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## Foreign Policy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Critical Analysis of Some Unresolved Issues

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### **Abstract**

This paper assesses Nigeria's foreign policy in retrospect and analyzes the major unresolved issues that now exist as challenges to foreign policy in the Fourth Republic (1999-2017). As an evaluative study with reliance on secondary data, the study adopts the linkage approach as the theoretical framework which highlights the crucial impact of the interplay between the domestic and external environments on Nigeria's foreign policy. The content analysis of data guided the findings, discussions and recommendations of the paper. Findings reveal an urgent need for re-strategizing and re-formulation of Nigeria's foreign policy to capture the internal and external dynamics of the Nigerian state, in order to maintain respect and relevance in the international system.

**Keywords** Analysis; Foreign Policy; Fourth Republic; Issues; Linkage Approach; Nigeria

The international system is symbiotic in nature, leading to the notion that no country can exist as an island. Since no state can avoid relating with others, states must frame their interactions systematically to aid the advancement of national interests in its relations with other states. Foreign policy is therefore an integral part of the activities of the modern state. A state without foreign policy therefore can be likened to a ship without a sailor (Abdul & Ibrahim, 2013). In order to remain relevant in the international system, a state must articulate its foreign policy in the manner that it captures the state's national interest. As Eze (2010, p. 79) succinctly puts it, "every nation's foreign policy is or should be in service of its national interest."

African-nationalism and Pan-Africanism were two factors that informed foreign policy thinking and orientation at independence and inception of Nigeria's foreign policy. In underscoring these averments, the foreign policy thrust of the country has been guided by the following: African unity and independence, peaceful settlement of disputes, capacity to exercise hegemonic influence in the region, non-alignment principle, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and economic cooperation and development within the region (Ukwuije, 2015, p. 110).

It is crucial to identify that the approach that guides the formation and execution of foreign policy objectives is dependent on some variables within and outside the state (Odubajo, 2017). These variables can be subsumed under the domestic and external environments of foreign policy. The environment of foreign policy consists of the domestic and external factors, structures, dynamics and processes that guide the actions of foreign policy actors (Alli, 2010). Gitelson (1980) highlights that some of the major variables that affect the foreign policy choices of states (especially small or medium powers) include: the domestic situation of the state, the nature of its leadership base, and the state's foreign policy orientations. The domestic situation of the Nigerian state is affected by factors such as ethnicity, religious bigotry, communal clashes, civil unrests, and militancy, to mention but a few; while the nature of the state's foreign policy may be influenced by the personal idiosyncrasies of the individuals that represent the state in the foreign policy-making process. The state's foreign policy orientation refers to the nature of foreign policy pursued in terms of being dependent or independent, proactive or reactive, bold or conservative. Other variables, according to Babawale (1988) include: the nature of a state's economy, historical experiences, and the nature of the political society.

Specific to the Nigerian foreign policy sphere, Ashiru (2013) identifies a number of factors that have determined the nature of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence and have formed the basis of the domestic and external environments of Nigeria's foreign policy. These determinants include: the eruption of multiple power centers in regions and regional economic groupings such as the European Union (EU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); formation of the African Union (AU) (formerly known as Organization of African Unity (OAU)); the waves of dictatorships and democratic transitions across Africa and the Middle East; Nigeria's increasing population; and the continuous existence of domestic and external challenges arising from issues like terrorism, climate change, arms proliferation, transnational crimes, oil bunkering, militancy, and migration, among others. A study conducted by Fayomi, Chidozie & Ajayi (2015) submits that the country's foreign policy efforts have been countered by an image predicament embedded in domestic crises experienced over the years.

The pursuit of an Afrocentric foreign policy, with goals of emerging as Africa's foremost state, has continued to guide Nigeria's foreign policy aspirations to date (Ade-Ibijola, 2013). However, Nigeria's efforts have been truncated by certain challenges which arise from poor leadership, corruption, developmental hindrances (Imoukhede, 2016), the country's image crisis,

ineffective representation of Nigerians in diaspora, and the seeming lack of will to engage the principles of reciprocity as it relates to its external relations (Chidozie, Ibietan & Ujara, 2014; Fayomi et al., 2015; Egwemi & Ochim, 2016).

This paper analyzes Nigeria's foreign policy, specifically in the Fourth Republic (1999-2017), with the goal of identifying some unresolved issues in Nigeria's foreign policy that now form its major challenges in the Fourth Republic. It utilizes the linkage approach as theoretical framework to explain the intricate relationship between the internal and external environments in the foreign policymaking process. The paper is structured as follows: the first section introduces the study. The second section presents the method. Sections 3 and 4 discuss the concepts, and review literature on Nigeria's foreign policy in retrospect and the theoretical framework on which the study is predicated respectively. Section 5 presents the discussion on Nigeria's major foreign policy thrust. Section 6 deals with some unresolved issues (domestic challenges; Nigerians in diaspora; image crisis; reciprocity) in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The paper concludes in section 7 with prospects for Nigeria's foreign policy being identified and recommendations proffered.

### **Methodology**

This paper adopts an evaluative approach. The application of linkage theory in analyzing issues in Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic is anchored on a historical design which allows for inquiry into past events with the goal of making interpretations of past events for current and future implications (Folarin, 2010). This informs the robust review of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust in the Fourth Republic, noting some unresolved foreign policy issues (discussed in Section 6 of this paper) within this period. Data were collected from secondary sources such as: the internet, newspapers, journals, and books. Content analysis was conducted on the data, and this illuminated the discussion, recommendations and conclusion of the paper.

### **The Concept of Foreign Policy**

Foreign policy, as is the case with many other concepts in the social sciences, does not possess a universal meaning, thus several scholars have different conceptions of foreign policy. In this light, Ade-Ibijola (2013) sees foreign policy as the objectives which constitute a comprehensive plan that serve as goals that a country hopes to achieve in its relation with other members of the world. In other words, Ade-Ibijola (2013) states that every country constructs a plan with certain key goals that it seeks to achieve in its relations with other states in the international system so as to avoid steering without direction in the waters of international relations.

Ota & Ecoma (2015) identify foreign policy as a strategy that is properly articulated and designed in a coordinated manner by institutionally-designated decision-makers in a bid to manipulate the international environment to achieve identified national objectives. This conception presents foreign policy as an instrument of power via which states can react to events in the international environment by its actions or inactions for the purpose of advancing national goals.

In explaining the interplay between domestic and foreign policy, Ukwuije (2015) conceives foreign policy as an offshoot of public policy that cannot actualize certain aspects of domestic policy without full and proper interaction with other countries. This assertion connotes

that public policy subsumes foreign policy, therefore foreign policy serves the purpose of achieving domestic policy on international front.

Eze (2010) simply states that foreign policy is the basis on which a state can engage with another state or subjects of international law, such as international organizations. This view is corroborated by Barika (2014) who argues that the concept of foreign policy is implicit in the fact that national interest is the guiding factor for nations in the formulation and execution of their foreign policies. However, he boldly identifies that the formulation of foreign policy is limited by the dictates of international law, treaty obligations and the leadership roles and responsibilities in international organizations assumed by the state with proper consideration to the foreign policy of other states. Inherent in these conceptualizations by Eze (2010) and Barika (2014) is the role of international law, non-state actors and very importantly, the foreign policies of other states. Their position on the subject is that when states begin to formulate or restructure their foreign policies, they should do so bearing in mind the need to align with statutes of international law, their commitments in regional or international institutions and the nature of foreign policies of other states, especially the neighboring countries. The fulfillment of these criteria will not only enable the state to properly pursue national interest, but within the ambit of international law and the capacity to respond to actions of other states in the region or globe. The next section reviews Nigeria's foreign policy in retrospect.

### **Nigeria's Foreign Policy in Retrospect**

Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, set the stage for Nigeria's foreign policy in 1960 when he identified the major components. As summarized by Enikanolaiye (2013, p. 19), they include in no particular order: respect for territorial integrity, good neighborliness, sovereign equality of states, commitment to decolonization and eradication of racist minority rule from Africa, promotion of the rights of the black man under colonial rule, promotion of Pan-Africanism and African Unity, respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter, and non-alignment. This foreign policy orientation was however criticized as being conservative and pro-West, while the bold policy moves that were required for the achievement of the policy he advanced were seen as inconsistent (Adebajo, 2008; Meierding, 2010), despite the fact that he laid the foundation for the pursuit of Nigeria's foreign policy based on the aforementioned conditions.

Military incursion into politics from 1966-1979 changed the nature of Nigerian foreign policy behavior. In accordance with the nature of the military, Nigeria's foreign policy was more assertive as seen in the leading roles it played in the Organization of African Unity, undisputed leadership of the sub-region, formation of Economic Community of West African States in 1975, and the support for liberation movements during this period (Odubajo, 2017:18), in spite of the setbacks encountered during the Civil War (1967-1970) (Imuokhede, 2016, p. 7). By 1979 when President Shehu Shagari took over, Nigeria's foreign policy output experienced a decline due to several domestic factors such as corruption, misplacement of priorities, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the bureaucracy (Odubajo, 2017). The Buhari-Idiagbon regime sought to restore the battered image of Nigeria by ushering in anti-drug and anti-corruption policies which they engaged stridently; the regime was also able to avoid dependence on any international financial institution through borrowing (Chidozie, Ibietan & Ujara, 2014). However, the allegations of human rights violations, especially the Umaru Dikko affair, served as a major setback to the foreign policy aspirations (Aremu, 2015).

General Ibrahim Babangida in 1990 formed the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and funded most of its operations. Egwemi & Ochim (2016, p. 123) record that while the ECOMOG lost over 500 soldiers, Nigeria suffered huge human and capital losses from resources contributed in comparison to other states. General Babangida's administration adopted economic diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument in a bid to tackle Nigeria's financial challenges through the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and consequently to re-energize Nigeria's hegemonic leadership in Africa (Imuokhede, 2016). His regime experienced image crisis due to widespread corruption within the country and the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election that was to usher in a democratically elected government (Chidozie et al., 2014, p. 53), but instead created a contraption tagged as interim government, which was later overthrown by General Sani Abacha in a palace coup.

Foreign policy under the late General Abacha's regime (1993-1998) was isolationist and confrontational in nature. While still maintaining the Afrocentric policy, Nigeria's image was marred by the extra judicial killings of the Ogoni Eight compatriots and Ken Saro-Wiwa, resulting in Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth and ultimately leading to the country's pariah status (Afinotan, 2015, p. 179). The return to democratic rule with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as president saw Nigeria's attempts at restoring her battered image via shuttle diplomacy (Oni & Taiwo, 2016), as well as the focus on economic diplomacy which sought to attract Foreign Direct Investments and partnerships from the West for the purpose of engendering economic development (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012). This administration is noted for its success at restoring the battered image of Nigeria globally in spite of the internal challenges it encountered.

The late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration tried to shift foreign policy focus to citizen diplomacy in a bid to identify with the interests of Nigerian citizens and the protection of the welfare of citizens both at home and abroad. However, due to his ill health, he could not see the policy to fruition (Imuokhede, 2016). His vice president, who later took over as president following Yar'Adua's death, maintained to a large extent Yar'Adua's foreign policy goals but also adopted the instruments of shuttle and economic diplomacy in rebranding Nigeria's image in a bid to attract foreign investments (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2015).

President Goodluck Jonathan lost the elections in 2015 to President Muhammadu Buhari who has since assumption of office been faced with myriad domestic challenges that constrained foreign policy outputs. Odubajo (2017) states that the foreign policy agenda of this administration is targeted at courting regional cooperation in the fight against the Boko Haram menace, attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), and partnering with states, especially Western nations, in the fight against corruption.

It can be observed from the foregoing that since the Balewa era, Nigeria's foreign policy has been supportive of the pursuit of African interests with potential to be Africa's foremost state. Some of the aspects in which the country's foreign policy has experienced continuity include the settlement of disputes in Africa, participation in peacekeeping missions, and the support provided in the resolution of crises in countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, to mention but a few. Ade-Ibijola (2013, p. 568), notes categorically that Nigeria has expended over \$10 billion and lost over 2,000 soldiers in the process of providing support to Africa and the world on bilateral and multilateral platforms.

### Theoretical Framework and Application of Theory

In foreign policy discourse, the state remains the basic actor in the international system. Thus, to obtain relevance and respect in the international system, a state must conduct its relations against the backdrop of influences from two environments (Odubajo, 2017). Alli (2010) identifies these environments as the domestic and the external.

The Linkage Theory evolved from systems analysis and has its roots in the notion that the term linkage refers to any recurring behavioral sequence that originates in one system and is reacted to in another (Rosenau, 1969; Frankel, 1972). The mutually reinforcing nature of elements within a system is reflected similarly in international relations. The interconnected nature of international relations informs the linkage theory and presents the argument that domestic and international politics are so interrelated that they should be simultaneously analyzed (Gourevitch, 1978). Pada (2006) also posits that the merger that exists between domestic and international factors is fully captured in James Rosenau's Linkage Theory. The theory establishes that domestic factors influence foreign policymaking and vice versa, thereby causing a linkage between the national and international affairs of a state. Rosenau (1969) seeks to understand the relationship between domestic and foreign policy. He focuses on the intricacy between national political systems and the evolution of foreign policy events and processes (Starrels & Mallinckrodt, 1978). Rosenau (in Starrels & Mallinckrodt, 1978, p. 80), states that "the need for linkage theory is multidimensional ... [there] is the need to trace linkages in which national and international systems function in such a way as to continuously reinforce each other."

The linkage theory can be used to explain the intricacies in international relations as it relates to, but is not limited to, foreign and domestic policies, international crises, and international economic relations, to mention but a few areas. The tenets of the theory as presented below reinforce the relevance of this theory to the subject under study. The thrust of Rosenau's linkage theory as highlighted by James & Rioux (1998) includes:

- Independent governments and the international system reinforce one another.
- The processes and structure of domestic politics are not independent of international occurrences.
- Ruling elites tend to redirect the concern of the public towards real or imagined external threats in a bid to reduce focus on internal challenges.
- Active participation in international relations is dependent on the state's ability to establish an effective cadre of officials capable of successfully managing their nation's foreign relations.

Rosenau's (1969) postulations inform the thoughts of Adeola and Ogunnoiki (2015) in affirming that when domestic and foreign policy are analyzed accordingly, findings would show that they are interconnected and interdependent in nature. The level of interdependence is so intense to the extent that the reality of the external environment is a major aspect of public policy, thus making foreign policy an offshoot of public policy. Pada (2006) argues, however, that focus should not be placed only on the interconnectedness of both environments, but should also evaluate if the state is able to cope with pressures from the domestic and international sphere that would lead to the formulation of a strategic foreign policy. The satisfaction of both environmental spheres thus requires a strong state and leadership.

Building on the linkage theory, this paper seeks to establish the nexus between the domestic and external environments in Nigeria's foreign policy. The domestic environment is

crucial to foreign policy as it sets the base on which it should run. However, if neglected, it results in challenges like loss of respect and relevance in the international system. This argument ties strongly to the first and second tenet above that emphasizes the reinforced relationship that exists between domestic and international politics. A case in point is the poor treatment of Nigerians within the country by security officials and law enforcement agents (Dickson, 2010). Due to Nigeria's inability to tackle this budding challenge, it questions Nigeria's ability to be assertive on the regional front in protecting the welfare of Nigerians abroad. This may partly account for the weak responses by the Nigerian government to the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa (Egwemi & Ochim, 2016). As a result, Nigeria cannot fully entrench the use of the reciprocity principle on the regional or global front because of its failings at home.

States can be forced to adopt a particular foreign policy stance based on the external environment beyond their control. This underscores the tenet which affirms that ruling elites occasionally choose to divert the attention of the public to focus on external threats and politics instead of domestic ones. When actors in the international system generate stimuli at any point in time, it would require certain reactions from states. These reactions can then be utilized for the benefit of or to the detriment of the state. This is reflected in Nigeria's approach to tackling terrorism under President Buhari, which is based on regional cooperation as the Boko Haram terrorist group's activities have transcended the borders of Nigeria (Odubajo, 2017). It is possible to infer based on the linkage theory that a state that trivialises issues of internal instability, economic underdevelopment and civil unrests will be unable to make meaningful impact in the international system; South Sudan typifies this situation.

As highlighted in this study, Nigeria is beset with myriad challenges arising from internal and external factors that may account for negative outputs from foreign policy engagements. As emphasised by the fourth tenet (stated above) of the linkage theory, the proper selection of the right set of individuals in the representation of the country internationally is crucial to its international success. This draws from the expectation that those individuals, having experienced the internal dynamics of their domestic environment, would be able to effectively represent their country on the international front. This is an area in which Nigeria's inability to make proper choices to determine its crop of diplomatic officials has forestalled its diplomatic achievements and added to the long list of challenges that the country grapples with.

From the foregoing, it can be noted that if a state puts into consideration domestic and external factors, it will enable the formulation of a holistic foreign policy that is capable of withstanding the international and domestic pressures. The next section presents Nigeria's journey in the fourth republic as a juxtaposition of national interest with internal and external demands on foreign policy performance.

### **Major Foreign Policy Thrusts in Nigeria's Foreign Policy in the Fourth Republic Shuttle Diplomacy**

Shuttle diplomacy is traceable to Henry Kissinger's years as secretary of state in the United States of America, and this was based on his attempt at maintaining peace between Israel and the Arab states (Egypt and Syria) during the Yom Kippur war in the 1970s. Shuttle diplomacy according to Dauda & Bako (2012) refers to the discussions that occur between two or more states whereby an individual, usually a government official, travels to and from the countries involved either for the purposes of mediation, negotiation or partnership as the case may be. Abdul & Ibrahim (2013) note that President Obasanjo was renowned for his shuttles in a



bid to forge bilateral and multilateral partnerships that sought to advance development within Nigeria and ensure the peaceful coexistence among states in West Africa. Also inherent in the goals of President Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy were the restoration of Nigeria's image from its position as a pariah state, and the securing of debt relief from the country's creditors. To this end, former President Obasanjo made a total of 113 foreign trips between May 1999 and August 2002 (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2015, p. 437).

One of the biggest achievements of that shuttle diplomacy was the successful reduction of Nigeria's external debt from 36 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2004 to less than 4 percent of its GDP by 2007. The administration also got America and some other Paris Club creditors to sign agreements on debt reduction for \$18 billion with the caveat that \$12 billion of Nigeria's debt would be returned by March 2006 (Dauda & Bako, 2012, p. 10). The FDI inflows into Nigeria increased following the years of the shuttle diplomacy. Prior to President Obasanjo's assumption of office in 1999, the highest amount recorded on FDI inflows between 1990 and 1998 was in 1994 with a record of \$2,287.4 million. By 2006, Nigeria had recorded a whopping \$13,956.5 million (UNCTAD, 2008, p. 8) after President Obasanjo's engagement in shuttle diplomacy sustained by the bilateral and multilateral investment relations.

While on acting capacity, President Jonathan embarked on shuttle diplomacy in an attempt to assure the world that Nigeria was secure and available for investment in spite of the domestic challenges it was experiencing. One of his shuttles to America to meet President Barack Obama was predicated on this. He sought to delist Nigeria from the discriminatory rule that enabled the Department of Homeland Security to screen Nigerians on international flights to the United States, especially after the attempted bombing of a U.S. airline by a Nigerian (Boma Lysa, Terfa, & Tsegysu 2015, p. 4). President Jonathan also paid visits to China to discuss the subject of trade and he was successful in securing a low interest loan of \$1.1 billion for the improvement of Nigeria's hydropower, road, and airport transportation systems (Adeola & Ogunnoiki, 2015, p. 441).

President Buhari has also engaged in shuttle diplomacy to West African nations in the pursuit of regional cooperation targeted at tackling the Boko Haram terrorism; he also engaged a semblance of shuttle diplomacy while acting as chief mediator in solving the constitutional impasse in Gambia (Bello, Dutse, & Othman, 2017, p. 49). The Buhari administration also forged diplomatic and economic relations with China which resulted in the provision of necessary funds to augment Nigeria's infrastructural deficit (Kia, Nwigbo, & Ojie, 2017). The adoption of shuttle diplomacy has been a recurring theme in the Fourth Republic and has yielded benefits to Nigeria across the different administrations from 1999 to date. It is crucial to state that shuttle and economic diplomacy could be seen to intertwine occasionally in terms of outputs and dividends.

### **Economic Diplomacy**

Lawal & Aluko (2015) described economic diplomacy as the brand of diplomacy that involves advocating the state's business interests and the application of technical expertise in the analysis of the effects of the receiving state's economic situation on its political climate and on the sending state's economic interests. In other words, economic diplomacy refers to the adoption of foreign policy instruments to achieve specific economic interests via decision-making, policymaking or advocating. This is noticeable during the General Babangida regime,

with General Ike Nwachukwu as foreign affairs minister. A key feature of economic diplomacy in this era was trade, not foreign aid.

President Obasanjo actively utilized economic diplomacy in the formation and strengthening of trade relations with Britain, America, France and Germany, core financiers of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (Ota & Ecoma, 2016, p. 12). At the multinational level, President Obasanjo attended sessions of the United Nations (UN), G77, G15, G8, OPEC, World Bank, IMF, UNESCO, Non-Aligned Movement, Commonwealth Organization, African Union (AU), ECOWAS and many other organizations to further entrench Nigeria's interests on a global and regional scale (Imoukhede, 2016, p. 8). His bilateral engagements on economic diplomacy resulted in the following partnerships as documented by Kia et al. (2017, p. 20): Nigeria–Cameroon Joint Commission, Nigeria–Morocco Joint Commission, Nigeria–South Africa Bi-National Commission; Nigeria–Egypt Cooperation, Nigeria–Niger Joint Commission (Consolidate), Nigeria–Ethiopia on Technical Aid Corp, and Nigeria–Sao Tome Joint Development Relations

The administration also utilized economic diplomacy to deepen its commitments to regional cooperation and integration through a plan to undertake a gas pipeline project linking the Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria on the one hand; and a West African pipeline project linking Benin, Ghana, Niger and Togo on the other (Ota & Ecoma, 2016, p. 12). Nigeria showed strong determination towards the success of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012, p. 80). President Obasanjo's administration's interest on economic integration and international institutions attracted some domestic criticisms (Oni & Taiwo, 2016), in the sense that he was accused of expending excessive resources on the pursuit of economic diplomacy (Ota & Ecoma, 2016) and neglecting the problem of corruption that was festering and becoming more institutionalized by the day in Nigeria.

Economic diplomacy featured prominently on President Jonathan's Transformation Agenda leading to the renegotiation and review of several bilateral agreements and the brokering of new ones. Examples include: Bilateral Joint Commission with Indonesia, India, Singapore and Malaysia; and leadership of the D8, the group of Eight Developing Countries (Kia et al., 2017, p. 22). Lawal & Aluko (2016) identify that in a bid to engage the use of foreign missions in the realization of economic diplomacy, President Jonathan appointed career diplomats as ambassadors to Nigeria's foreign missions.

President Buhari also visited China to solidify trade and economic and diplomatic relations with that country. Specifically, it led to the signing of an agreement to enhance development of infrastructure and industrial activities in Nigeria between China and Nigeria on Technological and Scientific Cooperation. Following the visit, China granted Nigeria a loan to finance the 2016 budget deficit (Bello et al., 2017, p. 50) and other infrastructural development plans of Nigeria.

### **Citizen Diplomacy**

During President Obasanjo's administration, foreign policy was targeted at economic and shuttle diplomacy as a strategy to rehabilitate Nigeria's image and facilitate national development. President Yar'Adua, however, sought to reap the gains of the reintegration advanced by President Obasanjo's administration through the protection of citizens' interest (Ukwuije, 2015). Thus, as Dickson (2010) highlights, citizen diplomacy is a foreign policy thrust

under which the Federal Government of Nigeria seeks the involvement of Nigerians at home and in diaspora in its effort to develop the country economically and politically. The articulation of citizen diplomacy by President Yar'Adua was hinged on a more citizen-centric foreign policy (Ujara & Ibietan, 2014), a seeming departure from the Afrocentric policy that Nigeria's foreign policy had advanced for several decades. The policy as espoused by Ojo Maduekwe, minister of foreign affairs in 2007, centered on reciprocity, implying that the manner in which Nigerians are treated by a particular country would determine the manner in which Nigeria would treat the citizens of that country (Agbu, 2009).

Citizen diplomacy was targeted at enhancing citizen welfare and national image-building, and the policy espouses that Nigerians should be the number one stakeholders and first beneficiaries of any external engagement that Nigeria embarks upon (Aleyomi & Abu Bakar 2017). This was not the case as Nigerians continued to be intimidated and oppressed within the country and abroad, with little or no recourse to compensation or reciprocity as the case may be. One of the few times when the Nigerian government functioned well while engaging citizen diplomacy was on the diplomatic row between Nigeria and South Africa where 125 Nigerians were deported for allegedly presenting fake yellow fever cards by South Africa. Nigeria responded by returning about 100 South Africans trying to enter Nigeria following the event (Egwemi & Ochim, 2016, p. 127). In spite of the laudable nature of the policy, challenges encountered in conceptualization and implementation led to its poor appraisal (Akinterinwa, 2013).

### **Discussion of Some Unresolved Issues in Nigeria's Foreign Policy Domestic Challenges**

Given the fact that foreign policy is an offshoot of domestic public policy, a stable economic and political economy is crucial to the actualization of foreign policy in the international arena (Ukwuije, 2015). Since 1999, Nigeria has contended with multiple crises resulting from communal and religious-based violence, resource activism which has taken the form of militancy, and fluctuations in global oil prices, thus leading to political and economic instability (Abdul & Ibrahim, 2013, p. 40).

While Nigeria may have a large economy, it is riddled with serious economic crises stemming from huge dependence on exportation of primary goods, especially crude oil and importation of finished materials (Enuka & Ojukwu, 2016). Worthy of note is the role that corruption plays in the underdevelopment of the Nigerian state, ultimately countering foreign policy actions of the state. Awojobi (2014, p. 155), argues that funds allocated for the development of the country have been mismanaged by political office holders since 1999. Dividends of corruption are visible in the poor health and power sectors, constantly deteriorating road networks, and poor infrastructural development and non-functional refineries, to mention a few. Awojobi (2014, p. 155), argues further that "poverty is a by-product of insecurity. The security challenges that are facing Nigeria have been blamed on the high level of corruption and poverty in the country."

One of the most devastating challenges Nigeria currently faces is that of terrorism. The Boko Haram terrorists wreak havoc in the northeast region of Nigeria and attack defenseless Nigerians, religious bodies and even the nation's security forces (Warner, 2016). The Fulani herdsmen in the Middle Belt region have attacked farming communities repeatedly, leading to wanton killings. Benue state alone has suffered about 20 different attacks in 2017 and many

others in 2018 leading to scores of deaths and colossal destruction of properties (Aytogo, 2018). The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (2017, p. 24) records that the Fulani herdsmen launched more attacks and were responsible for more deaths than the Boko Haram in 2016. According to the GTI report, the total number of people the herdsmen have killed exceed 2,500 people between 2012 and 2016.

Another cause for concern is the tension arising from the secessionist claims by Biafran organizations in the southeast. The same secessionist claims were made during the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970, but following the end of the war, the thought of a unified Nigeria was embraced once again (Campbell, 2017). Akinterinwa (2017a) states that the military instituted the doctrine known as "Operation Python Dance" to check the threats to national security from the southeast in Nigeria. However, southeastern observers have called to question the motive of the federal government for not directing the same amount of resources and action to tackle the kidnapping, armed robberies and killings by Fulani herdsmen that has been going on in other parts of the country.

As Ukwuije (2015) posits, there is a need for synergy between the domestic and external environments for the successful pursuit of any country's foreign policy. Import from the linkage theory would suggest that, for as long as the domestic environment of Nigeria's foreign policy is characterized by the challenges expressed above, the country's foreign policy objectives cannot be achieved since none of the self-respecting nations would take the country seriously in the conduct of international affairs. Corroborating this, Anyaoku (2017) alludes to fixing Nigeria's domestic situation, which comprises security deficits, challenge of political stability, economy, and the socioeconomic welfare of citizens. He counsels on the need to achieve a reasonable balance between domestic and foreign policies in order to maintain credible leadership regionally and continentally, among others.

### **Nigerians in Diaspora**

The cardinal plank of citizen diplomacy is that the protection of the welfare of Nigerians at home and abroad should be the major interest guiding Nigeria's foreign policy. After all, a state is not a state if it cannot protect its citizens. Akinterinwa (2017b) asserts that diaspora is a component of foreign policy and it is a Nigerian affair. He further argues that in the context of international relations, diaspora affairs fall under private international law, making it a matter of paramount importance to the government on the subject of foreign policy.

Nigerians in South Africa have experienced xenophobic attacks for several years (Ade-Ibijola, 2013). Apart from South Africa, Nigerians have been killed in Saudi Arabia, Singapore and China over drug-related offences without any inquiry or verification on the alleged offences by the Nigerian government. Chinese police in particular have reportedly beaten Nigerian immigrants to death, while over 500 Nigerians are said to be in Chinese prisons with offences ranging from robbery to drug issues (Kupoluyi, 2017). Ezugwu (2015, p. 1) records that there are over 16,300 Nigerians across the world serving jail terms for drug related offences alone, serving as a pointer to the fact that a lot more have been imprisoned for other reasons.

Besides the above data, the dehumanizing treatment given to Nigerians while being deported from some foreign countries is also a credible example. There are acceptable minimum standards which deportees should be subjected to while in transit, and yet cases of Nigerian deportees in handcuffs and leg chains abound (*The Guardian* Editorial, 2017). In the quest to migrate from Nigeria at all costs, some Nigerians engage in illegal movements through

dangerous routes in search of greener pastures. Some of these Nigerians end up stranded in deserts and strange lands across the world. Recently the government started the process of evacuating stranded citizens in Libya (who were being sold as slaves) in batches of 250 people per week (Warami, 2017). The care given to Nigerians abroad by the Nigerian government is predicated on the care given to Nigerians living in Nigeria (Ujara & Ibietan, 2014). As such, pursuing a foreign policy that pays attention to Nigerians abroad and neglecting those at home belongs to the realm of sophistry. To redress this state of affairs, Nigeria's national or citizens' interest must be pursued on agreed principles, philosophy, goals and objectives that are clearly articulated. The non-justiciability of issues contained in Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, especially Section 19 dealing with Foreign Policy, vitiates these lofty ideals. Extant literature (Okeke & Okeke, 2013; Olaiya, 2015; Eneke & Ojukwu, 2016; Nwauzi, 2017a; and Nwauzi, 2017b) support the above assertion.

To be sure, Okeke & Okeke (2013, p. 14) submit that the objectives and directive principles contained in that part of the constitution were meant to be non-justiciable, and the same document created an ambivalence that mandates the legislature (National Assembly) to enact laws that makes certain items/parts of that chapter to be justiciable. To navigate these hurdles and contraption, the policy instruments and domestic environment must be conducive and pivoted on good governance to deliver democratic dividends maximally to citizens.

### **Image Crisis**

A state with an image crisis is difficult to advertise in the "diplomatic market" (Egwemi, 2010, p. 134). Therefore, a country's image needs to be framed adequately in order to gain respect and relevance in the international system. Nigeria's image in the comity of nations has reduced drastically due to the activities of Niger-Delta militants in the South South, the Boko Haram insurgents in the northeast and other parts of the country, the Fulani herdsmen in the Middle Belt and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) (Campbell, 2017). Nigeria is ranked the third most terrorized country on the globe after Iraq and Afghanistan by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI, 2017, p. 14). Bad governance at the domestic level is partly responsible for the mass exodus of Nigerians to other countries in search of greener pastures who are sometimes caught committing crimes, thus giving the country a bad image (Uhomoihbi, 2011). Some Nigerians responsible for the projection of a bad image are corrupt government officials, drug and human traffickers, and fraudsters who operate online and offline, duping foreigners and citizens of their financial resources. Some examples include: the sentencing of five Nigerians to various jail terms in the UK for the theft of £610,000 from business bank accounts which they successfully carried out by using stolen data, impersonation and false representation (Odunsi, 2017, p. 1); three Nigerians who were sentenced in the United States for a cumulative 235 years for defrauding victims through dating sites, mail fraud, identity theft, credit card theft and theft of government property; another Nigerian who has been charged with 269 counts of wire fraud and money laundering which he executed by claiming to be a wealthy Nigerian prince willing to share his inheritance (Adekunle, 2017); and five Nigerians arrested in India for drug and human trafficking which they confessed to after being found in possession of cocaine, ganja and amphetamine tablets (Editorial, Daily Post, 2017), to mention but a few.

### **Reciprocity**

The principle of reciprocity entails that each country expects to be treated in the manner in which it treats others and vice versa. It also entails the use of retaliation as a deliberate strategy to end, maintain or nourish diplomatic ties (Egwemi & Ochim, 2016). Enuka and Ojukwu (2016) underscore the principle of reciprocity as favors, benefits or penalties that are granted by one state to the citizens or legal entities of another that should be returned.

The concept of reciprocity is embedded in the citizen diplomacy framework as diplomacy of consequence. However, in the light of meagre resources devoted to sustaining citizen diplomacy (Aleyomi & Abu Bakar, 2017, p. 1235), the reciprocity principle has not been properly implemented in Nigeria's foreign policy. Reciprocity as foreign policy instrument is not restricted to citizen diplomacy, and it should also be viewed as one of the driving forces of the Afrocentric policy. Akinyemi (1987) argues that if Nigeria is to undertake responsibilities towards Africa's benefit, Africa ought to do the same for Nigeria. Egwemi and Ochim (2016) state that to expect countries to continuously relate with Nigeria on the basis of past benevolence is misleading. Every state will pursue its national interests irrespective of Nigeria's expectations.

Ota and Ecoma (2015) support the notion that Nigeria needs to review her relations with her neighbors and African counterparts in general to incorporate the principle of reciprocity. Oni and Taiwo (2016) corroborate that Nigerian foreign policy actors should ignore the big-brother approach for more beneficial approaches in the quest for relevance in the international system. Emphasis should be placed on the reciprocity principle as the beacon of citizen-centrism and Afrocentrism as foreign policy thrust.

Nigeria as a country possesses vast resources at her disposal ranging from human, geographical, and material and mineral resources that can be useful in the implementation of the reciprocity principle. To this end, it is expected that Nigeria engage vigorously this principle in the pursuit of national interest and in foreign policy implementation. The inability of the country to maximize the use of these resources has accounted for its recent ineptitude in diplomatic engagement, causing it to be comically referred to as a "toothless bulldog" in view of recent occurrences nationally and internationally. Anyaoku (2017) corroborates that Nigeria has lost its leadership role due to the aforementioned issues and proceeds to identify security challenges and military incursions into the country's governance and public administration as parts of the drawback to be addressed through restructuring.

### **Conclusion**

It is observable from the discussion in this paper that Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic experienced its zenith under President Obasanjo. Subsequent administrations could not equal the achievements of his administration. Thus, since his exit from power, Nigeria's foreign policy has not been as assertive as it should be. The major foreign policy thrusts highlighted in the Fourth Republic could be seen as trial and error attempts. This is coupled with the fact that Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic bears convergence with that of the Second Republic, replete with inherent domestic issues bedeviling the successful implementation of foreign policy.

Some of the major unresolved issues in Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic that have been identified include: domestic challenges, Nigerians in diaspora, image crisis, and reciprocity. While these are not the only issues identifiable, this study chose to analyze these four

in order to unravel the prospects for Nigeria's foreign policy (once they can be tackled). Prior to the Fourth Republic, Nigeria remained a force in regional affairs because of its bold foreign policy stance and its ability to assert hegemonic influence over states within the region.

Arising from the lethargy witnessed after the President Obasanjo administration's years to effectively manage the domestic situation, Nigeria plunged into issues like political instability, economic crises, civil unrests/terrorist activities, and sundry governance deficits. The adoption of the linkage approach to foreign policy analysis shed light on the fact that there are remedial measures that can be taken by the Nigerian government to review and restructure the foreign policy in such a manner that caters for contemporary issues. To this end, this study proffers the following recommendations.

### **Recommendations**

1. An urgent review of Nigeria's foreign policy to capture the protection of the rights and the welfare of Nigerians at home and abroad. Once Nigerians are satisfied, they can begin to serve as citizen diplomats and ambassadors of the country, projecting good values and a positive national image. There is a need to revisit and tinker with Section 19, Chapter 2 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution as part of the issues requiring legislative (National Assembly) intervention to make it enforceable and justiciable.

2. A more proactive and community-based approach to tackling national security should be adopted. This would require a reinvigoration of security apparatus and architecture for national security, provision of adequate training of personnel, and effective motivation.

3. Nigeria needs to make huge investments in cybersecurity and electronic surveillance to enable the monitoring of activities of fraudulent individuals offline or online that have contributed in rupturing the image of Nigeria externally.

4. Nigeria's foreign policy should reflect the reciprocity principle in the sustenance of the Afrocentric policy. If the policy is to be maintained, it needs to be carried out with recourse to achieving national interest on bilateral and multilateral platforms.

5. There is a need for the current administration to be more pragmatic about tackling corruption in Nigerian public institutions. A high level of corruption stunts development within the country and consequently affects the country's stature in international affairs.

6. Nigeria's foreign missions require adequate funding to cater to the needs of Nigerians in diaspora. They contribute significantly to the economic development of the country and their welfare should be a priority to the Nigerian government.

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