

SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

ADENIYI, ADEMIDUN MARY

Department of History and International Studies,
Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo Ogun State, Nigeria.
asaintmary@gmail.com +234 (0) 810 722 1007

Abstract:

Over one and a half decade uninterrupted military regimes up till 1999 had Nigeria's image in shambles. This development had great impact on Nigeria's socio-economic standing. Given the democratic transition in 1999, the immediate democratic government of President Obasanjo and subsequent regimes were faced with the responsibility of initiating policies that would revamp Nigeria's image and foster socio-economic development. Shuttle diplomacy was a viable tool adopted by these administrations to help rescue the situation. However, despite the vast time and resources invested in shuttle diplomacy, Nigeria is still deficient in socio-economic development. The general objective of this paper is to examine the impact of shuttle diplomacy on Socio-economic development in Nigeria between 1999 and 2019. Using the historical method and comparative method of content analysis from primary and secondary sources, the paper examined how the regimes of Presidents- Olusegun Obasanjo, Musa Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari adopted shuttle diplomacy to foster socio-economic developments in Nigeria. Through a structured evaluation of their shuttle diplomacy endeavors, this study discovered the frequency and intensity of shuttle diplomacy under each regime. However, the paper concluded that shuttle diplomacy plays a vital role in Nigeria's socio-economic development given that no country can sit back at home arms folded with high expectations from the international community. However, to avoid wastage of resources and achieve maximal results for socio-economic development in Nigeria, this paper recommends that shuttle diplomacy should be more organized, planned, targeted and goal oriented.

Keyword: Shuttle Diplomacy, Socio-economic development, Pariah State, Foreign policy.

Introduction

“Diplomacy has been characterized as 'the master-institution' or, more prosaically, as 'the engine room of international relations.’” “When things go wrong in international affairs, people frequently talk about failure of diplomacy. When something difficult needs to be accomplished, or when a settlement or general improvement in international relations is in prospect, more and better diplomacy is often called for.” Thus, states engage in different forms of diplomacy for different purposes ranging from building mutual friendship, image building, trade relation and conflict resolution. Diplomacy is one of the major tools that help sharpen the image of a country internationally (James, 1999). According to Anholt (2008), the advancement in globalization has placed much significance on the national image and reputation of states in the contemporary world. The image of every country goes a long way to determine its foreign investment opportunities, development prospects, the general attitude of the international community and the public at large and the level of relevance and influence of a state in the international arena. Thus, a good international image attracts good fortunes to a country such as foreign direct investment (FDI) and exports promotion necessary for such country's socio-economic development.

The image problem of Nigeria

Ekele (2011) attests that the image problem of Nigeria has its historical foundation in the unconstitutional frequent takeovers of government by the military. The state of affairs climaxed during the Sanni Abacha's regime (1993-1998) leading to Nigeria's ASSUMING the status of a Pariah state. The Abacha's regime was famous for several human rights violations. Having

rejected the results of the June 12, 1993 election for no good reason, the Abacha regime employed violence and manipulation to enforce compliance and suppress opposing views. A noticeable development that occurred during the era was the execution of the famous novelist, playwright and environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and other eight human right activists in Ogoniland commonly referred to as the "Ogoni Nine". The execution of the nine attracted both internal and international attention and condemnation. Disregarding pleas from the international community, Abacha ordered their killing. Their executions became a symbol of tyranny of the Abacha regime which consequently sparked negative international reactions. The death of Abacha on June 8, 1998 led to the transfer of power to General Abdul Salami Abubakar, who transitioned the country into a democratic government led by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999.

Given the Pariah status of Nigeria as a result of such undemocratic actions taken by successive military regimes. It was pertinent for the incoming government to address the pariah status of the country. Thus, President Olusegun Obasanjo decided to engage in a flurry of shuttle diplomacy to correct the negative image of the country in the international community. The Obasanjo's administration was famous for his consistent shuttle diplomacy across major countries of the world targeted at revamping the deformed international image of the country. Adeniran (2008) states that President Olusegun Obasanjo embarked on about 103 foreign trips in the first 168 weeks of his presidency, an average of about two weeks of every month of his presidency. Obasanjo was able to regain Nigeria's lost glory by re-integrating the country into the comity of nations. However, Obasanjo's administration was criticized for personalizing Nigeria's foreign policy, ignoring the domestic issues that needed attention and wasting money on incessant foreign trips.

Nigeria's foreign policy under the government of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua (successor to the Obasanjo's administration) tilted its focus significantly from shuttle/economic diplomacy to citizenship diplomacy with the aim of identifying with the interests of Nigerian citizens and the protection of the welfare of the citizens both at home and abroad. The ill-health and briefness of his administration denied him of engaging in much trips. Through-out the period he was managing his health abroad, Yar'adua failed to make provisions for his Vice President to act on his behalf. Thus, Nigeria's seat in the international community was obviously vacant owing to Nigeria's absence in important international meetings and abandoned obligations thus losing several positions in multilateral associations such as the ECOWAS, and found herself in a situation where many of her allies began to wonder what had gone wrong with Nigeria. Taking over after his death, President Goodluck Jonathan, maintained to a large extent Yar'adua's foreign policy goals but also adopted the instruments of shuttle diplomacy in rebranding Nigeria's image in an attempt to attract foreign investments into the country moving from one country to another (Adeniran, 2011)

The deadly attacks of the Boko Haram terrorist group in the North-eastern part of the country dealt a deadly blow on Nigeria's foreign image once again. Thus affecting the country's international economic relations and development in terms of foreign investments and military aids. Also, increased poverty and corruption contributed to the image-problem. President Jonathan constantly embarked on foreign trips in an attempt to present Nigeria to the external world as a safe haven for foreign investments. The president was reported to have engaged in about twenty trips in the first eleven months of 2012, making four trips in September alone. Goodluck Jonathan renewed several diplomatic and bilateral relationships with many countries. He also urged European and Asian giants to invest in Nigeria's private sector particularly in the key areas of energy, downstream sector and agriculture and sought for help in combating the Boko Haram terrorist activities and corruption in the country. However, the terrorist activities of Boko Haram constituted a major challenge to Nigeria's external relations under his administration (Jacob and Akintola, 2014).

Upon the emergence of Mohammadu Buhari as the elected president in May, 2015, he

also borrowed a leaf from Olusegun Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy with focus on foreign direct investments as well as the search for international cooperation to help fight against the internal insecurity ravaging the country and to build a positive image for the country. Nigeria's international image improved following the signing of several bilateral and multilateral agreements under the Buhari's administration. His administration successfully purchased military weapons from the US which included 12 Embraer A-29 Super Tucano aircraft. Buhari was able to restore US-Nigeria relations, which had noticeably declined during the previous administration.

However, in spite of the fact that shuttle diplomacy has proven to effectively address Nigeria's image problem in the international community and setting the path for national development for succeeding administrations up till 2019, a host of critics have not ceased to criticize shuttle diplomacy by advancing its various loopholes. On this note, this study intends to analyze Nigeria's shuttle diplomacy from 1999-2019, determine its successes and assess its weaknesses as regards Nigeria's socio-economic development.

Diplomacy

Oyelakin (2014) posits diplomacy as essentially “the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted or managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the diplomatist.” However, diplomacy has evolved to accommodate other actors different from ambassadors or envoys. The president or head of state could take up diplomatic roles without necessarily involving their ambassadors. A newer form of diplomacy known as Summit diplomacy has encouraged the art of bringing political heads together to address their common or conflicting interests. For example, while addressing the Nigerian image problem, President Olusegun Obasanjo was more involved than anyone else.

Anifowose and Enemuo (2008), also define diplomacy as the conduct of interstate relations by means of negotiation. Diplomacy represents a peaceful and most important technique in resolving crisis and issues in the international system. However, diplomacy is not restricted to the process of resolving crisis and issues in the international system, it can be regarded as the 'master-institution' or 'engine room' of international relations.

Shuttle Diplomacy

Harold (1966) was of the view that Shuttle diplomacy could be described as the action of a third party playing the role of an intermediary between or among principals in a dispute, mostly without direct principal-to-principal contact. This form of diplomacy requires frequent travels i.e. “shuttling” by the supposed intermediary/mediator. In essence, shuttle diplomacy denotes the frequent act of negotiations executed by an intermediary who constantly travels between different locations chiefly with the aim of reaching a settled agreement between the parties involved.

Ajetunmbi (2011) further describes shuttle diplomacy as the diplomatic negotiation conducted by an official intermediary who travels frequently between the nations involved. He stresses that foreign travels which was turned to an observable ritual by Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan failed to positively affect the country's economy. He argued further that due to the inability of shuttle diplomacy to yield desired goals, attention should therefore be given to address domestic problems such as the lawlessness of the Fulani herdsmen, poor electricity, Boko Haram Insurgency, dilapidated road infrastructure, and pipeline vandalization..

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the 'soft power theory'. The soft power theory principally de-emphasizes the adoption of coercive military capability in foreign relations and therefore justifies the use of intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, policies, political values and institutions, to achieve a desired outcome.

Soft power enables one to get “others to want the outcomes that you want”, and more particularly “the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion.” Relying on attraction, persuasion or seduction, the soft power theory condemns negative behaviours such as

arrogance being a counterproductive action that can bring about repulsion instead of attraction. The concept of soft power is close to the Liberal tradition, which encourages cooperation, peaceful relations and economic interdependence (Arowolo, 2008).

SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY IN NIGERIA (1999-2019)

Shuttle Diplomacy under President Olusegun Obasanjo's Administration

Mudashiru (2011) posits that “The premonition that Nigeria might once again come back prominently into global reckoning was obvious from the volume of goodwill the General Abubakar's transition programme generated for the country. It gave a sense of assurance that Nigeria might bounce back to the world stage for global reckoning. The real chance to refurbish Nigeria's image, came at the enthronement of democracy in Nigeria and it essentially created an atmosphere of optimism and a symbol of integration into world politics. With about 40 heads of states from different parts of the world in attendance, no national event had pulled such crowd from the international community since Nigeria's independence. The leaders of many countries of the world had turned up to not only celebrate but to also demonstrate their recognition for the new development in the country. Unlike the previous regimes, the international community was receptive of the newly inaugurated civilian government in Nigeria.

At inauguration, Obasanjo lamented the Pariah Status which the country had found itself under the past military government. He however, vowed to take a new turn by facilitating the return of the country to its former place of pride in the international community. In his speech following his swearing-in on 29th May 1999, he said: “Nigeria, once a well-respected country and a key role player in international bodies, became a pariah nation, we shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, and other international bodies. We shall continue to honour existing agreements between Nigeria and other countries, it is our firm resolves to restore Nigeria fully to her previous prestigious position in the comity of nations.” This speech created a public awareness or declaration on Nigeria's new standpoint in foreign relations.

President Obasanjo realized there was need for an instantaneous amendment in Nigeria's foreign policy thrust. Thus, he launched an aggressive pursuit for the restoration of friendships with members of the international community in order to enhance the country's political, social, and economic development. On assumption of office, Obasanjo promptly embarked on charting the path for Nigeria to resume its rightful place in the comity of nations through a dexterous shuttle diplomacy. Foreign trips which had foundation before Obasanjo's inauguration became a significant part of the pursuit of his objectives in foreign relations. The restoration of Nigeria's image was fundamental to Obasanjo's foreign policy. Hence, Obasanjo's major foreign policy focus were; to improve the image of Nigeria and give sense of discipline and trust to Nigerians, at home or abroad; recovery of looted Nigerian monies kept in foreign countries; to press for foreign debt relief and inflow of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), peace; unity and security in Africa; International cooperation and partnership and due recognition for the worth of Nigeria and Africa at international level (Mudashiru, 2011).

Well ahead of his inauguration, he had embarked on several foreign trips as a private citizen and Nigeria's upcoming president, in order to set in motion, the process of revamping the image of the country. As a grand strategy towards revamping Nigeria's battered image and facilitating socio-economic developments in the country, Shuttle diplomacy which revolves around “peace, security and prosperity through friendship was adopted by Olusegun Obasanjo”.

The administration of President Obasanjo was renowned for making frequent diplomatic shuttles and holding direct meetings with important personalities and world leaders, presenting and addressing Nigeria's problem. He engaged in such trips with the sole aim of re-instating Nigeria's membership in the international community, obtaining debt relief and attracting foreign investments into Nigeria. Obasanjo relentlessly embarked on quite a lot of travels and visits around the world.

Akindele (2003), confirmed that above and beyond the repair of the broken political and

diplomatic ties was the agenda and need to reinstate the abrogated economic partnerships with key economic players most especially the United States of America which is the largest single buyer of Nigeria's most important commodity (Crude Oil), Britain- an important Trading Partner, one of Nigeria's largest creditor as well as other key members of the European Union, among which were Germany and France- major creditors and trading partners with Nigeria. He dialogued with key international organizations such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). in which the previous military dictatorships have dangerously ruined the country's relations with. More importantly, Obasanjo addressed a host of other international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS), the Commonwealth of Nations, the G8, the G77, and other State and non-State actors in the international system.

President Obasanjo saw the Commonwealth as a platform to advance Nigeria's national interests to the world. Following the transition to democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria's membership of the Commonwealth was restored on May 29th, 1999 and On June 1st, 1999, the Commonwealth lifted its military and economic sanctions in terms of travel embargo, freeze on foreign-held assets and arms embargo which were earlier placed on Nigeria. Consequent to the restoration of relations with the Commonwealth, President Olusegun Obasanjo hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) at the state capital in 1999 with the Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth 11 in attendance as the head of the Commonwealth of Nations. For the first time in the history of Nigeria engagement in world politics, Nigeria was integrated into the eight-member Committee Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) of the Commonwealth in 2000. Obasanjo remained the chairman of the Commonwealth until he was succeeded by the Prime Minister of Malta in 2005.

Following the emergence of President Olusegun Obasanjo, diplomatic relations between the United States, the European Union and Nigeria improved greatly. During Obasanjo's visit to the US in 1999, he met and discussed with President Bill Clinton and other senior officials in Washington DC. In return, President Clinton pledged a substantial increase in U.S assistance to Nigeria. In August 2000, President Clinton paid a reciprocal state visit to Nigeria where he addressed the Nigerian parliament. Also, Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy also secured for Nigeria the Open Skies Agreement with the US Airspace Agency in 1999. While the US lifted the ban on direct flight between Nigeria and the US, on May 31st, 1999, the European Union also reinstated full economic cooperation with Nigeria following several trips made by the transition government under Abdulsalaam Abubakar and President Obasanjo.

Ekele (2011) affirms that under the Obasanjo administration, there was a positive change from the former international perception of Nigeria which ended the international isolation status under Abacha's regime. He affirms that this was made possible due to Obasanjo's numerous visits to several countries that were previously estranged to Nigeria across the globe. Within a short period of time, Obasanjo renewed all forms of social, economic and political relations with countries that once detested Nigeria. This attests to the full re-admission of the country into the comity of nations. President Obasanjo pressed further to seek for economic assistance, trade relations, investment opportunities, regional security, international cooperation with the world leaders as generally contained in the four main objectives of his diplomatic shuttles which include: Re-integration of Nigeria into the comity of nations, Attracting foreign investment and fresh financial flows, Securing debt relief/forgiveness from the country's creditors and Promoting Nigeria's export trade.

President Obasanjo launched a tenacious campaign for debt relief. Not only was Nigeria in isolation, the country was also in debt crisis. In his inaugural speech on 29th May, 1999, he prioritized the debt issue that the country has been seriously submerged in for long. Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy practically entailed his personal involvement which made him embarked on several trips across the world especially to the Western countries to meet the powerful and dominant leader in order to mobilize their support for his campaign for debt forgiveness. The

huge debts were generated from bilateral official creditors in the Paris club. Nigeria's external debt in 1997 stood at USD 27.008 billion making the country the most indebted country in Africa. In 1999, the nation's debt was about US \$25 billion which gradually increased to US \$34 billion as at the end of 2004 and later increased to US\$39.9 billion based on the interest surcharges and penalties paid on the loan and not based on the reception of additional loans. Also, Nigeria was also greatly indebted to several other private financial institutions and multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AFDB). Nigeria was basically, spending about US\$ 1 billion annually on debt servicing leaving the country with less than US\$2 billion to meet her national developmental objectives in terms of infrastructures and social amenities.

It is important to note that at several intervals, Nigeria encountered some challenges regarding her pursuits of debt cancellation. For instance, the UK initially disagreed with Nigeria's plea for debt forgiveness because it was believed that the revenue generated from oil should be sufficient to repay the debts. However, despite the obstacles, Obasanjo administration never ceased to make considerable commitment to the policy direction adopted to address the debt issue. Since inauguration, he had been committed to the use of several international platforms such as the G8, African Union, Commonwealth of Nations, and the United Nations to publicize his campaign for debt relief for Nigeria. He continued to hold several meetings with Western leaders on the debt relief or cancellation for Nigeria and the poorest countries of the world. Fortunately, Obasanjo's campaign for debt forgiveness attracted the sympathy and support of the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair and other notable personalities around the world. Tony Blair and others continued to mount pressure on the Paris and London clubs, IMF and others to cancel Nigeria's debt profile which yielded good success after all. Thus, October 2005 marked a watershed in the history of Obasanjo's international campaign for debt relief. Nigeria officially exited the Paris Club as Africa's largest debtor. The creditors Club reached an agreement on the US\$ 30 billion debts with the Paris Club which included the cancellation of 18 billion dollars of Nigeria's external debt by the Paris club cancelled (Ekele, 2011).

The then president of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in April 2005 paid a two-day state visit to Nigeria, which was duly reciprocated in August 2005 by President Obasanjo and in September 2005, both countries signed a bilateral agreement focusing on four major areas which are; trade and investment, technical co-operation, cultural revival, and regular political consultations. Between 2003 and 2005, Nigeria's merchandised exports to Brazil increased from nearly \$1.5 billion to \$5 billion. Making Nigeria the fifth-highest exporter of goods to Brazil, after the US, Germany, Argentina and China.

However, his visits were not only limited to Europe and the Western States. According to the African Year Book, Obasanjo paid several visits to the main economic players in Asia such as China, South Korea and Japan. For instance, President Obasanjo paid an early state visit to India in January 2000 and to South Korea in July 2000 and then back to India on a working visit in November 2004-which was reciprocated by the Indian Prime Minister in October 2007. In May 2006, he addressed the D8 economic summit during his visit to Indonesia. He also paid his first official working visit to Japan from 21st to 23rd of May 2001 where he met Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, the Prime Minister of Japan and his Majesty the Emperor of Japan. The Prime Minister re-affirmed his stance on its foreign policy, claiming that nothing has changed about it- "There will be no stability and prosperity in the world in the 21st century unless Africa's problems are resolved". Obasanjo appealed to Japanese companies to invest in Nigeria. The meeting was said to further strengthen the friendly relations existing between Japan and Nigeria (Watson, 2013).

President Obasanjo also embarked on some official visits to China in 2003 and 2007 to pursue an improved and active economic relations with China. His personal visits coupled with a host of other Nigerian ministerial delegations to China laid the foundation of a robust economic relations, most especially trade relations that experienced rapid progress in Nigeria-China trade and the boosting of the confidence that was to develop Chinese investment and support for Nigerian infrastructural development. Nigeria engagements with China under the Obasanjo

administration brought about the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) in 2005 which permitted numerous Chinese investors to become more visible in the Nigerian economy and have themselves established in different parts of the country (Adeniyi, 2011).

Shuttle Diplomacy Under President Umaru Musa Yar'adua

In Adeniyi (2011), The emergence of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua as the President and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Nigeria on 29th May 2007, ushered in an era which there was not a total departure from the acknowledged the efforts of the immediate government that it succeeded in the area of predecessor had put in place towards the socio-economic development of the country. However, the administration was confronted by the enormous responsibility of sustaining the development programs initiated by its predecessor, all the same, the President made efforts to build on the already laid foundation of growth and development in his inaugural speech.

President Yar'Adua therefore on assumption of office took certain decisions reported not to have been in tandem with the disposition of his predecessor President Olusegun Obasanjo. One of such is the appointment of Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe as Secretary to the Federal Government. In addition, to prove the independent position of his administration, He introduced citizen diplomacy as a slight shift from shuttle diplomacy. The citizen diplomacy was intended to be a citizen-oriented policy in which Nigeria will strive for a cooperation between foreign policy and domestic affairs in such a way that the citizen is taken as the focus of foreign policy. According to Mbachu, the thrust of the new foreign policy initiative revolves around concerns for the basic needs, human rights and socio-economic welfare of Nigerian citizens in bilateral and multilateral engagements with other countries. (Adeniyi, (2011).

However, when the two administrations (Obasanjo and Yar'Adua's) is placed side by side in terms of diplomatic shuttles, it is evident that President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua government engaged in less travels. As pointed out earlier, his administration embraced more of citizen diplomacy. Thus, he stated in a statement that much of foreign trips may not be necessarily required to protect the interest of Nigerians in all the concentric circles. Yar'Adua posited that, his predecessor had engaged in a lot of foreign trips to ensure that the external image of Nigeria is revamped at a time when the country was confronted with grave image problem in the international community due to the prolonged years of military dictatorship. Thus, the apparent dynamism in Obasanjo's conduct of external relation was missing under the Yar'Adua administration as his health condition created an impediment on an effective shuttle diplomacy.

However, in spite of the fact that President Yar'Adua embarked on less diplomatic visits compared to President Obasanjo, his foreign policy was not totally void of diplomatic trips to certain parts of the world. On assumption of office, he engaged in some diplomatic trips around the world. One of the earliest major diplomatic trips he embarked on was to China in February, 2008 where he held bilateral discussion with the then Chinese President, Hu Jintao in Beijing. In the course of the visit, the two leaders reviewed the sound growth of China-Nigeria relations since the inception of their diplomatic relations and exchanged promises of commitment to each other's development.

President Yar'adua also visited Brazil in August, 2009 where he and his Brazilian counterpart held numerous bilateral talks which included the need for close collaboration between the two countries for the development of hydro-electricity generation aimed at solving Nigeria's persistent energy problem. Consequently, the meeting between the duo officially produced a joint agreement between Nigeria and Brazil on energy co-operation and an Energy Commission was established between the two countries. Stating the objective of the commission, Namadi Sambo, the then Nigerian Vice President asserts that the objective of the commission was to assist in revolutionizing the Nigerian energy sector (Adeniyi, 2011).

In 2007, President Umaru Yar'Adua went on a three-day visit to the United States of America. It was a visit which brought to the fore the nature of the US-Nigeria relations. President Yar'adua embarked on another high profile diplomatic visit to South Africa for two days on June 2nd, 2008. The visit was aimed at protecting Nigeria's strategic interest in South Africa because

of the large population of Nigerian working class and business men resident in South Africa.

Shuttle Diplomacy Under President Goodluck Jonathan

After the demise of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in May 2010, the then Vice President Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was sworn in as the Acting President. He held the reins of government until the 2011 election where he officially won the presidential election. Following a short but critical phase in the history of Nigeria's foreign relations where the country was poorly represented at important international meetings, lost many positions in multilateral associations, forsook obligations, made the list of the US terror watch list and ended up attracting several comments and concerns from eminent personalities and groups in Nigeria as well as from Nigerian allies concerning the state of the presidency. Nigeria under the Jonathan's administration launched a shuttle cum economic diplomacy in the international arena in order to recover the lost diplomatic grounds of Nigeria largely attributed to the perceived mishandling by President Yar'Adua as a result of his poor health (Adeniyi, 2011).

One of the earliest shuttles undertaken by the president after assuming office was an official visit to the United States in 2010 where he met with the then American President- Barack Obama requesting the removal of Nigeria from the terror watch list. It should be noted that the USA had placed Nigeria on the terror list following an attempt at bombing a US airline by a Nigerian Abdul Mutallab. The incidence without an iota of doubts brought about negative perception of Nigeria in the international community. However, the visit of the then Acting President Goodluck Jonathan to Washington, where he had a successful dialogue with his American counterpart led to the delisting of Nigeria from the terror watch-list and the discriminatory rule of the Department of Homeland Security on special screening of passengers on international flights to the United States that specifically targeted Nigerians.

Also, President Goodluck Jonathan never hesitated to seize every opportunity at international meetings to create awareness of Nigeria's potentials to foreign investors. For instance, at the dinner organized by the Cooperate Council of Africa (CCA) in his honour in September 2012, at New York, USA, President Jonathan emphasized on the governments focus on economic development. He asserted that Nigeria foreign policy would focus on attracting Foreign Direct Investment as this will foster domestic growth and create more jobs for the teeming unemployed Nigerians which is now the major focus on Nigeria's foreign policy. According to him, Nigeria foreign policy and foreign diplomatic missions has been tilted towards the realization of the Transformation Agenda by attracting foreign investment to the country.

Shuttle Diplomacy Under President Muhammadu Buhari

Amidst several challenges ranging from insecurity, corruption, volatile foreign exchange rate and economic crisis in the country, President Muhammadu Buhari's was inaugurated as the 15th Nigeria Head of state on May 29th, 2015. From the inception of his administration, President Buhari never concealed his inclination for foreign trips. Like his predecessors, President Buhari evidently opted for shuttle diplomacy as his first foreign policy thrust which concentrated on the attraction of foreign direct investment intended to promote Nigeria's socio-economic development. These foreign trips took President Buhari to numerous foreign countries such as France, China, India, Germany, Poland, Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malta, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and to African countries like; South Africa, Ghana, Benin, the Gambia, Niger Republic, Cameroon, Mali, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Togo, Egypt, Senegal, Morocco, Chad, and Kenya (Imanete, 2001)

“According to the Eagle online, Buhari made 52 foreign trips in 51 months and spent a sum of 4billion Naira on the trips. According to the BBC news Buhari travelled 15 times in 2015, 20 times in 2016, 12 times in 2017, 16 times in 2018. Between February 15th, 2016 and August 3rd 2018, President Buhari embarked on over forty-three international trips and visited 23 countries of the world. According to the Daily Trust, Buhari spent 407 Days Abroad visits 40 countries in 5 years. In the submission of a shuttle diplomacy critic, Obioha, “...Buhari is not alone in our leader's love for foreign travels. Former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and

Goodluck Jonathan turned such needless jamborees into compulsory observable rituals...". This is to say that succeeding governments after President Obasanjo also opted for shuttle diplomacy from time to time. This is in a bid to tackle the issues militating against the country's socio-economic development such as insecurity as well as attracting and accommodating foreign direct investments into the country.

With focus on President Buhari's shuttle diplomacy intended for Nigeria socio-economic development, Buhari was not unaware of the fact that the survival of the Nigeria state is also predicated on interdependence and inter-relations with other states in the international sphere. To prove that Nigeria was receptive of foreign investments in the country, Buhari was seen on the world stage trying to woo foreign investors into the country by presenting several investment opportunities in Nigeria. Idowu, (2021) is of the position that initially, Buhari was confronted with the security challenges in the country which stood to scare foreign investors, discouraging them from investing in the country. Thus, he spent some of his foreign trips during his first term in office to pursue foreign assistance and cooperation in combating insecurity which had obviously constituted external image problem for Nigeria. Buhari also embarked on trips to some neighbouring African countries such as Niger, Chad, (in the company of the Cameroonian President), Benin and Cameroon to strategize ways to collectively address the Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin area (Adeniran, 2008).

Idowu (2021) reveals that while on visits to other foreign countries, President Buhari in June 2015, at the 42nd G7 summit in Germany, presented his wish list to the G7 members in help to combat terrorism and revive the Nigerian economy. Also Buhari attended the 25th African Union Summit in the same June, 2015 where the issue of security and terrorism was topically discussed. In a State visit to the US in July, 2015 Buhari held talks with various high level US officials and equally engaged in talks with President Barack Obama in a private meeting where he sought for help to combat insecurity and asked for further military assistance in terms of technology and intelligence. The US resumed the selling of weapons to Nigeria which did not happen under the Jonathan regime due to the allegations of human right violations in Nigeria. The renewed relations with the US enabled a concerted fight against corruption and gave Nigeria the privilege of repatriation of recovered looted monies and assets hidden in the US by past governments (Ziegler, 1984).

Furthermore, towards tackling Nigeria's economic problems, President Buhari was active in the international community, attempting to convince and to sell Nigeria as a haven of business opportunities to governments and corporations around the world. It is important to also note that indeed, the president left the space wide open for all countries regardless of their ideology or religion. Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed an agreement on landmark identification and repatriation of illegal funds.

Also, on the repatriation of stolen money from foreign countries. President Buhari on in September 2015, embarked on a one-day official visit to Ghana to hold bilateral talks with the then president of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama on possible ways to repatriate Nigerian funds reported to have been allegedly carted out of the country by previous administration and stockpiled in Ghana. In addition to this, other trade and regional security issues were discussed. Moreover, Duke et al assert that shuttle diplomacy has been a productive exercise as it had generated positive returns for the country in terms of bilateral and multilateral agreements with several big powers of the world such as the US, UAE, France, Germany, China, Emirates, Germany, Saudi Arabia and other friendly nations. In line with the nation's economic foreign policy thrust, Buhari administration is worthy of an applause for invitations to international summit meetings of G7 and G20 as well as receptions in world capitals and the lack of a major foreign policy mishap (Adeniyi, 2011).

Other commendable achievements of Buhari from his shuttle diplomacy were the signing of bilateral agreement with China, where China agreed to invest in Nigeria's infrastructures. Nigeria under Buhari also attracted investments from countries like Japan and Russia. The then Japanese Prime Minister Abe made a \$300,000 pledge in 2019 to support

Nigeria's Defense College and a 12 billion Yen for Nigeria's public health sector. Lastly, there was a signing of €50 million Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Nigeria and the European Union towards humanitarian and development efforts in Nigeria particularly in the Nigeria's North East region. However, it is evident that not all the foreign trips of President Buhari were garnered towards pursuing Nigeria's development, a good percentage of his travels were purposely for receiving personal medical treatments abroad which generated some nasty reactions from Nigerians (Barika, 2014).

In summary, this paper has provided a summary of shuttle diplomacy under the four administrations between 1999 and 2019, the countries engaged with, the reason for embarking on shuttle diplomacy and the outcomes of some of the diplomatic shuttles. Indeed, it can be inferred that shuttle diplomacy was more pronounced and targeted under the President Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007). He embarked on most foreign trips when compared with the three others while the Umaru Yar'Adua administration is the least of them all, owing to his ill-health and unfinished term. In one way or the other, each of these administrations have made efforts at not only canvassing for foreign investments but also making certain moves and policies to launder the image of the country and thus improved its relations with foreign countries.

Conclusion

Though shuttle diplomacy is a capital intensive project for a developing country like Nigeria. It has constituted an important tool for the transformation of Nigeria from a Pariah state to an acceptable state in the comity of nations. The effect of shuttle diplomacy was mostly felt under the Olusegun Obasanjo administration (1999-2007) as it helped address the pariah status of the country and as well as secured for Nigeria the necessities for socio-economic development which included: debt relief, FDI inflows and re-integration into the comity of nations.

Thus, if shuttle diplomacy as effectively adopted by President Olusegun Obasanjo could help address the image problem which constituted an impediment for socio-economic development of the country under the military regimes, it as well helped to boost socio-economic development of Nigeria and eliminate certain hindrances that militates against the country such as terrorism and insurgency. This paper has been able to establish that image laundering or a positive image of the country in the international community is essential for attracting foreign direct investment and in fostering smooth economic activities.

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