of actors in decision making and the consequences of their actions. The methodology adopts process tracing and Ajrobarometer secondary data to interrogate and answer the questions raised. The findings revealed that Nigerians want her state to concentrate less on other countries due to its high cost incurred and low productivity derived from the rational decision. The paper concludes that Nigeria should focus more curtailing her security challenges and recommends that Nigeria should tie her economic gifts to other African States to a concrete diplomatic feedback and at the same time, all other African states should align with Nigeria in international politics and relations so as to enjoy more political and economy largess from Nigeria.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Nigeria, Democracy, National Interest, Africa centre piece.

Introduction

Countries of the world in the recent times have witnessed some measures of economic recessions and other developmental challenges which have some effects on their external image among the comity of Nations. Nigeria as well no doubt in the last four decades had been ravaged with all manner of developmental difficulties such as poverty, communal conflict, corruption, bad leadership, uncommitted followership and impudent advisers. This had become worse in the recent years where terrorism and communal chauvinism and conflict had become rampant in the polity. All this have a great effect on the foreign policy of Nigeria.

The recent feat of the internal insurrection of the Boko Haram which had assumed an external aggression dimension had become a dent on Nigeria's external image (Saliu, 2016). Many nations taught Nigeria would cruise over and crush the menace within hours or days but it had lasted for years. It is a common saying that no country had won a war against terrorism in the world and that it is usually an ongoing war to be fought through physical combatants and diplomacy surveillance. As if the Boko Haram insurgency is not enough, the dead issue of Biafra emancipation from the eastern part of Nigeria is suddenly reawakened. This also poses a threat to the sovereignty of the country and has a weight of pressure on and external image among the comity of nations. The resultant repercussion is a depreciation effect on the Nigeria's foreign policy empire (Aremu and Aluko, 2016).

Despite these challenges, it is not a gain saying to emphasize that Nigeria is seen as a big brother to Africa and some part of the world. Lawal and Aluko, (2016) noted that the areas where Nigeria had thrown and extended her kind largess to other nations include; security, peace keeping and peace building. Nigeria had also supported many African nations in the restoration of true independent status and the sustenance of the inaugurated democracy. In fact, professional personnel like doctors (with or without borders), nurses, engineers and teachers had been sent to some war ravished areas of Africa for possible nation building processes (Lawal and Aluko, 2016).

However, Nigeria has made and is still making giant strides in the pursuance of peace and stability in Africa and indeed in the world. Nigeria's foreign policy since independence in 1960 had not been changed the mantra of Africa as centre piece. The aim of this study is to examine the extent of depreciation in the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy and proffer ways of reclaiming it to its best status. The question this paper seeks answers is what makes Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy unpopular and what can be done to reclaim it back to its best status of operations? The theoretical framework of rational choice theory is adopted to show the dynamics of actors' rational choice in decision making and the consequences of their actions. The methodology adopts mixed method of process tracing and secondary data from Afrobarometer round six database to interrogate and answer the questions raised.

Conceptual Clarification

Foreign policy is not a new concept to be clarified in the literature. There are several authors who had diverse view of what the concept is. Some scholars have the central view that it centres on the fulfilment of a country's national interest in the international arena (Aluko, 1973; Akinyemi, 1974; Ajaebili, 2011). Others opined that it include the use of designated actors trained for diplomatic relations among countries in international relations (Gambari, 2008; Aremu and Aluko, 2016; Lawal and Aluko 2016). Contributing to the debate, this paper opines foreign policy to be the representation and actualization of the internal and domestic agenda of a sovereign state on the external and foreign realities outside the state. However, this paper is not too keen on what foreign policy is or what it is not but the major concepts

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that will be interrogated are what this paper regards as depreciating foreign policy and reclaiming foreign policy concepts.

Depreciating foreign policy is a phenomenon which depicts the gradual dwindling of the strength and positive prowess of the state. The strength of a foreign policy is a determinant of the type of leader invoking it, and the internal realities of the state such as political capabilities, economic strength and social morals of international reputes. If all this internal realities are capable enough of pulling other states to do what they would not like to do originally and ordinarily then the country's foreign policy will be rated as having adequate strength and power. However, if the countries which should ordinarily obey the superior country's biddings begin to stand at akimbo then it shows that the initial strength of influence had reduced or is depreciating. Depreciating foreign policy is a symptom of weak and dying internal economy, gross political, socio-economic corruption against the politics and socioeconomic integration of the state. If the internal democracy and economy management is depreciating the foreign policy empire will also be depreciating. Therefore, there will emerge a lot of rebellion and disobedience by the former allies.

The concept of reclaiming foreign policy is a phenomenon and action of the state to savage the depreciating foreign policy among the comity of states. By regarding it as a phenomenon; it implies system of casting a shade for the depreciating foreign policy or image of the country by giving reasons why other countries must continue to obey and recon with her foreign policy actions, directions and dispositions. The reclaiming foreign policy as an action denotes the deliberate efforts of the policy makers to represent and re-project the country's foreign image to others as if the actions and offers rendered were in the best interest of the receiving country and the rest of the world. The reclaiming of foreign policy is a regular and continuous action of the state. This implies that there is always a depreciating effect on the foreign policy of all state over the period of time. Every state that wishes to remain relevant among the comity of states in the world needs to keep revamping and reclaiming the depreciation inherent in her foreign policy.

Depreciation in Nigeria's Foreign Policy

The foundation of Nigeria's foreign policy utopia and big claims is the hallmark of its eventual and gradual depreciation. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister, in his maiden address to the 15th Session of the UN General Assembly (October 7, 1960) declared the following principles as guiding his country's relation with other countries of the world: i. Maintenance of friendly relations with all nations and active participation in the work of the United Nations; ii. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of, and peaceful co-existence with all countries; iii. Development of cultural co-operation as a means of strengthening political ties with all African countries; and iv. Commitment to African peace, development and co-operation, decolonization and fight against racism and apartheid. These guiding principles of Nigeria's foreign policy have remained largely intact despite regime changes since independence to date.

However, what is remarkable is that these principles have found their way into the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which denotes the foreign policy objectives the nation must pursue on the world stage. Chapter 11, Section 19 (a-e) of the 1999 Constitution prescribes the following foreign policy objectives for the Nigerian state: a. Promotion and protection of the national interest; b. Promotion of African integration and support for African unity; c. Promotion of international cooperation, consolidation of peace, and elimination of discrimination in all its forms; d. Respect for international law and treaty obligations, as well as seeking settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and e. Promotion of a just world economic order. These principles and the objectives are the ideals that today drive Nigeria's foreign policy.

The nation's commitment to the cause of international peace and security especially in Africa, involvement in non-alignment movement, decolonization of the continent, the frontline role in the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa, commitment to the cause of democratization in Africa, etc. were purposeful at their various times, and, image boosting for Nigeria. They all can conveniently be articulated largely within the framework of 'Afro-centricism' (Nwankwo, 2013). The inability of Nigeria to focus on domestic security and prosperity of all sectors of her economy is a potent spot of her foreign policy depreciation.

Nigeria prefer to show and throw herself at other African country's internal challenges but not considering the long term effect on her homeland security and prosperity. The inability to consider the intricate and explicit impact coupled with the inability to sustain the trend is another soft and potent spot of the continuous depreciation of Nigeria's foreign policy empire. In the case of Nigeria, this would imply that even her Afro-centric policies in terms of which she has conceitedly defined her foreign policy over the years, ought to have been pursued from the perspective of the nation's security and prosperity. The failure of such policies over the years to impact domestic priorities of Nigeria is another background to the depreciation of her foreign policy relevance.

Indeed, Nigeria aspires to be among the first twenty in the world with the vision of 20:2020. This implies that Nigeria would have to swap at the least a country currently in the club of twenty developing economies. Using the 2009 IMF ranking, Nigeria would have to surpass Indonesia that ranked 20th with Nigeria ranked 41st (Abdullahi, 2009). It would have to compete and 'beat hands down' Malaysia who is also engaged in the same struggle and even with the same timeframe. In essence, Nigeria would have to compete internationally with few States already in the club who would not want to be relegated and many other States who want, like Nigeria, to join the league of first twenty. The absence of the political, social and economic will power to prosecute this mission as displayed by the past leaders (presidents) within the set time frame (2020) further blows off the relevance of the over beaten focus of Nigeria's foreign policy.

The past leaders of Nigeria's foreign policy are more like an accidental and emergency foreign policy actors. This is visible and confirmable in their conduct of the Nations foreign policy which is part of the depreciating factors on the foreign

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policy empire. In a normal competitive environment neither President Yar'Adua nor Goodluck Jonathan his vice would have new focus for Nigeria's foreign policy and at the same time they never have the premonition of becoming the president of Nigeria. Like Obasanjo, Yar'Adua administered Nigeria more personally than institutionally. Thus in the absence of the President Yar'Adua, the Vice President Goodluck Jonathan was in no position to stand in for him except in situations where members of the President's inner circle could not thread like chairing the Federal Executive Council.

In many other situations on the international arena, when the incapacitated President could not perform, he delegated the leadership roles to his Vice. The consequence of such action in the case of Nigeria was that the ship of the Nigerian State was sailing rudderless on the international waters of foreign policy. Without functional institutions and without a leader, Nigeria's foreign relations and indeed the State of Nigeria also went into gradual depreciation and comatose when Nigeria failed to show up at important international meetings, lost many positions in multilateral associations, forsook obligations, and found herself in a situation where many of her allies started wondering what had gone wrong with Nigeria (Abati, 2012; Lawal and Aluko, 2016).

Internal challenges are also part of the dampening factors in Nigeria's attainment of great power status. Key internal challenges include Poor governance, insecurity of lives and property, power supply (Olutokun, 2013; Aremu and Aluko, 2016), the quality of the nation's educational institutions; its capacity to innovate; the quality of its democracy and the ability to build consensus and resolve conflicts. More specifically, the insurgency in the North, the collapse of public education, growing unemployment, oil dependent economy, dilapidated economic infrastructure among others are few of the factors depreciating Nigeria's foreign policy empire.

The measure of the extent of depreciation of Nigeria's foreign policy empire can also be perceived on the calibre of the professionals prosecuting the foreign policy. Nigeria's diplomacy requires high calibre professionals to drive her contemporary diplomacy. There exists to a much level the politicization of Foreign Service and the Ministry of foreign affairs in general in its recruitment and appointment exercises. There still exists the exhibition of a low and inappropriate orientation of the Foreign Service Officers in the direction of moral rectitude, of integrity, loyalty, good conduct and hard work. A high level of re-orientation is critical in managing the nation's foreign policies as a tool of development. This need arises from the current perception of Nigeria's diplomatic posts especially by Nigerians in the Diaspora as noted by Obijiofor, (2012) that Nigerian diplomats serving in overseas countries have been rebuked publicly for their selfish behaviour and for their disdainful treatment of, or disregard for, citizens in need of consular services. The Foreign Affairs Ministry further worsen the situation by neither been proactive or reactive in taking responsibility for the scandalous conduct of diplomatic staffs that has sullied the image of the country at home and abroad. This poor impression of the foreign policy sector in Nigeria and lack of confidence by many Nigerians in the Diaspora on Nigeria's Foreign Service as a result of mediocre work

ethic, and poor relationship with the public further complicates the rate of depreciation of Nigeria's foreign policy empire and its Africa centre piece orientations (Nwankwo, 2013).

Although, Nigeria is not in a state of war but the nation is not enjoying socio-political and economic peace and stability. As the most populous black nation on earth, Nigeria feels fulfilled being perceived as the "giant of Africa" and "potential leader" of black race all over the world. Therefore, it has not harness the best benefits of her Africa centre piece foreign policy. Nigerian leaders past and present have handled the issue of peace keeping as routine humanitarian assistance to other countries which had produced a little material benefit to the state. According to United Nations official sources, Nigeria has the fourth largest contingent in United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1960, having committed 250,000 men and women losing 2,000 troops in the process and expending over ten billion dollars. Presently, Nigeria has more than 17,000 troops serving under the world body. Regrettably, the nation's contribution so far has not been anchored on solid economic diplomacy that could ensure rewards for fortunes invested.

According to Bolaji Akinyemi— (a former foreign affairs minister in Nigeria), Countries in Africa should understand that "they need Nigeria more than we need them" He went further to say that "Nigeria's foreign policy have been marred by fellow African countries that voted against us on the international scene we have got to have a foreign policy, which penalizes countries that vote against us" the above submission clearly indicates that there are serious flaws in Nigeria's foreign policy. Ogunsanwo (2010, p. 45) also remark that Sierra Leone has gained a lot from Nigeria but alas it was the country that blocked ECOWAS from taking a united stand in favour of Nigeria's candidacy for a United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) permanent seat.

From the above analysis, one can deduce and justify the assertion that Nigeria's foreign policy is depreciating and needs urgent reclaiming and resuscitation. The extent of depreciation in the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy is enormous and compounded with the internal security challenges in Nigeria. This is coupled with incessant waste on foreign trips by policy actors without adequate planning on resultant impact on the country's domestic economy. The contribution of troop to quench the internal insurrections or external aggressions of African States by Nigeria is seen as a normal phenomenon to most African States – as if it were Nigeria's duty. Therefore, very little or no accolades is given back to Nigeria. This is regarded as waste of precious resources (lives and materials) on other African states which could have been used to build up the domestic economy of Nigeria. This inherent mentality of African States is a sign of retardation and depreciation of Nigeria's foreign policy empire.

Theoretical Framework: Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory, also known as choice theory or rational action theory is a theory for understanding and often modelling social, political and other individual actors' behaviours. This theory originated from the microeconomics school

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of thought and modern political science, as well as other disciplines such as sociology and philosophy. A pioneering figure in establishing rational choice theory in sociology was George Homans (1961), who set out a basic framework of exchange theory, which he grounded in assumptions drawn from behaviourist psychology. Becker (1976) recorded that “the rational choice theory was early popularized in social sciences. The goal of the rational choice theory is to describe choices, to generate predictions, to understand choice behaviour or to provide normative criteria for rationality.

Elster (1989) stated the essence of rational choice theory when he noted that “when faced with several courses of action, people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome. Ogu (2013) noted that Friedman, (1953) opined that the ‘rationality’ in the rational choice theory simply means that “an individual acts as if balancing the effect of costs against benefits to arrive at action that maximizes personal advantage.” Rational Choice Theory is an approach that is adopted to show that the actors in the Nigerian foreign policy sector have rational instinct to the current position, disposition and direction of Nigeria as an actor in international relations.

The four assumptions made by rational choice theorists include: Individualism, Optimality, Self-Regarding Interest and Rationality. Individualism – it is the individuals who ultimately take actions. Individuals, as actors in the society and everywhere, behave and act always as rational beings, self calculating, self-interested and self-maximizing, these individual social actions are the ultimate source of larger social outcomes. Optimality – Individual actors or the state choose their actions optimally, given their individual preferences as well as the opportunities or constraints with which the individual faced. The rational choice theory, therefore assumes that individuals actors of the state best control their actors, intentions, inactions and circumstances from the optimum choices.

Self-Regarding Interest – This assumption states that the actions of the individual and state are concerned entirely with his or her own welfare or warfare. Various types of group sentiments could exist, such as cooperation, unselfishness, charity, which initially may seem to be contrary to individual optimality. This implies that the Nigeria’s ‘Africa’s centre piece foreign policy’ is a self regarding action to promote socio-political welfare for Nigerians and Africans at large. Rationality – is another assumption that appears the most predominant assumption of the rational choice theory. All individuals, according to this assumption act in ways that would benefit them more; every individual and State is most like to undertake courses of actions that they perceive to be the best possible option and one that would immensely be to their own advantage.

Certain steps which the rational choice analysis should follow in making decisions include: definition of the problem, identification of decision criteria, weighing the criteria, generation of valid alternatives, rating of each alternative on each criterion and computation of optimal decision. These steps and other assumptions informed the rational choice of people, individual actors and the state uphold a foreign policy toward other states. Nigeria’s foreign policy sector rational

choice of 'Africa's centre piece foreign policy' has merits that were achievable in the early period of 1960. This was because many states in Africa have relatively small economy which Nigeria's economy can easily assist.

However, due to state development and population growth in Africa including Nigeria, the choice of the 'Africa's centre piece foreign policy' is currently unattainable with regards to Nigeria's current economy status. Every effort to assist any Africa state will be limited and its impact might not be thoroughly felt by the recipient nations. Therefore, when the time comes for a prospective decision for Nigeria at international levels, Nigeria's earlier role to the benefiting country will be hardly remembered and thus Nigeria receives a backlash instead of complementary vote. Due to these new realities of various state economy and population development in Africa, the reality of 'Nigeria's Africa's centre piece foreign policy' needs a rational choice of generating valid alternatives such as having a strategic focus on specific issues for specific outputs. This implies that Nigeria might invest in peace and security or technology development or human resource development among others of an African State for its loyalty in international organization decision making.

Methodology

The research methodology adopted is the mixed methods which include qualitative method of process tracing and quantitative method using secondary data collection from Afrobarometer-Nigeria data section database. The process tracing includes the tracing of chronicles of past presidents' foreign policy approaches and the nature of Nigeria's foreign policy in the past. The Afrobarometer secondary database on Nigeria includes the analysis of responses of Nigerians on Nigeria's foreign policy focusing and orientation. The data collected answers the research questions of what makes Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy unpopular and what can be done to reclaim it back to its best status of operations?

To provide answers to these questions, the perceived roles that Nigerians think the foreign policy attitude towards other countries should look like are considered and the level of the resultant helps Nigeria had derived from the regional organizations such as African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) despite her major 'self-imposed' responsibilities. This will help to give an answer to the research question driving this paper. The use of descriptive statistics such as bar charts are used to analyse and interpret the data collected for the study.

Analysis of Findings

This section of the analysis considers the perception of Nigerians to what role Nigeria should play in the region of Africa and to what extent of intervention to help other states Nigeria should dive into. Also it considers whether Nigeria's involvement in the regional organization had helped the country and to what extent. This will give an answer to the extent of depreciation inherent in the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy despite the internal security challenges in Nigeria.

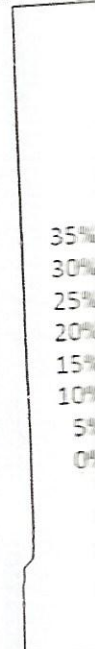
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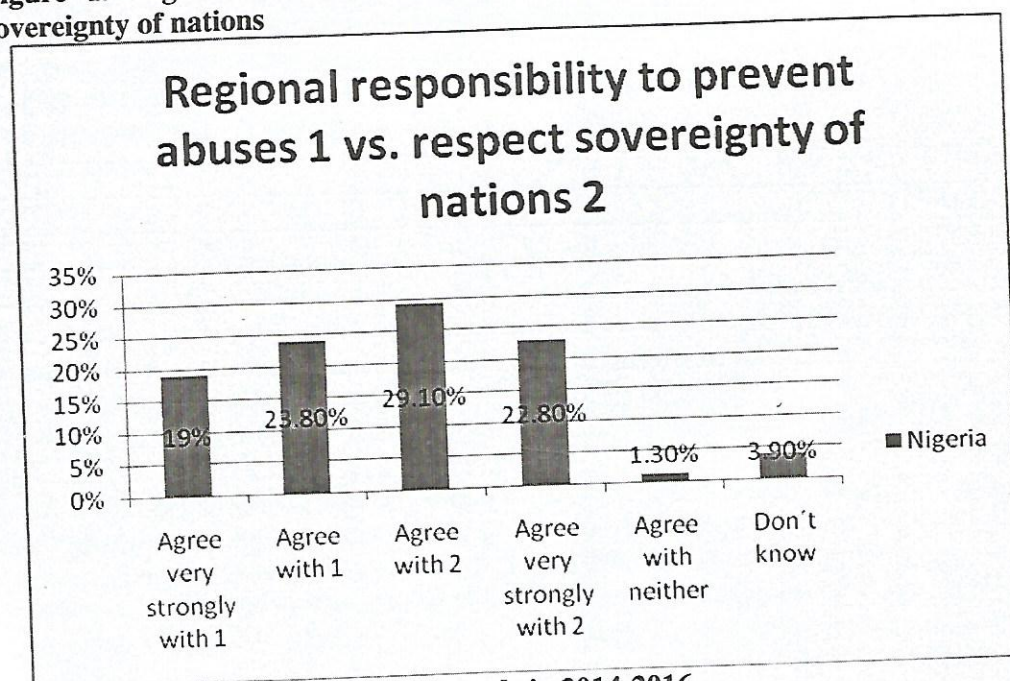
Table I: Nigeria's Regional responsibility to prevent abuses vs. respect sovereignty of nations

This explains roles perceived by Nigerians which it should play in the regional organizations. Should Nigeria continue to participate in preventing abuse across the regions or to simply respect the sovereignty of nations and keep to her own domestic issues? This invariably gives the level of enthusiasm Nigerians have in her foreign policy that gives credence to Africa's welfare.

Regional responsibility to prevent abuses vs. respect sovereignty of nations	Nigeria
Agree very strongly with 1	19%
Agree with 1	23.80%
Agree with 2	29.10%
Agree very strongly with 2	22.80%
Agree with neither	1.30%
Don't know	3.90%

Source: Afrobarometer Round six 2014-2016

Figure I: Nigeria's Regional responsibility to prevent abuses vs. respect sovereignty of nations



Source: Afrobarometer Round six 2014-2016

From the table I and the figure I above, it is observed that the Nigerians perception of the country's involvement in the regional organizations is somewhat significant. About thirty three percent (33%) (a combination of agree very strongly

with I and agree with I) revealed that only a few Nigerians (majorly in the decision making sector) sees their country as having the responsibility of preventing abuse and decision making in Africa region. This shows that the rest of Nigerians, about sixty seven percent (67%) opined that Nigeria's involvement in the regional organization is not to prevent abuses from member nations but other things as social welfare and national interest of Nigeria state. However, in the light of the statement two, a very significant number of Nigerians about fifty two percent (52%) (a summation of agree very strongly with II and agree with II) revealed that Nigeria respect the sovereignty of other nations to a large extent and will not coarse a state to unjustly tilt to her own wish. However, a lesser but still significant percentage of about forty eight percent (48%) agreed that Nigeria should interfere with the domestic need of other countries so as to get the gains of her investments in such state or make the state tilt to her conditionality international relations. This implies that Nigerians do not want the foreign policy to be centred on other nations essentially but to be focused on her domestic needs.

Table II: Regional organization (African Union and ECOWAS) helps country

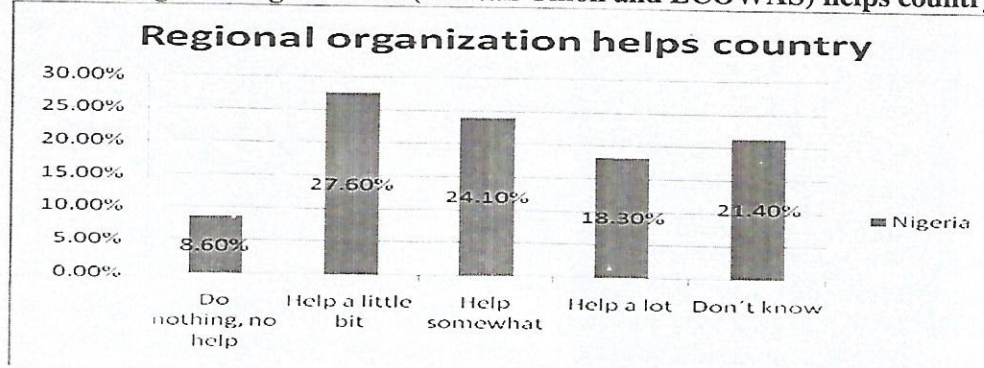
Despite all the help Nigeria had rendered to the regional organization such as African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) what extent of help had Nigeria derived from the regional organizations? This analysis reveals the extent of depreciation of the Nigeria's foreign policy.

Regional organization (African Union and ECOWAS) helps country

Regional organization helps country	Nigeria
Do nothing, no help	8.60%
Help a little bit	27.60%
Help somewhat	24.10%
Help a lot	18.30%
Don't know	21.40%

Sources: Afrobarometer Round six 2014-2016

Figure II: Regional organization (African Union and ECOWAS) helps country



Source: Afrobarometer Round Six 2014-2016

From the table II and figure II above, it is evident that the extent of help Nigeria had derived from the regional organization as compared to her involvements in the region has a little help derived from the alliance so far and little percentage of significance from the data presented. A total of about thirty six percent (36%) (a combination of no help and help a little bit) remarked that the largess of help that Nigeria had derived from her involvement in the regional organization is very low and of less significance as compared to the magnitude of effort Nigeria had put in the organization. However, about thirty two percent (32%) (a combination of help somewhat and help a lot) opined that the largess of help that Nigeria had derived from her involvement in the regional organization is somewhat good, significant and commensurate to the magnitude of effort Nigeria had put in the organization. From the foregoing analysis, it is important to note that the African centre piece foreign policy orientation had a little relevance to Nigerians and the present domestic economy because a very significant number of Nigerians opined that the regional organization has little or no help for Nigeria and Nigeria has derived little help from them as well.

Reclaiming the Depreciating Foreign Policy

The process of reclaiming the depreciating foreign policy is not a herculean task that cannot be surmounted. There are various measures that can be taken to reclaim the depreciating effects on Nigeria's foreign policy. Some measures are institutional methodologies why others are economic and political dimensions yet others are social dimensions to restore the Nigeria Foreign Policy. The strengthening of the research capability of Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) and the National Institute for Policy and strategic Studies (NIPSS) as Nigeria's foremost foreign Policy think tanks is inevitable (Ahmadu 2016). These think-tanks have the capacity of advancing the foreign policy empire by advocacy, opinion polls, conferences, open letters to the chief policy actor (president) and the use of persuasions to further get their ideals to the field actors. By this, adequate financial resources should be given to the institutes for more rigorous research and policy statement that matters per time. This is expedient because the opinion or policy adopted at a time might not feat the new international realities so a continuous upward and onward researches should be carried out.

Being a developed country is much more than political in nature. It is an interconnection of various variables many of which require formidable engagement with the rest of the global community. Therefore the vital role of diplomacy and foreign policy formulation and implementation is inevitable. Against this background, the articulations of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) on foreign policy component in 2009 on specific foreign policy objectives for the vision 20:2020 needs to be aptly reviewed and implemented. These include the following: i. articulate a better image for Nigeria and improve the country's relationship with the outside world by cultivating goodwill for Nigeria ii. Seek closer and better relations with the major and emerging powers iii. Pursue the acquisition and transfer of technology, promotion of trade, investment and cultural relations to boost Nigeria's

ailing economy. iv. Facilitate rapid and sustained economic growth and development v. Assist Nigeria to achieve systemic equilibrium, peace, stability and good governance vi. Ensure Nigeria's leadership role in Africa and the ECOWAS region is sustained and safeguarded vii. Use diplomacy to persuade Nigerians in the Diaspora to be part of nation building efforts viii. Assist Nigeria in securing a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council ix. Ensure Nigeria's strategic role and military capability in the world x. Seek and encourage high level visits by government officials and private sector to countries abroad that have strategic relevance to Nigeria's interests and vice-versa, for achievement of our goals in vision 20:2020 xi. Use success stories elsewhere and domesticate these for national Interest xii. Ensure Nigeria's domestication and compliance with bilateral and multilateral obligations and treaties. All this agreements needs to be sort for updated and actualises so as to reclaim Nigeria's image among the comity of states.

There should be an established mechanism for sustained high-level bilateral dialogue to promote and increase diplomatic, economic and security co-operation between the two countries. This will serve as a buffer mechanism to monitor the term of the agreement and harness it for the growth of the internal economy. For instance, the relationship between Nigeria and US continued to improve under President Jonathan. This is most exemplified in the signing of the first US-Nigeria Bi-national Commission, in April 2010. But it has a low level of benefit in the domestic economy in the country. The first US-Nigeria Bi-national Commission commission's main objectives are the following: (a) Promote and co-ordinate the diplomatic, economic, military, commercial, technical, social and cultural co-operation between the two countries. (b) Address areas of mutual interest and/or concern and develop strategies for tackling these issues with assistance and co-ordination from both governments. (c) Assist in the implementation and follow-up of agreements and all other legal instruments already concluded between the governments. (d) Create favourable conditions to carry out cooperation programmes and projects as may be decided by mutual consent and help to resolve any difficulties that may arise in carrying out any such programmes and/or projects. (e) Evaluate the development of co-operation between the two countries as well as initiatives from each government aiming to expand co-operation to new areas.

Also, like Jonathans administration transformation agenda, diplomatic shuttles, which engineered the formation of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) in all countries where there are Nigerians, President Yar'Adua anchored his government's policies on "seven point agenda". The president Buhari's 'change agenda' and war against Boko Haram insurgency had attracted high level of diplomacy and agreements were ratified with countries like France, USA, Germany, United Kingdom and China among others. A buffer mechanism to monitor the term of the agreements, harness it for the growth of the internal economy to sustained, bilateral high-level dialogue, promote and increase diplomatic, economic and security co-operation in the favour of the domestic economy. The best can be harness from these relationships if buffer mechanism can be made autonomous of political

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The sustenance of the good neighbourliness of Nigeria among the comity of states had earned her accolades and respects which should be sustained. Nigeria's visibility on the globe outside the peacekeeping/peace enforcement operations began picking up under the regime. Through lobbying and campaigning, Nigerian candidates got into positions in international organizations: Presidency of the Executive Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) based in Montreal, Canada; member UN Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); AU Commissioner for Political Affairs; Commissioner Political, Peace and Security at the ECOWAS Commission. In October 2011 Nigeria was also elected to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Vice Presidency of INTERPOL representing Africa. In November 2011, Nigeria was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO for a term of four years while Nigeria's Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Hon. Mohammed Bello Adoke, was re-elected to the International Law Commission. Others include the election of Dr. Chile Eboe-Osuji as one of the six judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in a tightly contested election in New York in November, 2011 and the election of Nigeria as the first President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: UN Women (Abati, 2012). Jonathan has also pursued Nigeria's desire for permanent membership in the proposed reformed UN Security Council with proactive diplomacy. The recent election in 2013 of Nigeria as non-permanent member of Security Council is an expression of faith in Nigeria by the international community. It is perhaps these efforts that have earned the Nigerian President international recognition of being among 100 most influential leaders of the world in 2012 by Times International magazine.

Concluding Remarks

This paper had addressed the issue concerning Nigeria's foreign policy. The extent of the relevance of Nigeria's foreign policy in Africa is considered and emphasis is laid on Africa as a centre piece orientation in Nigeria. The Nigeria foreign policy as seen as an empire is perceived to be depreciating gradually. The empire of Nigeria's foreign policy notwithstanding is depreciating due to acute security challenges. The reasons identified are the current insecurity issues which include the Boko Haram menace and kidnapping, others are leadership weak orientation to pursue aggressive and proactive foreign policy. It is opined that each leader has a self appointed foreign policy orientation which summersault as soon as another government comes on board.

This paper had considered the role Nigeria is playing in the region of Africa and to what extent of intervention Nigeria should dive into as regarding the sovereignty of other states and the Africa as a centre piece foreign policy adopted. The study discovered that a lesser percentage of about forty eight percent (48%) agreed that Nigeria should interfere with the domestic need of other countries through her continuous Africa centre piece foreign policy. This implies that larger significant

percentage of fifty two percent (52%) Nigerians do not want the foreign policy to be centred on other nations but to be focused more on her domestic needs. Also, this paper consider whether Nigeria's involvement in the regional organization (AU and ECOWAS) had helped the country and to what extent. The empirical result to this question shows that the African centre piece foreign policy orientation had a little relevance to Nigerians and the present domestic economy because a very significant number of Nigerians opined that the regional organization has little or no help to Nigeria and Nigeria has derived little help from the groups as well. These answers the research objective and the questions which centres on extent of depreciation inherent in the Nigeria's Africa centre piece policy despite the internal security challenges in Nigeria.

It is recommended to Nigeria and all other African states that peaceful co-existence is essential but a collective effort is needed to overcome the challenges at the regional or the continental levels. Also the opportunity inherent in collaborative assistance will surpass the effort that a single country might render for any other state in need. Therefore, the responsibilities should be seen as a collective responsibility. Although a country or two may champion it but a better effect of success will accompany a joint effort to combat African menace. The relevance of the security and the intelligent sectors can be shared to a large extent so as to keep at bay both internal insurrections and external aggressions against any state in Africa

Also, rational choice of concentrating on the domestic realities of Nigeria in other to build up and reclaim the depreciating foreign policy empire is important. Other African states are enjoined to be loyal to Nigeria's mandate in the international scene because it has invested much into Africa's sustenance and development since 1960 till date. If this is ensured more largess are likely to be enjoyed by more African states. There is also the continuous need to re-orientate Foreign Service Officers in the direction of moral rectitude, of integrity, loyalty, good conduct and hard work. This is critical in managing the nation's foreign policies as a tool of development.

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