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Assessing Nigeria's Foreign Policy: An In-depth Exploration of Buhari's Administration, 2015-2023

Abdulrasheed Abdulyakeen¹

Abstract

The pursuit of an Afrocentric foreign policy, to emerge as Africa's foremost state, has continued to guide Nigeria's foreign policy aspirations to date. Just like his three predecessors, Buhari effectively utilized Nigeria's foreign policy and economic relations to attract foreign investors and other international business/development partners to do business in the country. This study examined Nigeria's foreign policy under President Buhari's administration. Utilizing the case study research design with a qualitative approach enabled data to be derived from a variety of sources including documentary records and semi-structured elite interviews. The findings showed that it was able to transform Nigeria from a fairly isolated state to a globalized nation; the administration has also attracted foreign development investment in multiple ways, especially in the area of Agriculture and telecommunication. Health care, Education, Mine and Steel among others. The Buhari administration has implemented a foreign policy that maintained good relationships with its neighbours to fight the Boko Haram insurgency and also improved bilateral relations with China, Japan, Morocco, Dubai, and Qatar to cater to Nigeria's economic imbalance and also maintained good relations with the United States of America and the United Kingdom. However, PMB's administration has been truncated by certain challenges that arise from poor leadership, corruption, developmental hindrances, the country's image crisis, ineffective representation of Nigerians in the diaspora, and the seeming lack of will to engage the principles of reciprocity as it relates to its external relations. The study concludes and recommends Nigeria's foreign policy must be premised solely on national interest with an emphasis on national security and welfare, regional and global peace, as well as robust multilateral diplomacy that is tailored along strong strategic partnership with friendly states in the comity of nations.

Keywords: *Agriculture, Foreign Policy, President Muhammadu Buhari, Administration.*

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Introduction

The international system is symbiotic, leading to the notion that no country can exist as an island. Since Nigeria gained independence and became in charge of its internal and external affairs, this showcases that Nigeria became a participating and active member of the international system. The rise and birth of Nigeria's Foreign policy became inevitable. Specific to the Nigerian foreign policy sphere, Ashiru (2013) identifies several 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); the 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, and 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, to emerge 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 and Ujara, 2014; Fayomi, 2015; Egwemi and Ochim, 2016). In a bid to restore the domestic and external environment of Nigeria; President Muhammadu Buhari took over the mantle of Nigeria's leadership from President Goodluck Jonathan and immediately undertook so many diplomatic visits as President-elect even before his official inauguration. After his being sworn in on May 29, 2015, he undertook more visits to further

launder the image of the country and diversify her foreign revenue sources. Just like his three predecessors, he effectively utilized Nigeria's foreign policy and economic relations to attract foreign investors and other international business/development partners to do business in the country.

Buhari's administration maintained the status quo of sustaining the influx of more FDI and other foreign revenues into the country; but still with the tip tilting more in favor of Oil and Gas (O&G). There was however underperformance of the country's foreign policy about domestic and external environment. It is against this backdrop that the researcher tends to carry out an Assessment of Nigeria's Foreign Policy under President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration (2015-2023). The argument about Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari has raged for some time, and many have argued that the country's foreign policy needs to be evaluated. Although many people had different motives for wanting Nigeria to reassess its foreign policy, this is what happened. While many believe it is hard for Nigeria to have a coherent and unified foreign policy as a result of domestic challenges, others believe it is nearly impossible to construct a new policy orientation.

The Nigerian state's image crisis, which has left her with a poor image in the international community, has made it difficult to promote or advertise Nigeria, as Ajayi (2005) termed it, the "diplomatic market". Ajayi (2005) Laundering the country's tattered image in the international arena, he noted, is as difficult as trying to create an image for international terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and Boko Haram. It's no surprise that as Nigeria's elected leader, President Muhammad Buhari took the brunt of the responsibility for restoring the country's tarnished image. The regime's foreign policy has been focused on investment reforms, bilateral trade, security, and anti-corruption domestic and foreign policies. As a result, Nigeria's foreign policy posture shifted dynamically from a primarily Afrocentric thrust to a more universal, economic, and military direction to draw international attention. Even though there is a significant difference in the styles of previous administrations, Buhari has been chastised for his lack of seriousness of purpose. The administration was seen as lacking the political will to save its image, and the current administration has been chastised for misdirecting political will and resources. As a result, several

debates have erupted concerning the propriety of their foreign policy strategies, the amount of their triumphs, and the long-term viability of their actions.

Every foreign policy's purpose is to establish and maintain friendly relations with other countries, as well as to promote a country's image and meet its national and internal objectives. This invariably indicates that a strong foreign policy is critical in forming, establishing, and keeping a positive image for a country. Nigeria's reputation, on the other hand, is at an all-time low under Muhammadu Buhari's leadership. Violent crimes are said to be a stumbling block to Nigeria's progress. Nigeria has earned a spot among the world's least safe countries as a result of Boko Haram terrorism, Niger Delta issues, and IPOB agitations (Martin, 2016). These (and other) groups' violent crimes have resulted in the deaths of over 1.3 million Nigerians, the displacement of over 20,000 people, a lack of national integration, and ethno-religious chauvinism. Nigeria's image tarnishes as a result of corruption and a perplexing lack of transparency and accountability, while she simultaneously loses large amounts of foreign direct investment (FDI) and her energetic young human resources who migrate because they believe the country has little or nothing to offer them. As a result, the country is unable to effectively combat internal insurgencies and has a tarnished reputation for poor governance. This weakens the economy while also increasing insecurity and bad governance.

Indeed, according to Transparency International's (TI) 2017 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Nigeria was ranked 148th out of 180 countries surveyed, a drop from 136th in TI's 2014, 2015, and 2016 rankings, making a mockery of the Nigerian government's lauded anti-corruption drive. This is compounded by the fact that Buhari's administration, like many others in Nigeria, has always had strong foreign policies. Nigeria's foreign policy problem, which is harming the country's image, is not in its formulation, but in its implementation. The study centers on the assessment of Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration (2015-2023). The objectives of the study are an assessment of Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration. Other specific objectives include to:

- i. Examine the evolution and development of the Nigerian foreign policy;
- ii. Assess President Buhari's Foreign policy from 2015-2023;
- iii. Evaluate the performance of Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy; and
- iv. Recommend ways of improving Nigerian foreign policy.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Foreign Policy: Foreign policy is a programme of decisions and actions of a state about its external environment designed to achieve a state's long- and short-term objectives. By extension, a country's domestic environment shapes the decision of its foreign policy. Morgenthau, (1966), tells us that "all foreign policy is a struggle for the minds of men". George Modelski as cited in Bojang, A.S (2018), defines foreign policy as "the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their activities to the international environment". Foreign policy must throw light on the ways states attempt to change and succeed in changing the behaviour of other states' activities. Holsti (1972) views foreign policy as "the actions of a state towards the external environment and the condition usually domestic under which these actions are formulated.

Concept of Shuttle Diplomacy: Diplomacy is one of the concepts that is best conceptualized through a consideration of its usage rather than attempting to arrest or capture a precise, fixed, or authoritative meaning. Diplomacy is derived from the Greek word "diploma" denoting a folded document that contains the official handwriting and the idea of credentials confirming the claims of the bearer (Bajang, 2018). There is no consensus among scholars on the exact meaning of diplomacy. Osagie, (2007), observes that diplomacy in the popular sense means the employment of fact, shrewdness, and skill in any negotiation or transition. He went further to say that it is an application of fact and intelligence in international policies through negotiation, persuasion, and compromise. Asobie, (2002), defines diplomacy as the management of international relations by negotiation. Bajang, (2018), viewed diplomacy as the application of intelligence and tactics to the conduct of official relations

between the governments of independent states. The word shuttle Diplomacy is said to have emerged from Henry Kissinger's efforts in the Middle East in the early 1970s. He flew back and front between Middle Eastern capitals for months to bring about peace after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Fey and Ramsey (2010) assert that shuttle diplomacy, "involves the intermediary meeting with each side in turn and relying on those discussions to progress towards a solution". Akinterinwa, (2004, p.34), perceived the shuttle diplomacy of Obasanjo to be a deal of foreign policy for promoting national objectives.

Foreign Policy under President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023)

The Buhari administration was under no illusion that it could solve the multiplicity of problems confronting Nigeria without concrete engagement with the international community. Though not comparable in terms of frequency and number of times as was with President Obasanjo in his first term of office, nonetheless President Buhari equally embarked on high-power 'Shuttle Diplomacy' in his first year of assumption of office. The purpose of the shuttles, which have been at both bilateral and multilateral levels is tied to solving the domestic challenges of economic recovery, insecurity, and the fight against corruption. Shortly after the assumption of office, the President undertook a tour of member-states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission in West Africa that are equally affected by the activities of Boko Haram. For this purpose, the President also visited France because of France's interest in West Africa, as a result of the close affinities with her former colonies. The visits were meant to seek collaboration, cooperation, and the assistance of the various governments in tackling the Boko Haram menace. In line with the government's determination, the Boko Haram terror issue featured prominently in the president's discussion with the US authorities on his official visit to America. In the final analysis, the contacts made with various governments yielded results in the mold of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) (Assanvo, et al. 2016).

At present, the Boko Haram terrorist group has been seriously decimated (Somorin, 2016), with its existence hinged only on attacks on 'soft' targets. In the attempt to tackle Nigeria's economic problems, the president has been

visible on the world stage, attempting to sell Nigeria as a haven of business opportunities to governments and corporations around the world. Indeed, the president has left the space wide open by not discriminating against any part of the world, either based on ideology or religion. In the search for Foreign Direct Investment, the president has made both bilateral and multilateral visits to Europe (France, Germany, Britain), the US, China, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, amongst many other countries. Some of the efforts have generated visible results, for instance, “the secured commitments for investments worth \$ 6 billion from the Chinese government and private companies most of whom signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Nigerian government as well as private companies” (Akwaya, 2016). While the economy is still in a terrible state, especially in the period of recession, there are signals that with the monetary and fiscal policies of the government, in addition to the giant strides the government has made in establishing contacts and building the confidence of foreign investors, the Nigerian economy is on its way to recovery in a relatively short while. Finally, in this regard, the Buhari administration aggressively sought the commitment and cooperation of the international community in fighting high-level corruption at home.

Specifically, the government continually canvasses and lobbies foreign governments, especially in the West where most monies carted by Nigerian government officials are stashed. The cooperation of the foreign governments is sought in the area of refusal to provide safe havens for stolen wealth from Africa. Furthermore, the government is on an aggressive campaign for the repatriation of stolen wealth that is already stashed abroad. The president's trips abroad are meant to win the loyalty of the foreign governments in this regard. One such show of support came from the government of the United Arab Emirates as demonstrated in the signing of a bilateral agreement that details the willingness of the UAE to “facilitate the extradition of wanted persons, and seizure of stolen assets among others” (Akwaya, 2016, p.56).

In the quest for a corruption-free Nigeria, the president played a visible role in the London 2016, Anti-Corruption Summit, where emphasis was laid on erecting a strong global coalition against corrupt practices (Wakili 2016). While the Buhari administration displayed elements of determination and

commitment in deploying foreign policy to solve the various challenges at home, the government has equally been alive to its responsibility to the sub-region, in line with the underlying principles of the national interest. This is evidenced in the material and technical support provided for the following countries during their elections; Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Guinea Conakry. Most recently, the Nigerian government played a significant role as a leading member of ECOWAS to solve an impending political imbroglio in Gambia. The group ensured that the recalcitrant former President Yahya Jammeh vacated office for the democratically elected President Adama Barrow. From all indications, Nigeria, Senegal, Liberia, and Ghana, under the auspices of ECOWAS, would have implemented a forceful removal of Yahya Jammeh from office (Freeman, 2016).

Equally important in the foreign policy drive is the extent to which President Buhari is willing to make Nigeria relevant in international politics. In most international forums, the president leads the Nigerian delegation, thereby creating visibility for the office of the President of Nigeria and by extension, enhancing the country's image. In this regard, the President has attended and addressed, the UN General Assembly, the African Union Heads of State and Government meeting, the Heads of State and Government Meeting of ECOWAS, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the COP21 Climate Change Summit, the China-Africa Conference, the Nuclear Security Summit, among numerous others (Akwaya, 2016). Despite the commendable efforts so far made in the foreign policy arena, especially as they relate to achieving positive outcomes in domestic policy pursuits, the Buhari administration is relatively weak in terms of the pursuit of a concrete diplomatic agenda. It is an irrefutable fact that diplomacy is one of the most critical instruments of foreign policy; hence, the need to accord a high level of importance to Nigeria's diplomatic practice. A recurring albatross of Nigeria's diplomatic practice is the lack of funds experienced by many of the diplomatic missions in various capitals of the world (Aremu, 2016, 534).

This unacceptable practice hinders the capacity of the missions to carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently, with negative consequences on the efforts made by the government at home. The government appears to be

addressing the challenge by shutting down some of the diplomatic missions that are considered unviable (Salawu and Echewofun, 2016), perhaps so that funds can be made available to the diplomatic missions in capitals presumed to be of strategic importance to Nigeria's national interest. This position may appear logical on the surface; it however impedes the government's efforts to take advantage of opportunities across the globe. With the dynamic nature of globalization, there is a sense of keeping diplomatic relations with as many state actors as possible, for the possibility of the strategic importance of a state may arise at short notice. Moreover, given the itinerant nature of the average Nigerian, the government must be conscious of providing representation in as many countries as possible. A related development in this regard is the slow pace of appointing Ambassadors and High Commissioners to head the various diplomatic missions. As a critical element of foreign policy pursuit, the diplomatic machinery must be fortified to the highest level. A situation in which the appointment of the country's highest representatives takes too long to be finalized does not bode well for the relationship between Nigeria and the country starved of the highest-level representative. It is therefore imperative for both the executive and legislature to harmonize the processes of nominating, confirming, and approving Nigeria's highest-ranking representatives abroad.

Achievements of President Buhari's Foreign Policy

On assumption of office as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari undertook a tour to the neighbouring countries of Tchad, Niger, and Cameroon to discuss collaborative cooperation in dealing with the Boko Haram Insurgency that had grossly affected the social and economic life of Nigeria and these countries (Wakili, 2015). To deal with the insurgency in the region, the President relieved the service chiefs he met on the ground of their posts and appointed new officers to man the defense sector as follows: Major-General Abayomi Gabriel Olonishakin as Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General Tukur Yusuf Buratai, as Chief of Army Staff, Rear Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas, as Chief of Naval Staff, Air Vice Marshall Sadique Abubakar, as Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Monday Riku Morgan, as Chief of Defence Intelligence and Major-General Babagana Monguno (rtd) as National Security

Adviser. These new service chiefs were given a clear marching order to relocate to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, and to end the Boko Haram Insurgency once and for all. The President told them that to deal with the incessant herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria, the Federal Government sent a National Grazing Reserve (Establishments) Bill to the National Assembly. In the same vein, Benue and Ekiti States have enacted the Anti-Open Grazing Law to encourage Fulani Herdsmen to embrace cattle ranching.

The President's marching order started with the renaming of the counter-insurgency operation from Operation Zaman Lafiya to Operation Lafiya Dole (which in Hausa means no option for peace) by the Chief of Army Staff, who said he would be actively involved in the operation to end Boko Haram madness. In addition, the military chiefs moved their command-and-control centre to Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, where the theatre command was also set up. The Chief of Army Staff, General Buratai, brought a new paradigm shift from the old era where the army chief would be in Abuja and dish out orders to soldiers on the battlefield to a new era where the battle itself is being led by the Chief of Army Staff himself. He therefore joined the troops with very super-charged morale and support of the airfare jets in operations that led to the re-opening of the Damaturu-Biu road and the Biu-Dambo road. These marked the beginning of the defeat of Boko Haram in their enclave. Later, the Nigerian army, under the direct command of the Chief of Army Staff, with the support and gallant air force command, captured Mafa, Dikwa, Gamboru-Ngala, and Kala-Balge towns. The troops, under the cover of the air force, then went on to capture Guzamala, Bama, Gwoza, Baga Alagarno, and finally "Camp Zero" Sambisa Forest and headquarters of the Boko Haram Insurgents, which was captured on the 22nd of December, 2015 (Abdulyakeen, 2021; Abdullahi et al., 2019; West African Early Warning and Early Response Network (WARN, 2020; Abdulyakeen, 2021).

Table 1: Some Police and Military Operations in Nigeria

<i>S/No.</i>	<i>Operational Name (Code)</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
1	Operation Lafiya Dole (Lafiya Dole means Peace by All Means)	It was launched in North Eastern Nigeria in July 2015 by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. T.Y. Buratai, to fight Boko Haram
2	Operation Delta Safe	It was created in June 2016 to replace Operation Pulo Shield, Operation Delta Safe aims to secure the Niger Delta from militants, illegal oil bunkers, vandals, etc
3	Operation Gama Aiki	This was launched in June 2016 to clear Boko Haram stragglers from Northern Borno State and border regions with Chad and Niger Republic. A Joint operation between the Nigerian Military and the regional Multinational Joint Task Force. Gama Aiki is primarily targeting the terrorists fleeing Operation Crackdown.
4	Operation Awatse	This operation was launched in July 2016 to dismantle the operational bases of pipeline vandals and militants in the coastal areas of Southwest Nigeria.
5	Operation Sharan Daji	It was set up to tackle cattle rustling, kidnapping, and armed banditry in the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
6	Operation MESA	This is a nationwide joint Police-Military security arrangement, taking on different nicknames in the various states. In Kaduna, for example, it is called Operation Yaki, and in Benue State, Operation Zenda.
7	Operation Maximum Safety	It was launched on August 5 2016 to target bandits and kidnappers along the Abuja-Kaduna highway that cuts across the FCT, Niger, and Kaduna States.
8	Operation Crocodile	It was launched in the Niger Delta region to deal with the insecurity there.
9	Operation Python Dance (Egwu Eke 1)	This was launched in the Southeastern geographical region, i.e., five Ibo land to deal with the insecurity activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Source: *Nigerian Bulletin*, 2016.

In less than two years of the administration, the government has been able to improve its foreign relations with Nigeria's neighbors, which are ECOWAS and the LAKE CHAD Commission members. These as also helped the government achieve some level of success in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency, which has taken an international dimension. A). The Buhari administration has been able to forge important diplomatic and economic relations with China, which is a growing economic powerhouse in the global economy. This relation has provided the country with needed funds to cushion the effects of the infrastructural deficit. This provided the nation needed foreign direct investments. B) On the international scene, Nigeria has gained more respect under the Buhari administration, which is largely attributed to his personality and committed fight against corruption and insecurity in the country. c) President Buhari assumed leadership in negotiations for the peaceful return of a democratically elected government in the Gambia. President Buhari was appointed to lead the African Union's anti-corruption drive in the region.

Challenges Faced by President Buhari in the Implementation of the Nigerian Foreign Policy

The Buhari administration gained political power during one of the most critical times in Nigeria's history. The government is confronted with challenges built up by decades of mismanagement and maladministration (Omale, 2016). Indeed, it appears that 'the chickens have come home to roost', because, at this time, Nigeria is facing perhaps, the most difficult internal security problem in its history, coupled with the challenge of the worst economic recession in twenty-five years which has negatively affected our foreign relations and diplomacy (Ishiekwene, 2016). Furthermore, the challenges are compounded by limited resources, especially as a result of overdependence on income from the sale of petroleum products, which is currently experiencing low prices in the international market. The problems are multiplied by the pressures exerted on the state by various groups: political, economic, religious, and ethnic, struggling to attract the government's attention. Based on these, the Buhari administration had its work cut out for it from the outset. The major thrusts of the administration's domestic policies are: revamping the domestic

economy, ensuring the protection of lives and properties as a response to the spate of security issues across the country, and lastly, ending corrupt practices (prosecuting corrupt cases and preventing the art of corruption at the highest level).

Despite this accolade, though, the conditions of the critical sectors of the economy are debilitating, causing untold hardship for the generality of the people, who have to face rising inflation, while the purchasing power continues to reduce drastically. The Buhari administration had to contend with a great external shock induced by the heavy drop in global oil prices. As a result, "the Nigerian government faces a budget deficit of more than \$11 billion" (Scott, 2016). This was compounded by the activities of 'economic saboteurs' who disrupted the flow of oil production, thereby causing a reduction in the daily production of Nigeria's major income earner, crude oil. With a huge deficit inherited from the Jonathan administration (Tukur 2015; Abdulyakeen, 2022), it is no surprise that the Nigerian economy entered into recession for the first time in twenty-five years. The government is unable to meet its obligations in terms of recurrent expenditure while being unable to embark on capital projects. These problems have led to soaring inflation, unemployment, and a reduction in the purchasing power of ordinary Nigerians. The security challenge of the country has an international dimension.

The Boko Haram terrorist insurgency in the Northeastern part of the country brought global attention to Nigeria through both its activities in Nigeria and other countries within West Africa. Dating back to 2010, the Boko Haram group continues to unleash terror and mayhem on institutions and individuals across the northern part of the country. Before the commencement of the Buhari administration, the country was besieged by the criminal activities of the group, among which was the sacking of, and hoisting of its flag in Damboa community, the bombing of the Police headquarters in Abuja, the attack on the UN office in Abuja, and other daring bombings of 'soft' targets (Smith, 2014). Perhaps the dominant discourse in the activities of the group so far is the brazen act of insolence with which the group invaded and abducted two hundred and seventy-six secondary school girls in a night at Chibok, Borno state, in April 2014 (*BBC News*, 2016). Despite the global outcry against this action, the group

kept the majority of the school children in captivity for more than two years. All attempts by the Nigerian government to rescue the school children have so far failed. This is the unenviable burden inherited by the Buhari administration from the Jonathan administration. Based on its campaign promises, the Buhari administration immediately swung into action to address the Boko Haram menace upon assumption of office. In relative terms, the Buhari administration's success in the short term has surpassed whatever was achieved under the Jonathan administration.

While 82 Chibok girls from a group of 276 abducted in north-eastern Nigeria in 2014 regain freedom (VOA, 2023), there is, however, a noticeable reduction in the capacity of the Boko Haram group to wreak havoc. On record, the group has been chased out of its fortress in the Sambisa Forest of the North-East part of Nigeria. Whatever capacity remains for the group is now expended on low-level attacks against 'soft' targets in Nigeria and neighbouring countries (Vandiver, 2016). Aside from the high incidences of kidnapping and other regular challenges of insecurity, the Buhari administration was equally faced with the activities of economic saboteurs from the South-South geo-political zone of the country. The Niger Delta Avengers is the umbrella body of disgruntled elements in the South-South bent on causing the government's attention to bear on the economic, environmental, and social conditions of the area. The group's method is to disrupt oil production by blowing up pipelines that serve as conduits in the production of crude oil for the international market (Hinshaw and Kent, 2016).

This act of economic sabotage continues to cost Nigeria much-needed revenue, especially at a time when the world is witnessing a great reduction in the prices of crude oil in the international market. Concerned about the negative implications of their activities, the government continually makes efforts to 'pacify' the group by focusing attention on the development of the area. For instance, a reversal of the despoliation of their lands is being undertaken through the 'Ogoniland Clean' project (Alike, 2016; Abdulyakeen and Abdulsalam, 2022). As the administration engages the Niger Delta people in the solution to the problems in the area, there is a noticeable reduction in the negative activities of the Avengers, with a direct impact on oil production, and positive implications

on revenue accruing to the government. Deriving from the President's publicly declared hatred against acts of corruption, the administration made the fight against corruption a pivotal part of its domestic policy. Remarkably, numerous corrupt practices of government officials under the erstwhile Jonathan administration have been uncovered, and the processes of prosecution are ongoing. These three critical issues, economic revival, provision of adequate security, and the fight against corruption, have formed an appreciable part of the basis upon which the Buhari administration has engaged the rest of the world since its inception (VOA, 2023).

When President Buhari took over the mantle of leadership on May 29, 2015, he vowed to combat corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored. This was indicated in his inaugural speech when he said, "I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody", Buhari (2015). Immediately, according to Campuswaka (2015), he started by arresting Col Dasuki (rtd), the then National Security Adviser of President Jonathan, who was 1983 a young Nigerian Army Colonel who arrested the then General Buhari when Buhari's government as Military Head of State was overthrown on Dec 1983 by General Babaginda. Dasuki's accomplices that are of the opposition party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and those in the military were arrested and charged in court by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over the massive scam in weapons and defense procurements that led to the misuse of three trillion-naira defense budget since 2011 under the guise of fighting the notorious Boko Haram menace.

The NNPC investigation, where the former minister of petroleum, Mrs Diezani Alison-Madueke, was asked to give a holistic account of her stewardship while in office, could have been one of the reasons why President Buhari vowed to combat corruption in Nigeria no matter whose ox is gored. The investigation exposed several oil deals conducted in the NNPC. Among these are: (1) The USD 2.2 billion illegal withdrawal from the Excess Crude Oil Account, according to (www.punchng.com), of which USD 1 billion was supposedly approved by the then President Jonathan to fund his re-election campaign without the knowledge of the National Economic Council. (2) The investigation of the discovered USD 11.6 billion (NLNG) dividend payments that are missing

according to NEITI, Izeze (2015). (3) The non-remittance of USD 11.63 billion paid to NNPC on crude swaps due to subsidy and domestic crude allocation that was not remitted to the federation account from 2005 to 2012, Izeze (2015). (4) The stealing of sixty million barrels of oil valued at USD 13.7 billion under the watch of NNPC from 2009 to 2012, Izeze (2014). (5) The invasions of tax by Oil Prospecting Licenses (OPL) and Oil Mining Licenses (OML), *Daily Sun* (2016). Other cases investigated outside NNPC were: (6) Diversion of 60% of USD 1 billion foreign loans obtained by the Federal Ministry of Finance from the Chinese, Izeze (2015). (7) Diversion and mismanagement of USD 2.2 million meant for vaccination of children, Siteadmin (2014). (8) Diversion of N1.9 billion Nigerian naira being payment for the Ebola fight, Abiodun (2015).

The Federal Ministry of Finance hurried payment of USD 2.2 million to the Federal Ministry of Health contractor in disputed invoices, *Punch* (2015). (8) NIMASA fraud that the investigation is ongoing (www.punch.com). (9) The NDDC scam of N27 billion Nigerian naira contract award, *Premium Times* (8th August 2015). (10) The Police Service Commission scam investigation of N150 million Nigerian Naira, *Premium Times* (2015). (11) The security contracts of the militants on oil and gas pipeline, *Africa Oil and Gas Report* (2016). (12) The alleged down payment of N50 billion Nigerian naira for the N1 trillion fine slammed on MTN by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) for a breach of the nation's laws on Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) registration, which was allegedly diverted by government agencies involved, (*Daily Sun* 2016). Broadly speaking, there have been attempts by the administration of President Buhari to investigate several cases of corruption during President Goodluck Jonathan's administration (Jimoh, 2016; Abdulyakeen, 2022).

President Muhammadu Buhari's efforts towards eradicating and eliminating corruption in Nigeria embarked on financial management reforms which include the introduction of the Government Treasury Single Account (TSA), Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS); adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) were launched to further reduce the ability for corrupt officers to amass public fund for their personal or private pockets. Buhari's anti-corruption crusade has had some achievements.

These include recoveries of looted funds, blocking treasury leakages through the Treasury Single Account, and jailing some corrupt former governors, like Joshua Dariye of Plateau State, Jolly Nyame of Taraba State, and Orji Kalu of Abia State, Fintiri of Adamawa State, among others.

Conclusion

This study examined foreign policy under President Buhari's administration. It was able to transform Nigeria from a fairly isolated state to a globalized nation; the administration has also contributed in multiple ways, especially in the areas of Agriculture and telecommunications. Health care, Education, Mining, and Steel, among others. The Buhari administration has implemented a foreign policy that maintained good relationships with its neighbours to fight the Boko Haram insurgency and also improved bilateral relations with China, Japan, Morocco, Dubai, and Qatar to cater to Nigeria's economic imbalance and also maintained good relations with the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Recommendations

Foreign policies are not forged in a vacuum; Nigeria's ability to influence the continent of Africa depends on how it can combine both internal and external variables. For Nigeria to successfully realize its foreign policy objectives, it must undergo a revolution in social and national economic resources, which have not been harnessed. The development of her economic base is necessary to maintain effective and consistent leadership. Nigeria's commitment to its foreign policies equals its capabilities with a stable polity and visionary leader. The following recommendations are made:

- a) Mindful efforts should be made to curb insecurity and corruption through fortified institutional frameworks and effective surveillance hinged on resource provision and prudent use. The government vis-à-vis the pursuit of good governance should imbibe genuine political will in the anti-graft war, make people-oriented policies (with capital expenditure occupying preeminence in national and state budgets), and

provide basic social amenities.

- b) For the anti-graft war to be won, the agencies charged with maintaining moral rectitude and probity in governance should be made autonomous. This can be done by ensuring that the Commissions generate and control their funds so that they do not depend on the federal government. This time, they will determine their fate on how far they are willing to go to prosecute any case. This will reveal to the world that Nigeria is serious and ready to break its unenviable romance with corruption.
- c) Nigerians in the Diaspora should be properly recognized in the scheme of foreign policy articulation and implementation. They have a prominent role in advancing the foreign policy of the country and, by implication, its international image, and hence should be given sufficient diplomatic attention.
- d) Nigeria's foreign policy must be premised solely on national interest with emphasis on national security and welfare, regional and global peace, as well as robust multilateral diplomacy that is tailored along strong strategic partnership with friendly states in the comity of nations.

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