

A Postmortem Analysis Of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Under Yar'adua's Administration

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Abstract

Nigeria has not benefited tangibly from most of her dealing with other nations of the world. For this diplomatic calculation, therefore, President Yar'Adua's foreign policy thrust shifted significantly from the conventional practice of blind economic diplomacy, to citizenship diplomacy. The citizenship diplomacy was clearly built on citizenship protection and welfare. Thus, a crucial attempt is made in this paper to examine the fallout of this unique and laudable but unaccomplished foreign policy thrust. Methodologically, the paper adopts qualitative descriptive method of data collection and analysis. A medley of the leadership and power theories is skillfully utilized in the quest to achieve a strong analytical framework for the study. We argue that the implementation of Yar'Adua's foreign policy thrust was adversely affected by his terminal illness and subsequent sudden demise. Generally, Yar'Adua's practical incapacitation in office limited certain inherent potentialities and optimistic promises of the proclaimed citizenship diplomacy. More directly, there were important instances where the leadership faltered or petered out entirely from matching foreign policy with radical moves, both by lobbying and severance. We conclude that whichever foreign policy that is to be adopted should firstly be evaluated in view of the

commensurable and disposable diplomatic wherewithal, if tangible success is to be achieved. More importantly, foreign policy ought to be consistent and comprehensive over period. In the light of this rational conviction, thus, subsequent Nigerian leadership should elaborately incorporate the vital elements of citizenship diplomacy in molding their foreign policy thrust and build therein in an incremental mannerism.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Citizenship Diplomacy, National Interest, AFRICOM, Afrocentrism

Introduction

Foreign policy has become a useful component that defines relations between and amongst states. Generally, we may say, a country's foreign policy thrust bottles the totality of the acts, strategies and manipulations by a given state in her process of launching her domestic resolve in the international arena. Chibundu (2003:1) crisply notes that foreign policy is "a country's response to the world outside or beyond its own frontiers or boundaries. Such response may indeed be friendly or aggressive, casual or intense, simple or complex, but it is always there." This means that the said 'response' which critically requires a dependable and accurate means of attainment has a vital quality. That is why it is generally accepted, both in theory and practice, that in relations with one another, nations should vigorously pursue their national interests and seek to protect it at whatever cost. Certainly, a nation's foreign policy is the political instrument or technical framework upon which it pursues its domestic interest. To be clear, Morgenthau (1973) asserts that "no nation can have a true guide as to what it needs to

do in foreign policy without accepting national interest as a basic guide.” If this is to be likened to the Nigerian scenario, for example, then, the overall concern should be focused upon those parameters of Nigeria’s core values that constitute essential components of her foreign policy. Therefore, it is important to contemplate: Do various Nigerian leaders consider the country’s national interest at all, in the pursuit of foreign policy thrusts?

It is worth mentioning, herein, that since the First Republic, Nigeria’s foreign policy has been largely Afro-centric in posture. Take for instance, in an official statement just before independence, on August 20, 1960, Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, at the Federal House of Assembly stated that Nigeria was, “adopting clear and practical policies with regard to Africa; it will be our aim to assist any country to find solution to its problem” (Tafawa, 1960:3). Similarly, one significant event that took place under late General Ironsi’s regime was the June 1966 Ambassadors’ Conference, held in Lagos to re-examine the premises and directions of Nigeria’s foreign policy. Among other issues ironed out, the conference re-dedicated Nigeria’s external outlook to the total emancipation of all African territories still under colonial tutelage and racial discrimination. This position was further reinforced when General Ironsi persuaded everyone into the assumption that, ‘in the whole sphere of external relations, the government attaches greatest importance to our African policy’ (cited in Al-Hassan, 2008:7). It was under the above foreign policy directions, mainly, that the Nigerian state delicately ventured into the complex theatre of international relations in the first place (Asobie, 1990:13). This position could be better

appreciated when we consider the fact that successive regimes in the country accorded significant attention to Africa as the centre-piece of Nigerian foreign policy.

Whatever had been the case, definitely, we may have to adjust our mindsets towards the understanding that nation-states all over the world necessarily design and implement foreign policies in order to guide their external relations as well as protect, promote and defend their vital national interests (Aluko, 1981:9). In content therefore, a cluster of areas such as defense of territorial integrity, the promotion of economic, military, strategic and diplomatic interests and whatever a country might consider as its vital national interest appear germane (Ogwu, 2005:19). It is therefore naturally expected that Nigeria's foreign policy too, ought to be fundamentally guided by her national interest, which should ordinarily serve to either justify or repudiate the country's action or inaction in her foreign relations (Akindele, 2003:33).

However and seemingly, at a point when it became very glaring that such conventional orientation of thrusting Nigeria's external behaviour upon frivolous magnanimity, or say, unrewarding love for her African neighbours, has emptily translated into political bunkum, the emergent democratic leadership redirected the entire focus of the country's foreign policy. Former President Obasanjo, for instance, being so apprehensive of the excruciating economic condition of the country, and more so, of the shallowness of the Nigerian purse for such flamboyant or philanthropic role of 'giant of Africa,' made a progressive change and overwhelmingly refocused the country's external attention. According to Ogwu (2005:25), this foreign policy arrangement was built

upon ‘economic diplomacy.’ Put differently, the plank of this administration’s foreign policy became shuttle diplomacy. First and foremost, the Obasanjo regime devoted or dissipated political energy wooing foreign partners into the country, for national development. Indeed, it was such a personal task which Obasanjo took upon himself, to navigate and rummage through Western countries either begging world leaders for aids or enticing them to come and invest in Nigeria. In fact, Obasanjo was more or less hanging out with world leaders, and snapping too many pictures. It was on this diplomatic page that the frequency of these trips got so bad that “According to official sources, the President, as at mid August 2002, travelled out of the country for one hundred and thirteen times since he took over the leadership of the country at the end of May in 1999, and that as at June 2002, he had been out of Nigeria altogether for a period of 340 days” (Akindele, 2003:3). In other words, in a period of three years, the President has been out of the country for a period of a year less two weeks. This development does not only climax the emphatic value attached to the regime of “Economic diplomacy,” but more so, the magnitude effort invested in achieving a turnaround thereto.

More importantly, however, President Yar’Adua’s Administration made a radical and positivist step toward something very unique and so different – citizenship diplomacy. This foreign policy thrust was directed towards the enhancement of the country’s citizens world over. This paper therefore evaluates the level of political will and relevant actions invested in the implementation of the foreign policy thrust of ‘citizenship diplomacy’ in the context of Nigeria’s relations with the outside world during President Yar’Adua’s Administration. In other words, scholarly

effort is made to associate the minimal success or near failure of citizenship diplomacy with the challenges of Yar'Adua's incapacitation in office. Put differently, the nagging health issues that critically challenged Yar'Adua functional authority/capacity and/or legitimacy in office are significantly identified as causative factors that generated widespread loss of focus, distraction and practical inhibition to concrete commitments toward the successful implementation and subsequent attainment of the basic goals of citizenship diplomacy.

Theoretical Analysis

In substance, the issue of foreign policy is mainly all about formal actions taken by a state in the outside world. Typically, leaders are inherently responsible for the success or failure of their individual countries in the outside world. By implication therefore, leaders' personality, the operational milieu and other necessary diplomatic tools are all vital for the successful attainment of foreign policy objectives. Thus, we have hybridized and mongrelized the leadership and power theoretical analyses for the purpose of this paper. A leader is that person steering the affairs of a given group or institution. Burns (1978:23) simply sees leadership as the ability to influence others to behave in a certain desirable way. More concretely, Vernon and Eugene, 1981 (cited in Abba *at al*, 2004:84) defines leadership as "the relationship through which one person influences the behavior of other people." Here, a leader is expected to invoke his discretionary powers and desires upon other actors, provided such go in accordance with the general interest of his followers.

Generally speaking, there are so many approaches and theories that define the requisite attributes and ideal personality to be expected of an achieving leader. Byrd (1940) in his trait theory research provides a long list of what the ideal traits of a leader should be. A sample of traits desirable and generally embodied in a leader, for example, include: outspokenness, self-confidence, intelligence, dependability, moral straightness, fairness, firmness, initiative, sensitivity, extroversion, decisiveness, assertiveness, tact, enthusiasm, supervisory ability, willingness to assume responsibility, self-assurance, individuality and good appearance (see also, Abba *et al*, 2004:86; Nwankwo, 2009:207). On the contrary, the study of Jennings (1967) concludes that fifty years of experiment have failed to produce one personality trait or set of qualities that can confidently be used to distinguish between leaders and non-leaders. This finding therefore makes Byrd's categorization of little or no importance. Further studies on leadership diverted significant attention from this original premise towards identifying various types of leadership. While an authoritarian leader, for instance, is expected to employ force in advancing his goals, a democratic leader is expected to democratize the decision making machinery to accommodate and allow his followers participate actively in policy formulation. The Fielder's contingency model of leadership goes further to link between leadership styles and the critical impact of the situation on ground. In other words, leadership success is primarily attributed to the favourableness of the operational milieu and vice versa (see, Fielder, 1967). However, the limitations of leadership assumptions are well documented. For us therefore, the analytical tools provided may not properly lubricate the

moving engine of quest towards understanding of the fundamental rationale in employing all available resources to initiate radical moves, such as lobby and severance in the delicate terrain of foreign policy, provided there are core objectives that must be attained in the interest of the state. As such, the power theory is useful in filling this explanatory lacuna.

The power theory is well rooted in the original works of Morgenthau (1973), Frankel (1963), Dahl (1957) and Gauba (2003), among others. Power is the conduit through which states achieve their interests in international politics. Morgenthau (1973) succinctly observes that states are only motivated by self interest than benevolent feelings towards other states. Morgenthau is convinced that this self interest, identified as national interest, is fundamentally defined in terms of power. He specifically explained exercise of power as a predominant use of force which states must not hesitate to apply in the protection and furtherance of their national interests. Frankel (1963:17) further defines power as “the ability to influence the actions of others in accordance with one’s own ends”. Here, power is nothing but “the production of intended effects”, a condition through which one accomplishes his actual and potential political desires. As such, power is central to the attainment of core objectives in world politics, notwithstanding the detrimental effects on other actors. Hence, in the realm of *real politic* might is right.

In substance, power denotes the ability of, A to make B to do or accept something B would not have chosen to do or accept, so as to enable the influencing actor to achieve desired objectives to the detriment of B (Gauba, 2003:242; Dahl, 1957). However, it is apt to put

that power relation is symptomatically fluid and ephemeral. This means that it could flow either ways. Therefore power is not per se permanence or a perpetual control instrument (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2011:72). Hence, a nation can over a period assert its influence and dominance over another if it possesses greater power configuration. Therefore, the possession and command of power avail the state a limitless leeway to achieve, protect and further its critical interests in international politics within a distinct period. The principal components of national power include the following; “geography, national resources, population, economic capacity, military strength, quality of government, national character (morale, ideology, and leadership)” (Ikejiani-Clark, 2007:6).

Thus far, the leadership theory, as demonstrated earlier, is very effective in understanding the predominant role and ideal character/comportment required of a leader – a President, if foreign policy objectives must be successfully attained. However, as Jennings’ study suggests, we may assume that even though Yar’Adua was a leader, he may not have been naturally or incidentally imbued with the calculated leadership qualities. Also, upon the conclusion of Fielder’s contingency model, one may go further to argue that Yar’Adua’s inability to fully assert his personality in the conduct of foreign policy business was as a result of the unfavourable situational challenge of ill health which he obviously faced. In this regard, Yar’Adua rather became more of a democratic leader and never an authoritative leader. To make issues worst, and as a matter of contradiction of a kind, Yar’Adua’s indisposed nature merely allowed for the democratization of foreign policy making process but never gave room for holistic democratization

of foreign policy actions. Or put this way, the cabinet or cabal that watched over the country in the interim absence of Yar' Adua never allowed for such. This emerging confusion generated crisis that later strangled foreign policy actions.

On the other hand, the employment of power theory in the analysis of this kind avails one the understanding of the magnitude accident of foreign policy inaction during Yar'Adua's Administration. Particularly, in defiance of Morgenthau's advisement, President Yar'Adua variously failed to employ necessary powers and resources at his disposal to take radical moves in pursuit of the wellbeing of Nigerians abroad, which was the cardinal thrust of the regime's foreign policy. Again, against the impression of Gauba and Frankel, Yar'Adua slacked in using his official capacity to influence the actions of other states in accordance with his own ends. That is why there seemed to be little or no production of intended effects of citizenship diplomacy even after considerable gestation, incubation and experimentation.

Citizenship Diplomacy Explained

Accordingly, Yar'Adua's Foreign Affairs Minister, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, had described the new thrust of Nigeria's foreign policy as the diplomacy of consequence, such that if you are nice to Nigeria, Nigeria would be nice to you. If you are hostile to Nigeria, Nigeria would be damn hostile to you. In essence, the era of flamboyant magnanimity and reckless foreign spending had gone. The times of banking on intangible 'gain' or 'self deception,' of playing the big brother role in Africa was ruefully and painfully seen as wasted years. Citizenship Diplomacy therefore meant - expect Nigeria to pay you back

in your own coin. It is a sort of tit-for-tat or counter-strike diplomacy; meaning that, Nigeria must take a serious corresponding action, or its pound of flesh, should any country violate the human dignity of her citizens residing in its land. Here, as in physics, actions and reactions must be equal and opposite, and directly proportional and equilateral.

Mainly, the philosophy of citizenship diplomacy became a child of necessity owing to a lifelong ill treatment meted to Nigerian citizens abroad, and in most cases, coming from countries that had been or are still beneficiaries of Nigeria's largesse. Thus, the emphasis on the citizen-centered foreign policy was all about the welfare of the Nigerian citizens both home and abroad. This idea holds water, especially bearing in mind also that a happier citizenry home and abroad, would better project the country's image, prestige and glory anywhere in the world. This was referred to as 'Track-Two-Diplomacy'. Simply put, rather than relying wholly on Track I Diplomacy (i.e. work of actual diplomats at the embassies), the Yar'Adua's government engaged the strategy of scientific exchanges, cultural interrelationships, and international sporting events to complement official diplomacy (Omenma, 2009:261).

Evaluating Yar'Adua's Foreign Policy Actions

First to be stated is that human beings articulate and pursue foreign policy objectives. Even though Obasanjo was on top of Nigeria's foreign policy articulation and implementation during his regime, and virtually boycotting his foreign minister, Yar'Adua was never. Let us just say that the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was in so many ways the opposite of Obasanjo's personality. We may not be very interested in commenting elaborately on his health issues though, which in the first

place diminished any sense of personalization of the foreign policy structures. More in particular, the foreign policy machinery naturally deducted itself from the office of the President, which it was hitherto arbitrarily and forcibly subjected to. This was the reason why the country's foreign policy was rightly left for the Foreign Affairs Minister, Chief Ojo Madueke, to etch and achieve. In this sense, technical competence and objectivism were rationally employed into the art of diplomatic relations, such, leading to ambitious diplomatic designs and frameworks that were to genuinely translate into favourable outcomes. The only seeming misfortune about this new development, however, was that owing to his indisposed nature, a natural causality, Yar'Adua was particularly unable to play virile part in certain areas of bi-national and multinational diplomatic concerns that practically demanded outright invocation of astute personality and firm authority.

Generally speaking, there were in fact compelling convictions, as most analysts adjudged and in line with the thrust of citizenship diplomacy, that Yar'Adua had a genuine intention for the country's image and people abroad. Remarkably, the Administration had in various ways fought hard for the welfare and good of Nigerians in diaspora. Mainly, the plight of Nigerians, a large number of them, languishing and perishing in various countries of the world became an important port of concern and concentration for the Administration. The Administration did not only develop a rescuing urge but focused vast attention and resources toward salvaging Nigerians dying in foreign prisons. An outstanding step taken by the Administration in this regard, therefore, was the negotiation for exchange of prisoners with other countries. In

fact, the regime made painstaking efforts and calls, which rather fell on deaf ears, to intervene in the cases of over twenty thousand Nigerians serving merited and unmerited jail terms in prisons across Europe and Africa (1,500, in Libya; 391 in India; 15 in Nepal; 14 in Japan; 13 in Canada; 40 in Niger Republic; 150 in Togo; 1400 in Britain, etc) (see Omenma, 2009:263). More especially also, various attempts were made, howbeit in vain, to negotiate death sentences passed on some Nigerians in the Arab world and elsewhere. Near examples were the cases of two Nigerian citizens in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, where the governments of these two countries went ahead to execute the victims amidst pleas from the Nigerian government to hold action. Again, the Yar'Adua Administration made but a belated effort to hold on the execution of Mr. Samuel Iwuchukwu Okoye and Hansen Anthony Nwaolisa by the Indonesian government in June 2008. Also, about a dozen and half of Nigerian citizens, over 16 illustrious Nigerians, were gruesomely murdered in Equatorial Guinea; while 128 others are languishing in prison on alleged plot to overthrow the government of Equatorial Guinea (Eke, 2009:75). It was indeed so painful that Mr. Ikechukwu Obiakor died in Lindela Detention Camp in Johannesburg, while waiting for deportation. Particularly, the House of Representatives Committee on Diaspora angrily but merely condemned the brutal strangle to death of Mrs. Evelyn Uche Amarin by her Belgium husband, Mr. Wim Vanacker. In all these, no tangible retaliatory statement or action were either heard or taken. Much more, well over 84 Nigerians have been killed in South Africa between January 2007 and April 2008. A Nigerian diplomat, L.M. Wayi was equally killed, without any restraint, at the Nigerian embassy

in Prague, Czech Republic, in May 2007, by Jiri Podoski – an irate victim defrauded by a Nigerian. The May 2008 xenophobic attack on immigrants in South Africa, in which many Nigerians fall victims, is also very terrific and outstanding.

As this perfect hatred against Nigerians abroad intensifies and spreads like a wild fire, no compelling consequential pronouncement or action has ever been made or suggested by the Nigerian leadership. Perhaps, a bold diplomatic statement laden with practical repercussions would have been very instrumental and helpful, particularly in countering or preempting the probability of turning down such state demands and pleas from the persecuting countries. The point to be noted is that the full consequential effects or repercussions of the failure to oblige or grant such bargains/pleas (as in tune with the principle and purpose of citizenship diplomacy) were never articulated or presented before the persecuting countries. This blurredness of direction and purpose, of not definitely and firmly articulating and pronouncing what the said consequences and repercussions were or should be, has practically diluted and watered down the concept of citizenship diplomacy. In return, this misplacement and insensitivity of purpose have negatively affected the desired outcome of citizenship diplomacy.

If not, one cannot explain why apart from the purported hope that the Nigerian government was compiling list of Nigerian victims in order to seek for compensations from the South African government, no further concrete actions were taken or heard to that effect. On the other hand, other victimized countries, especially Kenya, had threatened diplomatic severance to press home their grievances. It is upon all these

staring realities that the issue of leadership action clearly comes to play. Even though the Nigerian legislature had time after time made relevant chiding and condemning statements against the persecutor countries, no concrete Presidential decision in form of repercussive action was achieved at this time. It is quite in doubt, however, if Yar'Adua himself was fully aware or was comprehensively briefed on these developments. The concern here is that President Yar'Adua was, in most cases, unavoidably indisposed and as such, may not have been all that privileged to hear, entertain or address all pressing matters of national importance.

Take for instance, it was in November 2007, barely six months after his assumption to office, that Yar'Adua was flown to Saudi Arabia reportedly to perform lesser Hajj, from where he later had cause to revert to the King's Hospital in Saudi Arabia for urgent medical attention. He later returned back to the country after three months had administratively wasted. In the following year, sometime in mid-2008, Yar'Adua embarked on medical trip to Saudi Arabia for a comprehensive medical attention, which took him about three and half months. It should be recalled, however, that it was this same 2008 that the xenophobic attack in South Africa which challenged the freedom and human rights of many Nigerians residing in the country occurred. Hence, Mr. President was never on ground to follow foreign policy issues squarely and diplomatically. On the alternative, every other person that may have been appointed to deputize him in issues of foreign relations, be him the Vice President or the Foreign Affairs Minister, neither had full discretionary powers nor authoritative legitimacy of action. Moreover, many of those

that were strongly for Yar'Adua in the cabinet never allowed for the democratization of the decision making powers both at the instances of national and foreign matters. This unfortunately continued to be the case, the urgency and strategic value of issues at stake notwithstanding.

However, the height of it all was the unfortunate incidence which fetched Nigeria a notorious place in the 'U.S list of 16 terrorist nations' in early 2010. It should be recalled that Mr. Farouk Abdul Mutallab, a 23 year old boy, who was trained as a diehard terrorist far away in Yemen, attempted bombing a U.S passenger plane, carrying over 240 passengers, on the 25th of December 2009. As was becoming a custom, Yar'Adua was not on ground during this period as a result of ill-health. He had left the country in November 2009, never to return until May the following year, 2010. Hence, it can be fairly argued that the absence of Mr. President contributed significantly to the hasty conclusion and inclusion of Nigeria's name in the U.S terrorist blacklist for the first time, not minding the lifelong smooth diplomatic rapport and foreign trade relations which the two countries have variously enjoyed. More especially, the aspect of the ongoing African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) signed in 2005 is worthy of reference. Ordinarily, again, one may say, that a swift intervention and timely initiation of a robust dialogue by the President, perhaps, could have provided a positive and elegant avenue to properly iron issues out and preempt such cataclysmic ridicule and battering of Nigeria's image and relevance before the entire world. Beyond that, the absence of Mr. President, resulting in his inability to act accordingly during this period, all as a matter of his health issue, rather inhibited Nigeria's foreign partners from making tangible

investments in the country, as there were wide circulation of propaganda, and indeed real truths that Nigeria, having bagged the status of a terrorist nation, was no longer very safe for such foreign investments. It was obvious that various sectors of the economy were fast collapsing, with Nigeria's foreign earnings depleting by days. Practically, there was no Yar'Adua to tackle the pervading economic meltdown that besieged world economy, thus, Nigeria had it too rough during this period.

Of course, Goodluck Jonathan, even in his capacity as the Vice president, had limited powers of authority and legitimacy, both at home and out there, to venture fully into the intricate and delicate terrain of foreign relations. Moreover, little or no support was given to him by law and cabinet members, to act in real capacity of the substantive but vacuumed President. Later, Nigeria had to cry through her nose, particularly with the intervention of the legislature, before such blacklisting was eventually wiped off after a detailed period of time. Even though recently, the U.S Government had sentenced the young lad to life imprisonment, this bad experience sets some questions germane. Why did the Yar'Adua's Administration fail to follow up the indicted country, Yemen, where the young lad was trained, to logical conclusion? Who and who can vouch that there are no more safe havens in Yemen, where other numerous tabular-razared minded young Nigerians are possibly and continuously being conscripted and indoctrinated into terrorism, even presently? These are very important concerns that seriously agitate the mind. Or, we may simply take it that the Administration entirely overlooked the preventive intricacies of the said citizenship diplomacy.

Again, part of the agenda of Yar'Adua's citizenship diplomacy was to launder the battered image of Nigeria. On this footing, the rebrand Nigeria programme, promoted by Yar'Adua's Minister of Information and Communications, Prof. Dora Akunyili, was introduced. The rebrand Nigeria programme became a crucial talk when it was generally felt that the image of the country has deteriorated almost beyond repair in the international community. According to Prof. Dora Akunyili:

There is no doubt that this country needs change, a change in character and general orientation... despite our struggles and not-too-good reputation, we must seize every opportunity to make a change. Though Nigeria is a country with problems, it is also one with countless opportunities. Nigeria has many brilliant minds and experts who can hold their own in virtually every field of endeavour... Gradually, as a people, we are approaching a point where many feel that there can be no redemption... (*Daily Sun*, March 19, 2009:1).

Therefore, an important slogan known as "Nigeria Good People, Great Nation" was hastily packaged and launched in 2009 in order to inform the whole world that Nigerians are not really as bad as they may have thought. Therefore, to generously boost the image of the country, certain philanthropic agendas gained importance. To begin with, an understanding was reached between the Nigerian Government and the Sierra Leone Government on Technical Aid Corps (TAC) programme. To make Nigeria appear generous or kindhearted in outlook, Yar'Adua's Administration also donated a cash sum of US\$500,000 as her contribution to the relief effort for the citizens of Myanmar who were affected by the misadventure of cyclone Nargis in May 2008.

Seemingly, however, these magnanimities were irresponsibly thrown out, at a time when, like other countries of the world, Nigeria was facing serious challenges of economic meltdown. Besides, was the offer in line with the spirit of Citizenship Diplomacy? What was Nigeria set to gain from such frivolous flamboyancy and what did she gain eventually? Indeed, there was virtually nothing to gain, no stakes at all, and by logic, nothing was gained at last. Perhaps and in reality, the philosophy of the so called ‘Myanmar aid’ was myopically borne out of the old and unfruitful African center-piece foreign policy. Garba (1991:24) had earlier demonstrated the futility and cost of Nigeria’s flamboyant donations to neighbouring countries. Thus, along the line, there was a careless mixture or conflict of application of the age-long foreign policy thrust of Afrocentrism with the new citizenship diplomacy. This diplomatic error had tuned down the volume and result of the much averred citizenship diplomacy.

Another important trend in the foreign relations of this regime was the bilateral security agreement struck with some western nations. Mainly, important liberalization strategies were articulated and relevant steps taken to effectively engage the country in the regime of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union in order to enhance the capacity of trade as an “engine of growth” (Osegbue, Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012). Reasonably, having taken over as ECOWAS Chairman from President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso in 2009, Yar’Adua diligently sought to securitize Nigeria and the continent in general. The plan was primarily to import security paraphernalia from US and other willing western nations to tackle the

hydra-headed issues of Gulf of Guinea piracy and militancy. Therefore, it was in the logic of this security framework that Africa Command (AFRICOM) became an important option for Nigeria. Incidentally, the US appeared to be more willing or desperate to help. Hence, crying more than the bereaved. Though, the U.S. expansive concern could be mostly located in their oil interest in the Delta region. In this case, against his usual aloofness, Yar'Adua personally became involved, unlike other foreign policy actions left wholesomely in the domain of the Foreign Minister to draw up and pursue. In a visit to the White House on 13 December, 2007, Yar'Adua had hurriedly pledged to President Bush, a holistic partnership with AFRICOM, which he strongly believed to be a viable means towards achieving Africa's security goals. He vouched:

I will never forget this moment... We have discussed on security issues, security with Nigeria, the Niger Delta, the Gulf of Guinea and peace and security on the African continent. We shall partner AFRICOM to assist not only Nigeria but also the African continent to actualize its peace and security initiatives. It is an initiative to have standby force in each of the regional economic groupings in Africa (*Voice of America*, December 13, 2007).

Although coming back home, President Yar'Adua had emphasized that he did not accede to the stationing of AFRICOM base(s) in the country in his meeting with President Bush, and maintained that his stand was in line with the earlier joint decision of the Council of States on the subject matter. The Council of States had mutually and unanimously rejected the whole idea. Otherwise, going by such unconditional pledge, Yar'Adua, who spoke on behalf of other African nations, appeared to have simply renewed African yoke of western

dependency, especially as it relates to security concerns. Ordinarily though, it may be taken that Yar'Adua was genuinely acting with good intention, in line with citizenship diplomacy – having in mind to protect Nigeria's citizens as well as other citizens from the rest of the Gulf of Guinea nations.

However, African Governments of the region wanted something else that would be homegrown, in substitute for Africa Command (AFRICOM). Preferably, member nations have hammered on Africa's sovereign responsibility of ensuring peace and security on the continent. Foreign Affairs Minister, Ojo Maduekwe clearly made known the position of Nigeria on the matter. In reiteration of the Council of State's unanimous rejection of the establishment of AFRICOM base in the region, the Minister emphasized:

Nigeria's position on AFRICOM remains that African government have the sovereign responsibility for maintaining of peace and security on the continent... In this regard, the need for support such as the provision of training, funding and logistics for Africa militaries is duly acknowledged (*Daily Independent*, December 17, 2007).

The imports of Maduekwe's statement are many and laden. First, that Africa is totally responsible for ensuring peace and security of lives and properties of her people, as well as safeguarding her natural resources. Second, that any external security apparatus (such as AFRICOM) that was to come in to securitize Africa, should be taken as an encroachment and violation of her sovereign right over her region and people. Third, that AFRICOM base(s) was not desirable anywhere in the country and should not be forcibly imposed. Lastly, that it would be far

better that the U.S Government provides the nation with such military support and assistance like training her military personnel, funding, provision of new technology military hardware and other military logistics.

Altogether, when the thought of AFRICOM did not augur well with most African nations, no further impressive effort was asserted by the Yar'Adua Administration, being the ECOWAS Chairman, to organize a reliable security outfit to protect the citizens and waters of the sub-region. Only cosmetic attention was given to the Niger Delta militancy, which did not wholesomely arrest the situation. This, again, illuminates a sort of lackluster and cold-feet approach of the Administration in strictly pursuing the central thrust of citizenship diplomacy.

Conclusion

In this paper, we made objective attempt to evaluate Nigeria's foreign policy under President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. As earlier demonstrated, citizenship diplomacy was mainly a pro-citizenship philosophy and assumption, targeted at safeguarding the welfare of the country's citizens, both home and abroad. Even though we recognized that such foreign policy thrust was so positively unique and laudable, certain distorting inactions prevailed upon and hastened the abridgement of the policy. Otherwise put, the inability of the Yar'Adua's Administration to equate such attractive foreign policy with relevant actions, owing mainly to the inhibiting health challenges of Yar'Adua while in office, worked hard to impinge on the successful attainment of the goals set out in the policy of citizenship diplomacy. More

particularly, bargaining, lobbying and severance were not proactively and preemptively applied where and when necessary, mostly as a result of Yar'Adua's unavoidable indisposed nature and/or absence in office.

All the same, there are some important lessons to learn from the evaluations made in this paper. For one thing, foreign policy ought not to be articulated in a vacuum without a view and assurance of the available wherewithal for its implementation. For another, to make better sense, foreign policy should be positively matched with relevant actions. Since foreign policy is inexorably dependent upon a number of sustainable foreign policy actions, it is therefore only rational and contextually proper that every available diplomatic ingredient to that effect, be simultaneously approximated alongside the articulation of whatever foreign policy that is to be adopted.

What we mean here, ordinarily, is that it is not enough for a country to fashion out a fashionable foreign policy. Every foreign policy to be prompted and promoted must in reality go with such considerations as to: What financial muscle do we have to do this? What military power do we have to do this? What voting advantage do we have to do this? What this, what that, etc. Such logical diplomatic congruence legitimately determines the level of achievement to be recorded in the international field of play. All this while, these vital logicalities have either been neglected or entirely overlooked by successive Nigerian leadership, including the Yar'Adua's Administration in focus, and after. Though one political reality remains that, Nigeria, as the most populated black nation in the world, has a reservoir of potential diplomatic willpower to effectively back up, achieve and sustain whatever proactive

foreign policy option it desires or takes up. Upon this persuasive premise, therefore, Nigeria shouldn't relent at all! She should not appear politically reluctant and docile – doing nothing and watching things spoil for her out there. All necessary diplomatic tools must be holistically harnessed and deployed accordingly in radical pursuit of her foreign policy. In all, it is our utmost conviction that citizenship diplomacy is a sound foreign policy thrust of vital substance and significance. As such, it is suggested that subsequent Nigerian leadership should elaborately incorporate the essential elements of citizenship diplomacy in molding their foreign policy thrust and build therein afterwards.

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