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THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY (NFP): MYTH OR REALITY?

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ABSTRACT
All through history, Nigerian foreign policy has gone through plethora of contours. It began with the colonial political and economic policy interest to the era of conservatism shortly after independence which was followed by radical and moderate policies in the 1970s and 1980s, then to total pariahness in the 1990s and finally to liberalized foreign policy. This undulating nature of the country's external policy is occasioned by the fact that the making and enforcement of foreign policy has become the exclusive preserve of the president who himself and his ministers on foreign affairs have no diplomatic experience or background on external relations. This is further accentuated by the failure of the constitution to grant any direct foreign policy role to the national assembly. The study which is based on desk research seeks to find answer to one question; what is the role of the National Assembly in the making, implementation and direction of Nigerian external relations? It finds that the assembly is only empowered by law to approve any form treaties that the country intended to be a part of. It thus recommended the review of the country's law that will ensure that the assembly continues to act as watchdog of the executive on matters relating to foreign relations.
Keywords: Foreign Policy, National Assembly, Colonial Policy, Legislative interface

Introduction

Nigeria came into existence in 1914 and achieved independent and sovereign status on October 1, 1960, thus by 2014 the country was 100 *years* old as an independent political entity. Nevertheless, as a global, diplomatic and sovereign legal subject, Nigeria commenced its activities in the global scene in 1960 and is 63 years today dancing the in global stage (Asobie, 2010). Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa and about the strongest in the aspect of imposing influences on neighouring states in Africa and sometimes, on situations outside the region. Within the sub-region of West Africa, Nigeria is unrivaled in terms of population, military and size of the economy, thus leading to the asserting of being the hegemonic power house of the sub-region (Wright and Okolo, 1999).

Nigeria's foreign policy since its formal independence from Britain October 1960 has witnessed high and low points with increasing level of expectations. During the first republic in Nigeria (1960-1966), the country's foreign policy thrust was conservative and modest with the formal implementation of the policy of positive neutralism and non-alignment, though remained closely knitted economically to Britain, its erstwhile colonial master and a reflection of the dominant Muslim leadership under Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, who was Prime Minister. A vicious civil war involving the federal troops and Biafra (1967-1970) was externalized by the warring parties with Paris showing openly its sympathy to the Biafran struggle even though it could not successfully formally have recognized her. Undoubtedly, the role of France during the war created a severe strain in Nigeria-France relationship when the war came to an end. The USSR took advantage of Britain's temporal emotional conscience by becoming the main supplier of arms to the federal government however, by the time the war came to an end, Britain was once again restored as the major supplier of military to Nigeria (Nafzizer, 1983).

During the 1970s the country experienced a rapid economic growth that dependent on the export of petroleum which eventually gave Nigeria the opportunity to push itself into preeminent status globally. Successive administration pushed for regional and West African policies built around the concept of Manifest Destiny and Moralism. The expectations of these policies is that the United States and European countries should pay serious attention to a nation that was greatly described not just by Nigerians only, as 'Africa's Champion', with the ability to enhance and secure the interests of the less fortunate Africans within the continent and in the diaspora. In fact, two global scholars put it thus, 'there is no other noble responsibility for Nigeria to achieve than to prudently deploy the leverage of Nigeria to speedily achieve freedom and justice for blacks the world over (Akinyemi and Ogwu, 1981).

From the 1980s to the present time, the political economy of Nigeria has reduced these policy influence, weakens some aspirations of the country, leading to a grudging acceptability of an increased examination of its capacity. This situation was critically summed up by Julius Ihonvbere thus;

> The country's ambitions have been checkmated by a series of domestic contradictions; marginal role and location in the global division of labour, dependence, political instability, foreign domination, technological backwardness, poor leadership, corruption and inconsistency in the formulation and implementation of policy (1994: 35).

The Objectives of Nigeria Foreign Policy

The objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy have since the nation's attainment of statehood in 1960 been clearly listed by successive administration. The Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa in his address to the Parliament on August 20, 1960 highlighted certain basic important foreign policy objectives of Nigeria. The most significant on which others revolves is the, 'promotion of the national interest of the federation and of its citizens. However, the 1999 constitution of Nigeria spelt out the foreign policy objectives of the country thus;

(i) Promotion and Protection of the national interest
(ii) Promotion of African integration and the support for African unity.
(iii) Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its ramification
(iv) Respect for international laws and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication
(v) Promotion of a just world order.

The Principles of Nigeria Foreign Policy

Since the attainment of independence, Nigerians have witnessed the emergence of 14 different regimes and despite the fact they have different leadership styles and orientations, the conduct of the country's policy has been proclaimed by them publicly to be guided by similar principles which are in tandem with the well-established principles of traditional law as well as the charter of the AU. The principles include:

(i) Sovereignty equality of all states
(ii) Respect for territorial integrity and independence of other states
(iii) Non-interference in the internal affairs of other states
(iv) Commitment to self-determination and independence of other states
(v) Non-alignment to any geo-political bloc

Determinants of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

There are certain basic factors that influence the foreign policy of countries. The foreign policy of any state is most often the outcome of factors of the environment which are both external and internal to it (Northedge, 1968). The determinants of Nigerian foreign policy include;

National Image

Nigeria's image could be assessed and described under Alhaji Tafawa Balewa (1960-1966), General Aguiyi Ironsi (January-July, 1966), Gen. Yakubu Gowon (1966-1975), Gen. Murtala Mohammed (1975-1976), Gen, Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979), Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979-1983), Gen. Mohammadu Buhari (1983-1985), Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), Gen. Sani Abacha (1993-1998), Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar (1998-1999), Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua (2007-2010), Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), Mohammadu Buhari (2015-2023), Tinubu (2023-Present), (Zimako, 2009). Chief Ernest Shonekan regime that lasted from August to November 1993 was not listed because it was too insignificant as to attract any examination of the country's image during that era. National image is very fundamental when considering the domestic structure of foreign policy. A country that is bedeviled by corruption, political instability, rascality, lawlessness and recklessness, democratic robbery, incidences of theft, decayed infrastructure, power failure, increasing poverty level, rising tide of unemployment, insecurity and other societal vices, cannot relate with other nations in the international system nor can it pursue a strong and dynamic foreign policy. Not that they cannot actually relate, the truth is that the battered image may not yield any positive result in its foreign policy pursuit.

The Press (Mass Media) and Communication Elites

The media is a professional body that hurriedly writes history. According to Section 22 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution, the media is charged with responsibility of monitoring political governance (Akinterinwa, 2010). The media empowers citizens to watch out for government actions in consonance with the country's objectives thus a necessary yoke between people and the government. Through consistent observation by the population, the government displays an acceptable behavior that through the media (electronic broadcast or print distribution) is delivered to the entire world. This is a proof that the media performs significant function in successfully formulating the foreign policy of states (Matthew, 1981).

The mass media is defined in terms of print and electronic media. While the electronic media is exemplified by television and radio, the print media involves newspapers and magazines. In recent times however, there is the advent of the new media also known as social media which in making of policy, the media can play a significant role in agenda setting for the public, makers of policy and the press through the explanation of important issues at a point in time. Social media provides support for peers, expands interactions of the user and extend access to other intervention areas. Bola Akinterinwa gave an all-encompassing definition of media when he opined that;

> Media is the plural form of medium which is utilized in Mass Communication both in singular and pluralized form. In technical terms, it encompasses all Mass Communication activities. For example, press comprises of electronic and print media, which television, radio, newspapers, journals, internet, magazines and periodicals but the term MEDIA is not just about press but also includes arts, theatre and cinema. Therefore, media is not just a communication channel but a conglomeration of means of communication which makes it all-encompassing (2010:152).

The most important representatives of these organizations are the active participants, controllers and owners of mass media, that is, movies, press and radio. Careful examination revealed that the prompt development

and elevation of the mass media have appeared to concealed the continuous decisive significance of more intimate kind of communication in the molding of popular attitude (Almond and Verba, 1963). The press raises issues that are real or abstract as well as propaganda which act as direction for makers of a state's foreign policy including assisting to push the direction of foreign policy. Olajide Aluko historicized the importance and origin of newspapers this way;

> Beginning from the early 1966, there exist seven national dailies in Nigeria; The Daily Sketch, Daily Times, Nigerian Outlook, Nigerian Tribune, The Morning Post, the New Nigerian and the West African Pilot. By the middle of 1972, the number has grown to 12 following the addition of Daily Express, the Nigerian Tide, Nigerian Chronicle, the Standard, Nigerian Observer and the Renaissance which replaced the Nigerian Outlook that became moribund in 1967.Without the parliament, these national dailies became the main means of expression and carry from time to time, issues of foreign relations. Since 1966 however, the number of newspapers have increased astronomically. Additionally, television and radio have become a major media expression for most citizens on different areas of government activities and foreign affairs (1990:195).

The level of media support for external relations is dependent largely on the level in which the government is able to swiftly brief and persuade the media on the reasons for its foreign policy actions.

Foreign Policy Consensus/Public Opinion

It is assumed that for a state to have a sound, dynamic and unified foreign policy, there is need for general consensus. The foreign policy consensus is complete with exceptional emphasis, unipartite reservations as well as potential and real crisis of ideological and innate behavior (Almond and Verba, 1963). Opinion of the public (global and national) is one of the significant factors that the government takes into cognizance in making external relations decisions. National decision makers must accept and render due recognition to the perception of people they make decision on their behalf as well as global public opinion. Without doubt, decision makers are leaders of the people but must also accept the demands that emanates from the public. Some examples of general consensus on Nigeria's foreign policy include the country-wide discourse on the Anglo-Nigeria Defense Pact that was keenly debated by civil societies, scholars and students which resulted in its abrogation in 1962. There was also a general consensus with respect to the IMF loan and the emergence of Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in the 1980s. There was also the issue of Rhodesian deadlock wherein the on November 24, 1971, British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Mr. Ian Smith made a joint statement in Salisbury on the settlement of constitutional crisis between both countries without recourse to African majority rule in Salisbury. This led to serious outcry in Nigeria as major Nigerian media outlets like The Nigerian Tribune, Morning Post, Daily Times etc all took up the matter for several weeks condemning the actions of White Minority in Rhodesia. The continuous reportage of the events eventually influenced Nigerian government that it took a decision on December 23, 1971. In its submission, it condemned the Settlement Proposal describing it as totally unacceptable and concluded that the country would not accept anything short of No Independence Before Majority African Rule (NIBMAR). Again in November 1969, the Busia government in Ghana gave Nigerians and other Africans in the country without work and residence permits two weeks to leave the country under the Aliens Compliance Act (ACA). By early 1970, there was report that over 180, 000 Nigerians were in prison in Ghana while in the middle of same year, about 144, 000 Nigerian including those who had lived over 50 years and born there were thrown out of Ghana without being allowed to take their money and assets. There was serious resentment by Nigerians against this action in Ghana on the basis of which the Nigerian government was forced to intervene (Aluko, 1990).

The Political Structure of Nigeria

The political structure of Nigeria is a reflection of the traditional, religious, multi-ethnic, linguistic and cultural settings of the country. This is because the political elites who possess unlimited power in the control and determination of the state's foreign policy are results of these traditional forces and their opinions on foreign policy reflects these domestic realities. This was clearly exemplified during the discourse on Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the normalization of diplomatic relations with the nation of Israel. The two issues of discussion here are basically religious and divided the opinions between the majority Christian South and the majority Muslim North. With respect to Israel, Nigeria broke diplomatic relationship with Israel in 1973 at the instance of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in reaction to Israeli occupation of Sinai Territory which belong to Egypt. This led to series of disenchantment among Christians in the South who saw the move by the Muslim government as basically political and thus called for a restoration of diplomatic ties. In a hurried news conference during his three days visit to Accra, Babangida declared that Nigeria was ready to normalize ties with Israel since the issue that led to severance of relation is fading away gradually (Noble, 1989).

Regarding the issue of the OIC, only few issue on foreign policy have generated much controversy as the full membership of Nigeria of the OIC in 1986, the dust that is yet to settle till date. The issue is better understood when placed within the context of religious, ethnic and regional realities. As a densely populated state, Nigeria possessed a near equal representation of Christians and Muslims regionally separated with the South predominantly Christians and Muslim dominating the North and a small minority adherent of the indigenous religion known as 'African Traditional Religion' (ATR). This religious mix has continuously heightened political fears and anxiety and as a result, the national constitution becomes secular and this explains why the issue of OIC raised a lot of dust (Faseke, 2019). The issue raised is simple; should a religious and ethnic divided country like Nigeria be part of an organization that is deeply rooted in Islam?

Demographic Factor

Population is a significant indicator of the power potential of a state and hence, influences its foreign policy. The issue of a state's human resources has impact in one way or the other, the foreign policy of nation. Of more importance is the quality of the population. The articulate nature of people in a country can determine the kind of foreign decisions that are formulated and implemented on certain sensitive national issues. When the citizens are enlightened, the greater the magnitude of their understanding of foreign issues, the higher their determination to influence the decisions of government on those issues. For example, the rejection of the loan by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1986 arose as a result of serious debate by intellectuals and other people that understood the implications of loan for Nigeria. In the same vein, the repealing in 1962 of the Anglo-Nigeria Defense Pact of 1961 was due to pressure on government by opposition parties and articulate student's organization.

For several years, population has been considered as significant criteria in the measurement of the power of a country. In the wars of the past, the large infantry of China was a major force in the resistance of the Forces of the United States of America. The interaction between foreign policy and population gains significance in the area of a state's capability. The population is significant in the determination of solidarity policies among citizens, the growth of political organizations, quality of the public, governmental type, encouragement of political consciousness, and the expansion of public opinion and political participation. Nevertheless, its quality is specifically significant with regard to size of population. Quality money, capacities and skills of citizens assist in the spread of national influence (Biswas, 2021).

History

The foreign policy of every country is partly a result of its history but the effect is felt more by some than the others. In the process of the formulation of the foreign policy of a country, the foreign decision makers take into cognizance its past particularly its erstwhile colonial masters. This is the rationale behind

Nigeria's pro-British foreign policy views from independence till at least 1975. The highlight of every country's history is created through the unique conditions of the events and chips. The geographical frontiers of every state are decided through the inhibition of historical situations. Through the history of the evolution of a country, a lot of fundamental characteristics of foreign policy are created. In view of historical development, every state establishes a basis of its own foreign policy (Biwas, 2021).

Through history, a country inherits culture and lifestyles which then have its influence in the formulation of foreign policy. History is the record that shows what a community has done, including its successes and failures and these past experiences, successes and failures serves as guide to policy makers in handling contemporary problems. If a particular policy in the past has shown to be productive, makers of policy would make effort to utilize similar policy in handling same conditions in the future. Contrarily, the failure of a policy in dealing with a situation will compel policy makers to adopt a different policy approach in a prospective similar situation. Contemporary tradition and self-image of a country is shaped by history which in turn impacts its national life style. Therefore, the concern of France with security, glory and honour; the character of Britain in muddling through; ruthlessness by Germany; India's non-alignment policy; the character of USA in interpreting global matters as issue of morality; and the obsession with secrecy by USSR, all have particular and definite historical antecedents. Such character and national lifestyle play significant role in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

Religious Sentiment

Foreign policy which is described to mean sovereign interest of nations deployed in the global environment is the contemporary aspect of global affairs to concentrate on religion as the main source of political actions. Perhaps, one of the most significant developments is the plan by the State Department of the United States of America to involve faith communities and religious leaders in the areas of conflict, promotion of democratic norms, prevention of conflict and humanitarian assistance. The concept of religious freedom has now sunited other concepts like development, security and democracy into a unified foreign policy agenda in the West. In the global sphere, religion has developed as a significant position in the central policy discourse between global religious institutions and national diplomats, majorly on matters relating to stability and peace (Marshall, 2012; Rees, 2015). The importance of religion in external relations was described by Jenichen and Barbato thus;

> Religious role in regional organizations and external relations of nations is still relatively uncharted. Religion can affect foreign policy through several means. For example, some knowledge of secularism and religion can become an aspect of an organization or country's identity thus impacting the manner with which it relates with others. Religious groups may have varying ideas about plans and objectives than secular governments thereby making effort at influencing the conduct of foreign policy (2015:1).

Religious differences in Nigeria have had its consequences in foreign policy orientations with the two major religious groups (Muslim and Christian) fairly divided equally within the country. Support for parties in the Gulf War, the issue of diplomatic relations with Israel which was severed during the Arab-Israeli war, even though before then, Israel was allowed a diplomatic mission in Lagos but with a proviso that its Ambassador will not be allowed to travel to the Northern part of the country including membership of the OIC, have been among the various foreign policy thrust impacted by religious pressure (Wright and Okolo, 1999).

Internal Cleavages

A stable political system is germane for the conduct of a vibrant and coherent foreign policy. Domestic instability has offered significant inputs into the foreign policy processes. In the 1960s, Nigeria was in a situation of political instability and thus unable to play active role in global affairs. Nigeria comprise

of about 250 different ethnic groups of which some are more domineering than the others notably, Igbo in the East, Yoruba in the West and Hausa/Fulani in the North. Recurrent clashes between the minority and dominant groups contributed to the civil war while opposition has also significantly inhibited the capacity of civilian regime to effectively govern. The suppression of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) by government which culminated in the execution of nine of its leaders in November 1995 and the continued detention of other leaders led to international outrage and ostracization (Wright and Okolo, 1999). Similarly, the repression of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and the subsequent arrest and detention of the leader, Elzazaky and his wife as well as the killing of some of its members; the arrest and persecution of the Yoruba Activist, Sunday Igboho, and the reported killing of his fellow comrades and the suppression of Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) leading to the arrest, detention and prosecution of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu and other members, has drawn global condemnation.

Structure of the Economy

The economic viability of a nation is indicative of its affordableness and the impact of that capacity finds expression in its interactions with other nations. The major goal of the economy is to deploy a state's enterprises including capital, labour and land for production purpose. Also included in national economic activities are; welfare of the public, degree of consumption, enhancement of citizens living standard and the distribution of economic wealth that was produced. A state that is rich in natural resources like the Middle East can effortlessly achieve economic prosperity and make the region the epicenter of global politics. Industrial development, growth and natural resources underlie the global status of a state. In the contemporary world, a nation's resistance and acceptance is largely dependent on the level of natural resources and industrialization (Biswas, 2021).

For most countries of the world, economic interest and the struggle for resources have become decisive factors in the formulation and determination of foreign thrust. Occasionally, national security which happens to be an important determinant of foreign policy is considered to have emerged from economic interest. Nigeria's economy exhibits largely, the structure of neo-colonialism which depends on importation of manufactured goods and exportation of primary products, hence the continuous underdevelopment of the economy. Undoubtedly, this situation has prevented Nigeria from exhibiting a dynamic foreign policy. It was only towards the end of the 1970s that dynamism was witnessed in Nigeria's foreign policy, an era in which the nation's economy was booming occasioned by the unprecedented global increase in crude oil price. The regime of Murtala/Obasabjo capitalized on this era of boom to pursue a radical, dynamic and active foreign policy. Since then Nigeria's foreign policy dynamism has returned to the trenches as the economy has continually experience disarticulation, redundancy and strangulation which has in turn rendered Nigeria's foreign policy dormant and lacking the possibility of any potential virility.

Character/Quality of Political Leadership

The major sources and strength of a country's foreign policy is the political leadership. A nation's role at any given time and the type of external relations is dependent on the quality of those that make the decisions. Based on experience, it can be argued that foreign policy and nature of political leadership are inseparable. The decisions on a state's external relations are evidently influenced by leaders in government which includes personality, political foresight and experience, achievement of global politics and psychological structure (Biswas, 2021). Thus, the magnitude of buoyancy, dynamism, virility, activism and radicalism of a nation's external relations dependents largely on the type of leadership in a country at any given time whether it is military or civilian. For example, during the First Republic (1960-1966), Balewa's foreign policy was mostly conservative with a pro-West policy thrust while the Murtala/Obasanjo regime possessed an active, radical and dynamic foreign policy posture between 1976 and 1979.

Geography Placement

One of the most stable and permanent determining factor of foreign policy is geography. The location, climate, fertility and land topography are the main geographic factors influencing state's foreign policy. A country can agree to pursue greater objectives if the geographical factors are suitable and encouraging. The influence of India's location has placed it as the largest nation around the Indian Ocean as compared to other Littoral countries. The duty of the English Channel in British growth as a dominant naval force as well as an imperial power is evident. The Atlantic Ocean's influence on the foreign policy of America is well recognized. Geographical influence on foreign policy of states is in two areas; a country's geographical environment and the political significance of the geographical placement. The geographical environment revolves around the climate, area and size. Therefore, the typical geographical environment of countries includes;

(a) The climatic condition must favour hard labour. In other words, the climate must not be too harsh-excessive wind, cold or hotness, such that it will reduce hard labour.
(b) The shape of the country should be such that in time of armed violence, local or global, people can move easily.
(c) Terrain must be in support of national resistance. Sea-borne, riverine and mountainous nations have the advantage of freedom from external invasion.
(d) Size of the country should be such that will encourage and assist citizens to have a descent standard of living (Biswas, 2021).

Culture of a Nation

By definition, International Relations (IR) are interaction among states executing parts of its foreign policy. However, every country has its peculiar tradition, intellectual and social orientations, creating its own method of energy generation, create concepts and ideas so as to provide meaning for its existence, organizes itself in social groups and harness resources. A country is thus a cultural system and IR is relations among cultural systems (Iriye, 1979). Indeed, there is a fundamental relationship between a state's behavior and its cultural system in the global system. While tracing the cultural setting of American foreign policy, it was concluded that in understanding the diplomacy of the United States of America, something about American culture must be known (Head and Kapland, 1977). The manner of formulating and executing a state's external relations is influenced considerably by its cultural nature (Adefuye, 1992).

At the heart of the history of the global system complete with a moving frontier of cultural exclusivity is indeed a cultural theme (Mazrui, 1990). Due to the fact that there is dynamism in culture, it can be rectified or adjusted in such a manner as to dictate the dynamic reactions of events, government or people. For instance, with the emergence of Perestroika and Glasnost, USSR reactions to events which led to the collapse of the Communist regimes in Poland, Bulgaria and Romania, differs markedly from what it would have been prior to the Gorbachev period (Adefuye, 1992). Domestic factor of foreign policy is rooted in culture. In every society, culture plays certain fundamental roles. It helps in providing frames of cognition and opinion. How people consider the world is largely determined by one or more cultural paradigms in which they have been exposed to. An Ayatollah in Iran see the world around him qualitatively different from how Henry Kissinger sees it (Mazrui, 1990).

The Evolution of Nigerian Foreign Policy: The Colonial Period

The foreign policy of Nigeria has gone through series of contours from the colonial period till the present times. The colonial masters did not give any meaningful foreign policy direction that was based on Nigerian national interest except those that has to do with British imperial/colonial, political and economic interests.

Nigerian Foreign Policy under Colonial Governance (1914-1960)

In the era of colonialism, with the exception of Indonesia and Britain, Nigeria was more significant among British Colonial territories in the entire world due to the fact it had the largest market and population in British colonial Africa. Hence, the desire to examine Nigerian foreign policy during the reign of Britain and how it has shaped and impacted Nigerian external relations since then. During this period, all parts of Nigeria including issues of external affairs were dominated by Britain (Flint, 1999). The struggle for territories in Africa eventually led to its division between the late 1884 and early 1885 by colonial powers of the times especially Britain, Germany, Italy, Portugal, France and Spain (Onwubuiko, 1973) ended up ceding Nigeria to Britain.

Prior to the unification of the various regions in 1914, each of these regions had earlier established interactions with the outside world. For instance, while Western and Southern Nigeria established relationship with the Republic of Benin (formally Dahomey) and other ethnic minorities in the West Coast of Africa, Northern Nigeria being a Muslim dominated region, established link with the Muslim and Arab world (Flint, 1999). Similarly, there were also contacts between nations of the Iberian Peninsula and the people of the Delta areas (Oladimeji, 2019). With the unification in 1914 by the Governor General, Sir Lord Lugard, of the Protectorates of North and South, a country called Nigeria emerged, included in the global map and thus, began its journey into the global realm.

From this time onward, Britain dominated all aspect of Nigerian life especially between the periods of amalgamation till independence in 1960. The foreign policy of Nigeria became the exclusive preserve of Britain as the formulation and execution of Nigerian foreign policy was conducted in London by the British government through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Issues of external affairs with direct impact on Nigerians were planned in London and were reflection of the desires of British in the international arena. Additionally, this policy formulation impacted Britain's political climate and global daily events rather than those that took place in Nigeria (Chibundi, 2003; Folami, 2010).

Britain's Colonial Political Policy in Nigeria

As a colonial territory, Nigeria was governed by Britain from the middle of 19th century until political freedom was achieved in 1960. The influence of Britain commenced shortly after abolition of slave trading for its subjects in 1807 and the subsequent 1861 annexation of Lagos followed by the 1884 creation of Oil River Protectorate. From the 19th century, there was gradual increasing influence of Britain over the Niger area even though the occupation became effectual from 1885 being the year of the conclusion of Berlin Conference in which other imperial powers officially recognized the domination of Britain over that area. The introduction of body of laws (constitutional development) created opportunities for progressive representation and democratic governance by Nigerian citizens, thus from every indication, the period of Nigerian colonialism was effectively from 1900 to 1960.

Britain's Colonial Economic Policy in Nigeria

Shortly after taking over the political arena in Nigeria, British government in the name of the Crown executed a tax system that compelled the locals to move from subsistence farming for which they are known for, to wage labour. Oftentimes, forced labour was directly deployed for the projects on public works (Isiche, 1983; Elliot, 1965) while a substantial part of the budget was used in paying the Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) (Carland, 1985) and the military, the other was sent to London for the payment of officials of Britain employed in the civil service of Nigeria (Isichei, 1983). It must be noted that in Britain's desire to supply raw materials for industrial use to other European nations, Nigeria experienced a dwindling in the significance of domestic economic system which hitherto made families self-sufficient in economic needs especially in food production. In line with its plans to ensure massive production of cash crops required to

service the ailing industries in Britain, the colonial masters systematically reduced the production and supply of food crops to rural communities.

The Myth and Reality of the Role of the Nigerian National Assembly in Foreign Policy Formulation and Determination

One of the key actors in a democratic setting is the parliament or what we call legislature which has the responsibility of making laws in any political system thus according to Truex (2014), in all political setting, the parliament is the long serving significant organ. The make rules by bringing together all feelings with competing and contrasting alternatives in an effort to reach a compromise that will be beneficial to those they represent. They are seen as the people's chosen representatives who relate with each other in accordance with established regulations so as to ensure that more modern rules are produced (Mcquade, 2021). Notably, there is no institutional responsibility for parliament but constitutional position which comprise of delegating constitutional authority to carry out specified constitutional aims. This constitutional position is above the powers conferred on the parliament by the constitution and its major focus is conducting legislative business in accordance with the authority vested on it (Weis, 2020).This implies that in any democratic system, the legislature is sacrosanct.

Foreign policy is seen as the policy that governs countries as they interact with each other. It is considered as tactics, methods and guidelines that countries deployed in pursuing their in the international system (Amadi, 2016). In other words, it is the combination of programs, interest and principles which guide the actions of sovereign nations as they interact in the global arena often with the purpose to influence the thoughts of other sovereign nations. It means the whole relationships, actions and decision between actors in the global stage with the motive of securing cooperation in relation to socio-cultural, economic and political. It means the global objectives of a state and the tactics it deployed to realize such objectives in its relationship with other nations across the globe (Offor, Nwankwo and Elechi, 2019). Even though the object of foreign policy is to realize series of national objectives, the major goals it pursues comprises of political freedom, national economic well-being, to preserve a state's territorial integrity and national prestige (Ahmed, 2020). The foreign policy of all states revolves around some principles that guide and determine the manner its interest are promoted externally (Osondu-Oti and Tolu, 2016).

Supposedly, the national assembly plays pivotal roles in the making of foreign policy of Nigeria; these functions are gotten from the country's constitution The constitution did not specifically mention the responsibility of national assembly in the making and enforcement of the country's foreign policy because in line with section 11 of the 1999 constitution, the function of the national assembly are law making, oversight function and approval of budget, yet, the body has several functions due to the fact that its legislative authority can in certain way have effect on the nation's external relations (Osondu-Oti and Tolu, 2016). The power of the national assembly is simply the law making which entails enactment of laws for the country. Section for grant the assembly the authority to make laws for peace, order and good governance of the nation or any aspect of it that relates to issues on the exclusive list. On matter relating to the country's finance, section 81 and 121 authorize the assembly to screen the budget presented to it by the executive before it is passed into law. This according to section 80 is done to stop any attempt at withdrawing cash from consolidated fund to any other fund except to meet certain critical national need with the express permission of the assembly and constitutional requirements. The implication of this is that the assembly can deny or delay authorization of funds sent by the president

Also, section 88 grants authority to the assembly to carry out function of oversight on all aspects of administration. It authorizes them to investigate matters in which it is empowered to make law; to investigate any government ministry, agency and department that has the responsibility for enforcing laws that has been made by the assembly and distributes finance that has been allocated or approved by the assembly (Arowosegbe and Akomolafe, 2016). On issues relating to external relations, section 88 notes that

committees on foreign affairs from both chambers of the assembly shall perform oversight roles so long as they carry public inquiry on external affairs (Osondu-Oti and Tolu, 2016). Though the constitution did not explicitly state role of national assembly on external relations related matters, yet there are several legislations that have the semblance of external relations whether directly or indirectly. Thus, when it discuss such matters, they develop external relations and such legislations are treaty approval, budget approval, deployment of military troop, legislative diplomacy and presidential appointment approval

Power of the National Assembly to approve Treaty

The constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended granted power to the assembly for the approval of treaty before it can have any binding effect. Section 12 subsection 1,2 and 3 states that;

> No treaty between the federation and any other country shall have legal force unless and until it has been passed into law by the National Assembly. The National Assembly may make laws for the Federation or any part of it on issues not included in the Exclusive Legislative list for the purpose of implementing a treaty; and A bill for an Act of the National Assembly passed pursuant to the provisions of subsection of this section shall not be enforced unless ratified by a majority of all the Houses of Assembly in the Federation.

What this means is that it is within the powers of the executive arm to negotiate international treaties and enforced same but it requires the nod of the national assembly to make it a law which comes in the form of an Act; this is to avoid a situation in which the executive arm will usurp its constitutional powers. Thus, before any international treaty becomes a binding in Nigeria, it must pass through the National Assembly who may alter some parts of the treaty as it deems fit. The implication of this is that as an institution, the assembly performs specific functions in the negotiation and enforcement of treaties (Oni, Olarenwaju and Deinde-Adedeji, 2019; Ngara, 2017).

Legislative Interface

The Nigerian National Assembly do sometimes participate in legislative functions alongside other states within the region or sub-region and even outside the continent. For instance, Nigeria is a member of ‘international parliament for tolerance and peace, the purpose of which is the promotion of co-operation and swapping of experiences and ideas on several national and global matters affecting global peace. In a similar vein, there is an inter-parliamentary union of ECOWAS which comprise of members of parliament of ECOWAS sub-region. Also, there is an inter-parliamentary assembly for commonwealth members. Often, these are forms of diplomacy that leads to bi-lateral reciprocity which in itself is a way of projecting the image of the country.

Conclusion

In all, the functions of the national assembly in the formulation and enforcement of the country’s foreign policy are inhibited by three key factors. First is the fact that foreign policy determination has become the exclusive preserve of the president who implements foreign policy decision through his Foreign Affairs Minister without the input of the national assembly. Quite notably, some of these presidents and their minsters of foreign or external affairs lack diplomatic or foreign policy backgrounds.

Secondly, members of the national assembly so chosen as chairmen of external or foreign affairs lacks the basic diplomatic or foreign policy knowledge. The background is not there, the education relating to the field is absent while there dearth in the fundamentally required basis for diplomacy. See the table for example

Year (1999-2003)	**President/Profession**	**Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs/Profession**	**Chairman House of Representative Committee on Foreign Affairs/Profession**	**Minister of Foreign Affairs/Profession**
	Olusegun Obasanjo/ Agricultural Engineer	NA	NA	Sule Lamido/N.A.
Year (2003-2007) Olusegun Obasanjo/ Agricultural Engineer		NA	NA	Oluyemi Adeniji (Historian) /Okonjo Iweala (Economists)/Joy Ogwu (Political Scientist/ International Relations/Diplomatic Historian}
Year (2007-2011)	Musa Yar Adua/ Educator and Chemist	NA	NA	Ojo Muduekwe (Lawyer) and Odein Ajumogbobia (Lawyer)
Year (2011-2015)	Goodluck Jonathan/Zoologist	NA	NA	Olugbenga Ashiru and Viola Onwuliri
Year (2015-2019)	Muhhamadu Buhari/ N.A.	Sen. Mohammed Bulkachuwa/Accountant	Yusuf Buba/Political Scientists	*Geoffrey Onyeama/Political Scientist/Lawyer*
Year (2019-2023)	Muhamadu Buhari/ N.A.	Sen. Abdullahi Adamu/Building and Civil Engineer		*Geoffrey Onyeama/Political Scientist/Lawyer*
Year (2023-?)	Bola Tinubu/Business and Administration	Sen. Sani Bello/Economist	Hon. Jibrin Abdulmumuni/Political Science and International Relations	Yusuf Tuggar/International Relations/Diplomat

Third is the fact that there is no constitutional provision for the national assembly to act on issues that has to do with foreign relations. The failure of the constitution to grant authority to the national assembly on matters relating to formulation and execution of foreign policy is a major lacuna on its role of lawmaking and oversight responsibility. As a key stakeholder and the major law making organ of government, the drafters of the constitution failed to recognize this key role of the national assembly. Thus, from all indications and what has been analyzed so far, apart from treaty approval and legislative collaboration within and outside the continent, the Nigeria legislature has no role in the planning, consideration, approval and implementation of foreign policy.

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