

# Comparative Analysis of Nigeria Foreign Policy Under Muhammadu Buhari Administration 1983-1985 and 2015-2017

Ismail Bello, Asmau Isyaku Dutse and Muhammad Fuad Othman  
School of International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia  
ismailbello12@gmail.com

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**Abstract** –This research paper provided a comparative analysis of foreign policy of Nigeria under Muhammadu Buhari's military regime 1983-1985 and his current civilian administration which started in May 2015. Foreign policy is a set of tools or activities developed by states to drive its interest in the international system, and internal and external factors usually influence this. The personality and environment of which leaders assumes leadership also plays an important in defining a state foreign policy. The objective of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of Buhari's foreign policy under his military and civilian administration. The research utilizes secondary data from journals, books, newspapers, government reports among others. The findings of the study shows the under Buhari's military administration relations between Nigeria and ECOWAS was hostile which led to border closures, relations with Nigeria's former colonial master, United Kingdom was also strained due which resulted to diplomatic rows between both countries, the Buhari administration also continued with Afrocentric policy with continuous call for end to apartheid and colonialism on the continent. While under his civilian government Buhari was able to create friendly relations with ECOWAS member nations, maintained good relations with UK and US, and improve the countries relations with China to improve the country's economy. The paper concludes that the type of government and environment in the international system with which Buhari served played a role in shaping the foreign policy direction of the state.

**Keywords:**– Foreign Policy, ECOWAS, United States, China, Buhari, and Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy is an essential tool with which states relateto states and non-states actors in the

international system [1; 33]. The foreign policy is set of tools which are used to pursue and achieve country's national interests. Foreign Policy of Nigerian state has continued to change under different governments and leaders. This is usually influenced by the type of government and to a great extent personality of the countries leader [1], [2], [29]. From independence, where Nigeria pursue a non-aligned foreign policy under Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, Under Yakubu Gowon 1966-1975 the country was plagued with civil war, but his foreign policy was also Afrocentric in nature, Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo 1975-1979 the government pursued a radical foreign policy which was aimed at liberation of African states from clutches of apartheid and colonialism and reducing the influence of Western capitalist countries, Shehu Shagari 1979-1983 continued with the Afrocentric policy and also liberal policy, Muhammadu Buhari 1983-1985 chose to follow foreign policy of Murtala/Obasanjo foreign policy which was radical in nature. Ibrahim Babangida 1985-1993 foreign policy was seen mainly as pro-western countries which led to the acceptance of Structural Adjustment Programs and also its economic diplomacy, Sani Abacha 1993-1998 choose to pursue an isolation foreign policy which meant Nigeria had limited engagement with outside world. Olusegun Obasanjo 1999-2007 decided to re-open Nigeria to the world after isolation of Sani Abacha government, his foreign policy was hinged on shuttle diplomacy which was aimed at economic development, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan 2007-2015 foreign policy was opened and encourages relations with other countries around the world, and its policy was hinged on citizen diplomacy, Muhammadu Buhari 2015-Present foreign policy is also hinged on improving relations with neighbors and to maintain ties with the United States and China among other countries in the world.

As a Head of Government under a military government General Buhari pursued a radical foreign policy which led confrontation with Nigeria neighbours, radical countering of colonial and apartheid governments on the continent. President Buhari assumed shuttle diplomacy between different countries immediately after assuming office in 2015 he was referred at as “Jet-Setting President”, this was attributed mainly to the fact he spent a quarter of first 100 days in office in different countries. The president upon inauguration assumed the responsibility of been countries chief diplomat and foreign policy officer to re-launch Nigeria into the international community. This is mostly attributed to the international environment Buhari found himself, this situation was characterised by dwindling oil prices, terrorism and counter-terrorism, nuclear deals and neoliberalism among others [3].

The objective of this research is to have a comparative analysis of Muhammadu Buhari foreign policy under his military and civilian administrations to understand the change of foreign policy direction under the same person and different form of government.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This paper utilises secondary sources of data for the research; this includes journals, relevant books, periodicals, newspapers reports, internet sources, government releases, and pronouncement.

#### **Foreign Policy Decision Making (FPDM) Under Military Regime**

Military administration are regime who came into power via coup d'état either by overthrowing a democratic government or fellow Foreign Policy under a military administration revolves around the personality of head of state who has the prerogative to accept or ignore advice from government bodies, also FPDM is faster and quicker because it is usually via decree rather than constitution, influence in military regime is limited because the head of state determines the position of government foreign policy, and FPDM in military regime does not entail broad consensus which is a feature of a democratic as decision are personalized [4].

#### **Foreign Policy Decision Making (FPDM) Under Democratic Government**

A democratic government is that in which power is vested in the people, and it is exercised by them

directly and indirectly. The people are provided with the opportunity to elect their representatives through free, fair and periodic elections. Features of a democratic government are an independent judiciary, respect for fundamental human rights, a multi-party system which ensures alternatives and competition candidates for people. FPDM in a democratic government includes the presidency, ministry of foreign affairs (state departments or foreign and commonwealth office) and the parliament or legislature. All these multiple bodies influence FPDM in a democratic government which makes foreign policy a long drawn process due to due process and broad consultation and finally FPDM shows broad consensus mainly due to debates and approval of ministerial appointments, ambassadorial positions, treaties, a budget which are required to be approved by national assembly [4].

#### **Nigeria Foreign Policy under Major-General Muhammadu Buhari 1983-1985**

Major-General Muhammadu Buhari rose to become Nigeria's head of state and Commander-in-Chief from December 31, 1983, and his government ended August 27, 1985. He became head of state as a result of military coup d'état which deposed civilian president Shehu Shagari. The military accused the civilian authorities of mismanaging the economy, corruption, civil disorder and uncertainty in which the nation found itself under the leadership of the former civilian government. General Buhari government focused on fighting corruption especially those committed by former government and businessmen with a link to government, as a result of the corruption drive over 500 officials of government, politicians, and people in business were thrown into prisons and tried to the military tribunal's setup. In his inaugural speech, General Buhari stated: “to put an end to the serious economic predicament and the serious crisis of confidence now afflicting our nation”. [5]. With the start of its administration, the Buhari administration prided itself as an offshoot of Murtala/Obasanjo government, it hereafter built its foreign policy after that of the previous military regime. In one case, in following suits of Murtala/Obasanjo, which recognised MPLA in Angola, the Buhari regime recognised Polisario government in Western Sahara despite opposition from fellow African states. The regime also re-launched commitment to the liberation of South Africa from the apartheid regime [6]. The key features of the General Muhammadu Buhari

foreign policy were its relations with Nigeria ECOWAS neighbours, Nigeria-Africa relations and a diplomatic face-off between Nigeria-Britain.

### **Nigeria-United Kingdom Relations**

Nigeria has been a former colony of United Kingdom; both countries enjoyed peaceful and cordial relations. However, in 1984 there was a break in diplomatic relations between both countries due to the "Dikko affair". Umar Dikko was an influential minister in the toppled Shehu Shagari civilian administration, with the coup d'état which toppled Shagari's regime, General Buhari government released a list of former government officials accused of corrupt practices. Umar Dikko was top on the list and was accused of syphoning about six billion dollars from the national treasury. However, Dikko escaped Nigeria and found succour in the United Kingdom where he came to a critic of Buhari's junta and even promised to lead a holy war against the junta. There was an attempt to kidnap him on July 5, 1984; the action was carried out by Nigeria's diplomats and MOSSAD officers from Israel. Dikko was kidnaped and drugged by MOSSAD with the help of an Israeli medical Doctor, he was packaged in a crate which had a Mossad agent Shapiro, which was to be flown out of UK with Nigeria Airways Boeing 707 which had arrived the UK, and however, Dikko's secretary witnessed the kidnap and promptly reported to authorities. The crates were opened at the airport these led to freeing of Dikko and arrest of the Israeli agents and Nigerians involved.

This action of Nigeria led to a serious diplomatic spat between both countries. Seventeen individuals were arrested while four were convicted and jailed, they included three Israelis Abithol, Barak, Shapita and a Nigerian Major Yusuf. After the failed attempt, Nigeria government formally requested for the extradition of Dikko; Britain rejected this. The Nigerian government also retaliated by arresting two British engineers for stealing an aircraft. Another diplomatic implication was the grounding of Nigeria Airways Boeing 707 and the expulsion of two Nigerian diplomats from London; they include Peter Oyedele (Counselor) and Edet Okon (attaché). The Nigeria government retaliated with the suspension of British diplomats; Head of Chancery in Lagos John Harrison and diplomatic attaché. This was also followed up by the grounding and seizure of British Caledonian jet which was carrying 221 passengers and 22 crew members. However, when the Nigeria crews

were released and return home from Britain, the British Jet was also released and allowed to return to London [7], [31], [4].

In international relations, the withdrawal or recall of ambassadors or high commissioner is always a sign of escalation or serious rift between countries in the conduct of relations between each other. Due to diplomatic escalation as a result of the Dikko Affair, the Nigerian government recalled its high commissioner in London, General Halidu Hanania for consultation, because he was summoned by Britain foreign office and was requested to submit himself to police questioning, these were clear contravention his diplomatic immunity, in response Nigeria called on London to recall its high commissioner in Lagos Sir Hamilton Whyter. Britain later complied by recalling its top diplomat after much pressure. The standoff between both countries was the hallmark of Buhari's junta foreign policy with her former colonial masters. To this effect, there were even calls for the downgrading of economic relations and breaking of diplomatic ties with Britain as a result of this issue. The junta claimed that its decision on foreign policy was informed by national interest because the former ruling elites had bastardised the economy which was complimented by dwindling fall in oil prices made it imperative for the junta to take action which has a nationalistic outlook and was commended by the populace in the country [9].

### **Nigeria-United States of America Relations**

In continuation of its Afro-centric policy and strive to rid the continent of Apartheid regimes and colonial rules. The Buhari government tried to exact some influence on Ronald Regan government to secure independence for Southern Africa state of Namibia independence and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. One enormous success of the administration was the appointment of Joseph Garba, a Major General as Nigeria permanent representative to United Nations. He was subsequently elected as UN special committee against Apartheid. Through the instrumentality of Joseph Garba, Nigeria was able to recruit non-governmental organisation, business leaders, and civil societies to lobby the America political establishment with regards to Southern Africa states. Companies such as Kellogg, Gulf Oil, Bechtel Corporation and Mobil while personalities such as Reverend Jesse Jackson, Anthony Solomon and David Rockefeller were all enlisted to push forward Nigeria's foreign policy thrust on the

Southern Africa states. It is noteworthy that much was not achieved during Buhari government with the US, as president Regan at no time showed any interest in relations with Nigeria, as a result of these relations between both countries were strained [7; 31].

### **Nigeria- Africa Relations**

Nigeria since independence has pursued an Afrocentric foreign policy; which implies that Africa is the centrepiece of Nigeria foreign policy. As stated above, the regime continued to toe the foreign policy of Murtala/Obasanjo regime with regards to Africa, especially the liberation of the Africa continents as a whole from the shackles of colonialism and apartheid regimes, with Namibia and South Africa topping its agenda. The administration reasserted the need for liberation by contributions to the Organization of African Union (O.A.U) liberation committee. Nigerian foreign affairs minister, Ibrahim Gambari, undertook a tour of states under these colonial and apartheid rule to assert the government commitments towards the liberation of the continent. The appointment of Murtala/Obasanjoerst while minister of foreign affairs as Nigeria Permanent representatives to UN and his subsequent election as the chairman of UN anti-apartheid committee boosted the regime role in fighting colonial and apartheid rule in Africa. Another milestone in Nigeria-Africa relations under General Buhari regime was its recognition of Polisario Front as the legitimate representatives of Western Sahara and Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The government condemned the occupation of Western Sahara by the government in Morocco and call for decolonisation and granting of independence to the Western Sahara. The government position was hinged on the fact that it cannot continue to call for an end to the colonisation of Africa by foreigners and still condone conquest of Africa by Africans. This gave an impetus to the liberation struggle by the people of Western Sahara [10].

### **Nigeria-ECOWAS Members Relations**

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was created to facilitate free movements of citizens of the 15-member nations within the region, however, like it, relations with the former colonial masters, Nigeria relations with its neighbours was everything but friendly. These alluded to some factors which will be discussed in the paper. To the east Nigeria shares border with Cameroon, to the west, it shares a border with the Benin Republic,

and to the north Niger Republic. On assumption of office in 1984, the Federal Military Government (FMG) sent a delegation led by Major-General Domkat Bali; the Nigerian defense minister to the three countries that shared border with Nigeria to assure them of commitment of new government to foster relations with the countries, and seek their cooperation towards the enhancement of Nigeria national security, check cross-border smuggling and prevent hostile action against Nigerians living in these countries. Meetings were held with Mathieu Kerekou of Benin, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Seyni Koantche of Niger and Tahiru Ginaso of Chad on 11-17 January 1984.

However, relations between these countries went sour less than just a month of sending diplomatic emissaries. Two factors were said to have influenced these decisions; Security implication as religious crises which occurred in Yola Adamawa state which was blamed on aliens from neighbouring countries and Economic implication; ruling elites were leaving the country through the various porous borders with a large sum of money which could cripple the economy if allowed escape. The border was closed between April 25 and May 6, 1984. The security implication was as a result of February 1984 religious violence which broke out in Yola Adamawa state claiming the lives of over 100 military and police officers were reportedly killed while over 1,000 civilians lost their lives. The minister of internal affairs Brigadier Muhammadu Magoro accused foreigners of been responsible for the crises and directed that Nigeria borders with neighbouring countries be closed and armed with military officers to prevent illegal entry, with over 700,000 immigrants ordered to leave Nigeria, these led to straining of relations between Nigeria and this member nation

**Economic Implication:** One of the key reason for overtaking the Shagari government was its mishandling of Nation economy which was characterised by greed and corruption especially at high echelon of government, coupled with oil glut in early 1980's. The three policy of border closure, medication of the naira (national currency) and expulsion of illegal aliens had an impact on Nigeria's and its member's relations. The border was closed to curtail excessive smuggling which occurs at Nigeria borders with neighbouring countries which have become a feature of commercial and trade relations. The closure was justified by external affairs minister who said: "*to have a weak Nigeria,*

*economically, nor to have a Nigeria whose currency is a subject of trafficking all over”* [4, pp. 161]. Another economic implication was the fact that second republic politicians had run the country to ground economically, and with the coup, they were escaping through the countries porous borders and making away with their loots from the national treasury. Furthermore, he stated that borders had to be closed because of the government determination “to look inward and record it priorities internally, to check indiscipline; to consider the value of our currency to check smuggling and then put our trade relations on a positive path with our neighbours.”

The impact of the policy was immense in these border countries, for Niger the closure was adversely affecting it economy because it was a landlocked country which depended on Nigeria for supplies of petroleum products, The presidents of Benin, Niger Republic, Chad, all visited Nigeria in a bid to get concession from the government of Nigeria on the issue of border closure.

The border closure issue became an international economic and diplomacy issue. The Benin Republic, for example, was affected by the closure, these were attributed to cultural and historical ties between both countries, they also share economic ties because of some strategic projects sited in Benin and Nigeria which benefits both countries these include the training of Béninois at the Nigeria College of Aviation Technology at Zaria, academic collaboration between University of the Republic of Benin and the University of Ibadan for the training of Béninois. Also economic projects such as Save Sugar project and Onigbolo Cement project. There was also a military collaboration with the 1979 agreement which allowed cooperation in security and military between both countries and finally, both countries share cultural ties because 15% of Béninois are Yoruba speaking people. All these were affected due to the closure of the border. With regards to the Chad Republic, it took an international diplomacy aspect because of the conflict which has displaced a lot of people.

The Americans and French tried to persuade the Nigeria leader to reconsider the closure, American president sent General Vernon Walters as a special envoy to Nigeria in order to convince Buhari on need to reopen the border in order to aid the passage of relief materials and urgent supplies to refugees who have been displaced as a result of conflict in Chad. However, the border remained closed despite diplomatic overtures to the Nigerian leader; this was

attributed to the fact that Chad has always been central to security issues in Nigeria due to its closeness and previous encounters when Chadians invaded Nigeria territories. The Nigérien President Kountche took a diplomatic tour to Nigeria in order to persuade the government of Nigeria to reconsider the policy, because the policy severely affected the country because the country is landlocked and depends on Nigeria for Gas and Petroleum, there was also economic cooperation between both countries through the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation which is located in Niamey the Niger capital with a Nigerian as the secretary general. Both countries also share cultural ties as a good number of Nigériens are Hausa speakers.

The government also without prior notice expelled foreign nationals in the country especially those from ECOWAS region, those expelled were those with illegal entry visa or expired visa and overstayed their welcome in the country. This action further infuriated the member nations who call to question Nigeria leadership in ECOWAS, as the action defeats the goal of the creation of ECOWAS which was to aid free movements of citizens of member nations. Submissively, it could be argued that relations between Nigeria and its immediate neighbours were not cordial. In the international arena, the junta was unable to continue on the path of General Murtala/Obasanjo regime; this was attributed to the state of the economy in the country which was in the bad state as a result of mismanagement of the economy by the previous civilian regime. [11], Summed General Buhari junta by saying

*The continued decline in oil price and the inability of OPEC to do much to change the situation, and the Counter-Trade and other alternative economic arrangements into which Nigeria was forced, could not bring about the much-desired autonomy of action, under the General Muhammadu Buhari's regime [11, pp. 187).*

#### **Achievement and Summary of General Buhari foreign policy**

- In keeping in line with the country Afrocentric policy, the regime continued to push for decolonisation and end to apartheid in SADR. This finally culminated in eventual independence for South Africa, the recognition of Nigeria to

SADR also granted impetus to the SADR calls for independence.

- In international economic relations, the regime was able to pursue an independent policy despite pressure from capitalist bodies such as IMF & World Bank for the devaluation of Naira due to economic imbalance. The regime was able to maintain the value of naira against dollars and provide basic service for the populace.
- The regime was able to pursue an independent foreign policy without unnecessary influence from her former colonial master- the United Kingdom, or other western power. The regime was able to pursue a foreign policy which is important to the achievement of her national interest.
- Through the instrumentality of international organisation such as O.A.U and U.N, the regime pushed for the independence of states under colonial rules.

#### **Nigeria Foreign Policy under President Muhammadu Buhari 2015-2017**

President Muhammadu Buhari won the election the 2015 election by defeating the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan. The election which was conducted on March 28, 2015, saw the former military leader returning to power, making him the second Nigeria's former military leader elected under a democratic rule. Factors which contributed to President Buhari success at polls could be attributed to the failure of the former government to deal decisively with the Boko Haram terrorism which was badly affected Nigeria's image in the international community. President Buhari hinged his campaign promises on three cardinal points which include, Combating Terrorism, Fighting Corruption and Improving on the economy.

As stated earlier, foreign policy under a democratic government involves a lot stages for planning and execution. The main foreign policy under president Buhari government includes improving relations with its neighbors in order to jointly fight Boko Haram which assumed a multinational or transnational dimension, partner with US and other world power to support the government in order to fight terrorism by providing needed manpower and intelligence, and more importantly improvement of economy and fighting corruption, improved relations with China in order to foster economic development through provision of needed infrastructure.

#### **Nigeria- ECOWAS Countries Relations**

During his campaign for election to the presidency of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari promised to tackle head-on three main issue of Insecurity (Boko Haram Insurgency), Corruption and Economy development. Before his declaration as president, Boko Haram had taken over swat of Nigerian territories and declaring an Islamic state within the Nigeria territory. Apart from Nigeria, the Boko Haram terrorism took a transnational dimension by carrying out attacks in Nigeria and receding into the neighbouring countries. Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which was charged with the responsibility of insurgency in the Lake Chad region was not effective although it tried to curtail the activities of Boko Haram as members countries contributed to the war against Boko Haram in Nigeria. With onslaught against the group by MNJTF member countries, Boko Haram soon targeted these countries for daring to aid Nigeria in the fight against terrorism, thereby giving the Boko Haram action an international dimension [12 & 13]. It was observed that MNJTF was not effective and efficient as Boko Haram even overran its base in Baga Borno State, and went ahead to commit one of the most heinous crimes against humanity when it massacred the locals in Baga town [14; 32].

On the assumption of office, President Muhammadu Buhari first trip overseas was to the Niger Republic on June 3, 2015. The Cameroon president also attended the meeting; the trip was on Anti-Boko Haram summit which was aimed at discussing the regional offensive against the group. The Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufou committed his countries resolve to help Nigeria tackle the growing threats of Boko Haram which has continued to threaten peace and stability in the region. It was also agreed that MNJTF headquarters be relocated from Nigeria to N'Djamena in Chad an appointment of a Nigerian as the commander of the organisation. The meeting was followed up with a visit to Chad on June 4, 2017; this visit was followed up by a bilateral meeting with President Paul Biya of Cameroon. Although Benin republic was not affected by the insurgent activities of Boko Haram, Buhari visited Benin republic and these visits were reciprocated by Benin President Boni Yayi who committed troops to the MNJTF to combat terrorist activities in the country [35].

As Onapajo [15] and Waddington [16] argued, the shuttle diplomacy by President Buhari to his West

Africa neighbors played a decisive role in limiting the capabilities of Boko Haram to strike in Nigeria and recede to these neighboring countries as shield against Nigeria forces, this diplomatic relation between these ECOWAS countries help curtail the activities of Boko Haram.

Apart from using foreign relations to tackle Boko Haram insurgency, president Buhari played a key role as the chief mediator in solving the constitutional impasse in Gambia, where President Yahaya Jammeh initially refused to give up power to democratically elected president Adama barrow, President Buhari was tasked by ECOWAS to led a negotiation with Jammeh in order to concede power to Barrow. President Buhari resolves for a peaceful transition and the need to avoid violence which could lead to a civil war and a possible a humanitarian disaster for the ECOWAS sub-region. The negotiation was fruitful, and former president Jammeh conceded power and stepped aside [17], [18].

President Muhammadu Buhari made it a cardinal objective of his foreign policy to pursue its national interest by maintaining good relations with its immediate neighbours. The result of this was an improvement on the counter-insurgency war which led to decimation of Boko Haram.

### **Nigeria-United States Relations**

Unlike his predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari enjoyed somewhat better relations, the grudge between Obama Administration and Goodluck Administration over the handling of Boko Haram insurgency especially the kidnap of Chibok girls and Human Rights abuses committed by the military. Relations between both countries under Buhari administration started with a high-level diplomatic meeting between Obama and Buhari which held at Oval on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016. President Obama committed that the United States will assist the government of Nigeria, tackle the growing threats of Boko Haram and countering violent extremism. President Buhari also requested Obama administration to assist the government in curtailing corruption which has continued to plague the country, also seek the assistance of the government towards improving the economy which included reforms in the energy sector by stopping oil theft. The meeting was followed up by a meeting with Vice President Joe Biden where it was agreed that the US would assist Nigeria to root out corruption, ensure stability in the economy and also the policy with special reference to a Northern region

of Nigeria which is the heartbeat of the Boko Haram insurgency. The trip also afforded president Buhari an opportunity to meet Treasury Secretary, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch and Bob Work the Deputy Defense Secretary [7], [19], [20].

Under the administration of Donald Trump, nothing seems to have changed, as US Department of Justice recently filed a civil complaint for the forfeiture of money (\$144 million) which are from corrupt proceedings by former Nigerian minister of petroleum Diezani Alison-Madueke. The DOJ was said to have accused the former minister and two accomplices in the name of Olajide Omokore and Kola Aluko of fronting for the former minister through oil lifting contracts which were awarded to the duo without due process. The DOJ seeks the forfeiture to return these assets to benefit the populace which is harmed by this corrupt practice [21]. [22] agreed and stated that US government officials saw the election of Buhari as an avenue to aid the government's anti-corruption drive and on the larger extent improve bi-lateral relations This action can be linked the agreement between Buhari administration and DOJ under Loretta E. Lynch for collaboration to fight corruption and assist Nigeria to recover its loots domiciled in the US and other western countries.

The Trump administration also demonstrated efforts to aid Buhari administration in his fight against Boko Haram with the proposed sales to military equipment to Nigeria, Nigeria was earlier blacklisted under President Jonathan, this led to declining for a request for the purchase of military equipment. The proposed sale included 12 Embraer A-29 Super Tucano aircraft. The proposed arms sell also got the approval of Senators in US Congress who had earlier blocked the sales under Obama administration citing Leahy law which prohibited the US from selling arms to countries where their militaries have cases of human right abuses [24], [23].

### **Nigeria-China Relations**

China has been termed the fastest growing economy and the second largest economy in the world and Nigeria have been trying to establish a balance of power with China in economic and diplomatic relations. Both countries share demographic and geographic significance in their continent. With China continuous aggressive expansion regarding commercial, technical and economic matters Nigeria has become an important player in Africa with regards to China new strategic expansion. Owing to its large

population Nigeria is considered a large market. On the hand also, Nigeria and other Africa countries, considers China a partner in development due to infrastructure loans which it provides at interest rates lower than what is obtainable from Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund). The importance of China has been affirmed by a wide range of analyst and academics, CNN asserted that the US is the most significant nation on the world stage, but China is de-facto leader of the global economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century [25].

Barely one year after assumption of office, President Muhammadu Buhari visited China, the visit was on the heels of invitation by Chinese president Xi Jinping. The visit was aimed at solidification of both countries trade, diplomatic and economic relations between both countries. The visit led to the signing of the framework to enhance infrastructural development and industrial activities in Nigeria between National Development Reform Commission of China and Ministry of Industry, Trade and investment of Nigeria; Technological and Scientific Cooperation between both countries, the visit lasted for one week. In the aftermath of the visit, a number of the loan was granted to Nigeria especially to finance the deficit of 2016 budget, infrastructure loan for trains, among others.

The rail project as argued by the government was aimed at solving the infrastructure deficit in the country, also provide needed jobs for the populace, and most importantly stimulate the economy. The government took a bold step towards breaking the hegemony of USD in the Nigeria market by signing a deal which allows for Chinese currency Yuan to be used for transaction in the country. This will facilitate inclusion of Yuan in the country's foreign reserve and also allow banks to allow Yuan transaction from foreign and local investors alike. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China also provided \$2 billion to Aliko Dangote for funding of his cement factories.

Apart from Economic relations between both countries, the countries also enjoy good diplomatic relations between both countries, China recently stated it full support for Nigeria's quest for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, Chinese parliament speaker Zhang Dejiang made this known during a meeting with his Nigerian counterpart Yakubu Dogara, this was part of effort to reform the UN and accommodate countries from another region. [26].

Table 1. Showing Infrastructural Project Agreement Signed Between China and Buhari Administration.

S/n	Amount	Project
1	\$ 1.231 billion	Lagos-Kano modernization projects, Lagos-Ibadan segment
2	\$1.146 billion	Lagos-Kano railway modernization project, Kano-Kaduna segment
3	\$ 3.474 billion	Lagos-Calabar Coastal Rail project
4	\$ 6.1 billion	Ibadan-Ilorin-Minna-Kaduna-Kano line
5	\$ 1.4 billion	Lagos to Ibadan Rail Project
6	\$ 15 billion	Agricultural Development
7	\$ 2 billion	Dangote Group Cement Project
8	\$478 million	Construction of 300 Mega Watts solar power in Shiroro, Niger State
9	\$55 million	Construction and equipping of granite mining plant
10	\$1 billion	Greenfield expressway for Abuja-Ibadan-Lagos
11	\$250 million	Ultra-modern 27-storey high rise complex
12	\$1 billion	Hi-tech industrial park in Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone
13	\$200 million	Construction of two 500MT/day float gas facilities
14	\$363 million	Comprehensive farm and downstream industrial park
15	\$500 million	Project for the provision of television broadcast equipment
16	\$25 million	Facility for production of pre-paid smart meters

Source [34]

On the issue of Taiwan, which China has refused to recognise as an independent state but as a province of China, President Muhammadu Buhari recently assured Chinese foreign minister of its resolve to adopt the "one China policy". This policy ensures that there is only one state called China and Taiwan and mainland China is incontrovertible part of a single China. In keeping with this policy, the government in Nigeria ordered the Taiwanese embassy out of the federal capital which means downgrading of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, and its movement to Lagos. However, it maintains minimal trade relations and consular activities with Taiwan which will be domiciled in Lagos. The minister of foreign affairs minister, Geoffrey Onyeama made the policy statement stating that "Taiwan will stop enjoying any privileges because it is not a country that is recognized under international law" stating the country justification for a trade relation the minister stated that

“Chinese Government does not oppose trading with Taiwan as long as there is no formal contact with the government that will suggest recognition of Taiwan as sovereign country” (Yusuf, 2017). Nigeria decision can be justified in the sense that Taiwan possesses less economic leverage in comparison to China. Nigeria-Taiwan economic relations which cover seafood, industrial equipment, natural gas and other food product stood at \$800 million in 2016, compared to \$6.4 billion trade relations between Nigeria-China in just first half of 2016 [27], [28].

Conclusively, it can be argued that under President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria-Sino relations have been taken to great heights with improvement in bilateral economic and diplomatic relations between both countries.

#### **Achievement and Summary of President Buhari Foreign Policy 2015-2017**

- In two years of the administration, the government has been able to improve its foreign relations with Nigeria neighbours which are ECOWAS and LAKE CHAD Commission members. These as also helped the government achieved some level of success in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency which has taken an international dimension.
- 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 effect of the infrastructural deficit. This provided the nation needed foreign direct investments.
- On the international scene, Nigeria has gained more respect under Buhari administration this is largely attributed to his personality and committed fight against corruption and insecurity in the country. This was evident at the invitation of President Buhari to G7 meeting immediately after he was sworn in.
- President Buhari assumed leadership in negotiation for the peaceful return of democratically elected government in the Gambia. Recently President Buhari was appointed to lead AU anti-corruption drive in the region.
- Unlike his predecessor, President Buhari was able to improve relations between Nigeria and the United States which has led to improving collaboration in the fight against Boko Haram and

corruption which has become endemic in the country.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The paper concludes that there was a major shift in Muhammadu Buhari foreign policy under his military and civilian regimes. Under the military regime, General Buhari pursued a more radical foreign policy direct which was anti-west and anti-capitalist. Also with regards to Nigeria neighbours in the West Africa sub-region. This action could be linked to the environment which the government took over the leadership of the country. These situations include acolonial rule in southern Africa, smuggling and economic sabotage which was aided by Nigerian neighbours, among others. While on the other hand, the civilian regime there was a change in the personality of President Buhari foreign policy postulations. President Buhari maintained good relations with its neighbours to fight Boko Haram insurgency, the administration also improved bilateral relations with China to cater for countries economic imbalance, despite the relations with China, Nigeria also maintained good relations with the United States.

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