

Diplomatic Shuttles as An Economic Revival Architecture: An Interrogation of President Muhammadu Buhari's Foreign Policy

Oluwafunto Mercy OSO

Department of Political Science, Achievers University Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria.

Abstract: States are propelled by certain interests in their external relations, thus shaping their patterns of behavior in the international system. Those interests, also known as national interests, are encoded in their foreign policy. Therefore, as interest varies among states, so also are the approaches adopted by individual state leaders in the pursuit and realization of such interest. This reality has been noted in Nigeria's foreign policy under President Buhari since 2015. A major feature of his foreign policy is the penchant for foreign trips (diplomatic shuttles), as a tool for promoting bilateral and multilateral bargaining in interstate relations. Against this backdrop, this paper examines the nature, contents, and, viability of Nigeria's external relations under President Buhari in the context of its many diplomatic shuttles. The paper adopts neo-classical realism as its theoretical framework. Data were collected through secondary sources such as journals, magazines, and reports. The paper observes amongst others that the diplomatic shuttles rekindled international business engagements in Nigeria by attracting an inflow of Foreign Direct Investments, infrastructural development, and, promoting trade and bilateral relations. However, there is more to be done in addressing some of the domestic challenges that government aims to address. This paper, therefore, recommends redirection of the country's priority towards addressing the critical issue of infrastructure as an internal dynamic that can substantially strengthen the country's foreign policy architecture and emplace the country in a vantage position for more robust international engagements.

Key Words: Diplomacy, Diplomatic Shuttles, Foreign Policy and, Foreign Direct Investment

I. INTRODUCTION

States are propelled by certain interests in their relations with other actors (state and non-state) in the global system. Those interests otherwise referred to as national interests coded in countries' foreign policy instruments serve as a guide in the implementation of foreign policy. It is common knowledge that as states are at different levels of development, their choices, interests, and aspirations also differ. This predictably implies that individual states through their leaders deploy different approaches in their pursuit and realization of foreign policy objectives, which encompass their interests. Such has been the case with Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari since May 2015 when he assumed office. The President came with a new direction and style in Nigeria's foreign policy drive, which was informed by the unpleasant reality of pervasive challenges that the administration inherited from the previous

Goodluck Jonathan administration. The three most cardinals of these domestic problems, which are closely intertwined and directly related to economic development are; deteriorated security, monumental corruption, and crumbled economy. In reaction to these challenges, the President sees foreign trips, otherwise referred to as diplomatic shuttles as the grand strategy in seeking to convert foreign policy activities into concrete achievements which would be of direct benefit to Nigeria and especially its pursuit of sustainable development and meeting the citizen's immediate economic needs. It would seem that the objectives of these shuttles were to encourage old foreign investors that had left due to insecurity; attract new investors and fresh financial flow, sign terms of foreign direct investment; and promote Nigeria's export trade.

No doubt, since the commencement of Muhammadu Buhari's administration, several studies have been conducted on Nigeria's foreign policy under the administration (Odubajo, 2017; Olakunle, 2017; Ayobolu, 2017; Onapoja, 2017; Bello & Dutse, 2017; Bello, Othman & Dutse, 2017; Duke, Charles, Glory & Alagba, 2018; Oni, 2019; Abubakar & Umar, 2020; Saleh & Muhammed, 2020). However, to the best of my knowledge, there is yet no holistic and comprehensive study that examines the foreign trips of the President as a strategy to address the pressing domestic challenges. This is the gap that this study seeks to fill. In specific terms, the study examines the specific objectives of President Buhari's foreign policy, the factors that informed it, the specific strategies that the government employed in its foreign policy pursuit, achievements so far as well as the challenges that have been encountered so far.

For clear focus and ease of exposition, the paper is structured as follows: the first section introduces the study; section two focuses on the key concepts and theoretical framework that guides the study; section three attempts an overview of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence while section four examines an overview of President Buhari's diplomatic shuttles and its benefit on Nigeria's economy. Section five which is the last section concludes the study.

Conceptual Building Blocks- Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Shuttles

Two concepts capture the whole essence of this paper. They are; foreign policy and diplomatic shuttles.

I. Foreign Policy

There is no doubt that foreign policy like any other concept in the social sciences has suffered from definitional problems. However, there is no disagreement on the notion that foreign policy remains a plan of action adopted by a nation in its dealings with other nations towards achieving its national interests and objectives. This position accounts, perhaps, for Frankel's stand when he referred to foreign policy as "consisting of decisions and actions which involve, to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and another (Frankel 1975 cited in Akinboye, 1999:364). Such relations must therefore be reflective of the state's national interest. In another view, foreign policy has been described as the strategy or planned course of action developed by the decision-makers of a state vis-à-vis other states or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in terms of the national interest (Darhl, 1995). In this light, Akinboye (1999) described foreign policy as the instrumentality by which states influence or seek to influence the external world and to attain objectives that are in line with their perceived national interest.

Though foreign policy may suffer from definitional pluralism and conceptual diversity, scholars are unanimous in their opinion that foreign policy remains guidelines that shape the relationship of one nation with another. In other words, foreign policy is a body of decisions formulated to serve as the guiding principles of a nation-state in its interaction with other nation-states. For this paper, we shall adopt the definition of Oni & Taiwo (2016:63) which describes foreign policy as an instrument adopted by states to exploit the international arena in achieving their national interest and project their image on the global stage through interactions with other states.

II. Diplomatic Shuttle

Diplomatic shuttle as a term is sometimes erroneously misplaced for shuttle diplomacy but they do not mean the same thing. While shuttle diplomacy features mainly when mediating in the course of an international conflict resolution and it involves a third party doing the traveling between the principal parties in contention, diplomatic shuttle involves collaborations between and amongst parties.

Diplomatic shuttle is a foreign policy approach whereby an individual, usually a government official, travels to and from countries for collaborations or cooperation in areas such as trade and economic partnerships. Diplomatic shuttle more often involves principal-to-principal contacts in external relations. This usually occurs when the President of country 'A' makes overtures his counterpart in country 'B' in a quest for development partnerships. Direct contact between presidents indicates the importance which these personalities place on their issue-field of discussion –an issue that goes beyond the regular handling by the resident diplomats/ambassadors in those countries without necessarily undermining the sense of judgment of their respective emissaries (Sanuni and Oke 2017:141). Such principal-to-

principal negotiation also symbolizes the high level of premium placed on the specific issue field of the discussion which is of great importance to a country's foreign policy objectives. For President Muhammadu Buhari, foreign travels are a tool for not only rebuilding Nigeria's international image but also, and most importantly, fine-tuning the international economic environment for the attraction of foreign investment in terms of capital and technology.

Theoretical Framework

One of the most dominant features of social science scholarship is the adoption, discussion, analysis, and even understanding of concepts from a theoretical point of view or orientation. The paper is anchored on the neo-classical realism theory to explain the nature and content of Nigeria's foreign policy under the Muhammadu Buhari administration.

A pioneering figure that set out a basic framework of Neo-classical realism theory was Gideon Rose in his *World Politics* (1998), which draws insights from classical or traditional realism. The Neo-classical realism theory is a philosophical explanation of the role of power and structure of an international system in states' behavior and foreign policy outcomes. Neo-classical realism theory does not aim to create a grand theory of international politics but to fill what seems to have been neglected in the study of international relations—the importance of the domestic variable. Thus, the aim to explain how systemic and unit-level variables combined together help in understanding states' behavior and foreign policy outcomes.

The central assumption of the theory is that states' foreign policy is the result of both the structure of the international system's domestic variable and complex interaction between the two (Omar, 2013). This is not to discount the importance of power and the position of states in the international structure, rather it is about acknowledging how imperative domestic variables are to states' foreign policy choices and decision-making.

In sum, neo-classical realism theory argued that in order to have a proper understanding of states' foreign policy, one must take cognizance of domestic-level variables. Suffice it to say here that as states' foreign policy differs so also are their domestic-level variables.

Nigeria's foreign policy under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is, within the foregoing line of thoughts shaped by domestic variables such as deteriorated economy, Boko-Haram insurgency, and monumental corruption. These variables informed the foreign policy approach of the president, particularly his flurry of foreign trips to countries that are considered to be strategic in addressing these challenges.

II. FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMATIC SHUTTLES IN NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

The foundation of Nigeria's foreign policy was considered to have been laid by the government of Sir Abubakar Tafawa

Balewa. Significantly, Balewa on assuming office on October 1st, 1960, set out the principles and objectives which have remained as the enduring framework of Nigeria's foreign relations. However, what has remained a source of scathing criticism was the administration's conservative and Pro-Western foreign policy orientation despite the avowed principle of non-alignment in the East-West Cold War. No doubt, the administration's Pro-West policy orientation allowed for Nigeria's unlimited access to London as well as consistent visits on issues of economic and bilateral relations and foreign policy decisions. Nevertheless, the rapprochement later became unguided as Balewa could hardly make any foreign policy decision without first consulting the British Government.

The military coup of January 15, 1966, terminated the Balewa Government. The General J.T.U Aguiyi-Ironsi regime that took over the government was too short to conceive of, not to talk of reforming any meaningful foreign policy for Nigeria. After the death of Ironsi, Lt. Colonel (later promoted to full General) Yakubu Gowon became the Head of State. There were two major events during the Gowon regime which informed foreign policy direction. These are the civil war and the oil boom. The Civil War, on the one hand, put the corporate existence of Nigeria into question. Under the war condition, hitherto Nigeria's conservative and Pro-West foreign policy posture was put to the test. However, what Nigeria received was the back side of the West. On the other hand, the oil boom that attended the post-war era under Gowon had an unprecedented impact on Nigeria's foreign policy. First, it provides Nigeria the opportunity to play a more assertive and expansive role in Africa as seen in the leading roles it played in the Organization of African Unity, undisputed leadership of the sub-region, formation of the Economic Community of West African States in 1975, and the support for liberation movements during this period. Second, it led to improved relations with the Eastern bloc (Soviet Union). Third and perhaps more importantly, it provided an opportunity for Gowon to take a tour extensively and play statesman. Some of these trips which took place after the Civil War include the November 1971 visit to Israel as a member of the Organization of African Unity's Peace Mission, the June 1973 three-day visit to Britain as fitting climax of the process of normalizing relations, and the November 1973 United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York. (Maina, 2003)

On July 29, 1975, General Gowon was overthrown in a military coup. The succeeding regime, Murtala/Obasanjo advanced a more assertive, activist foreign policy. The regime implemented a more militant pan-African foreign policy that targeted struggle against colonial rule in Africa such as Apartheid Regime in South Africa, the Angolan liberation struggles, and other freedom fighters in Zimbabwe and Namibia (Oluwole 2016:30).

In line with the Murtala-Obasanjo transition agenda, power was handed over to a democratically elected government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari who stayed in office between 1979 and

1983. However, Nigeria's foreign policy in the Shagari years witnessed passivity and docility. In fact, unlike the previous Head of Government, Shagari does not engage in an active diplomatic shuttle in his external relations. For instance, as noted by Owa and Owa (2017:5), in June 1981, Shagari failed to attend the OAU summit in Nairobi, Kenya on the flimsy excuse that the OAU secretariat did not list the border conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon on the agenda.

The Buhari-Idiagbon regime that ousted Shagari's democratic government sought to restore the battered image of Nigeria in the international community, and revamp the grossly battered economy that it inherited from Shagari's government. However, the regime's highhandedness and record-breaking violation of human rights especially in the case of Umaru Dikko (a Shagari's cabinet member, who was declared wanted over wanton squandering and mismanagement of public funds) led to frenzied relations between Nigeria and Britain.

The palace coup that ousted the Buhari/Idiagbon government brought General Ibrahim Babangida to the helm of affairs on August 27, 1985. Babangida emerged as the Head of State when the country's economy was going through a serious downturn, owing largely to the oil price collapse. The regime, therefore, considered it imperative to improve the economy. To achieve this, it adopted what has come to be known as economic diplomacy as a way of stimulating foreign capital investment, especially from Europe and the United States. By implication, Babangida had to embark on visits to Western capitals notably London, Paris, Berlin, and Washington.

Following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election by the Babangida's Government, Nigeria found herself in a state of confusion and near disintegration. As a saving measure, the Babangida Government installed the Interim National Government (ING) led by Ernest Shonekan. Completely rudderless and unprepared, the ING could neither initiate nor affect any meaningful external relations. In such a situation of confusion and passivity, General Sanni Abacha who has been waiting in the wings as the only military personnel in the government staged a palace coup, sacked the ING, and installed himself as the Head of State on November 17, 1993.

Nigeria's external relations under Abacha underwent the darkest moment in its history. By any standard, no other Nigeria's head of state has earned as much notoriety for foreign adventurist policies as General Sanni Abacha. Commenting on the regime, Kolawole (2010:148) argued that 'diplomacy which is the instrument of international relation was replaced by bull-fighting'. Rather than courting friends, Nigeria was simply attracting more enemies. Consequently, except for South Africa 1994 during the swearing-in ceremony of Nelson Mandela, Abacha did not pay "state's" visit to any major country of the world (Okajare 2003:184).

The least-expected death of General Sanni Abacha on the 8th of June 1998, brought General Abusalami Abubakar to the helm of the nation's affairs. On assumption of office, Abubakar asserted his administration's commitment to consolidate old friendships, win new ones, and repair

damaged relations (Olaleye 2004:166). To match his words with action, Abubakar paid two visits to South Africa in quick succession and to other West-African countries such as Togo, the Republic of Benin, and Niger. Abubakar's diplomatic shuttles also took him to prominent Western countries such as Britain, the United States of America, and France. He was received in audience by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and later traveled to the United States to address the 53rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (Okajare 2003:187).

Following the restoration of democracy in 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo assumed office on May 29, 1999. Obasanjo left no one in doubt of his desire to completely re-integrate Nigeria into world politics and restore her battered image. Obasanjo took his reintegration process beyond mere acceptance in the international community to court friends and investors for the economic development of the country. This he achieved through his flurry of international shuttles around the globe. Thus, in the observation of (Akindele, 2003), between May 1999, and mid-August 2002, Obasanjo embarked on 113 foreign trips, spending a total of 340 days outside the country. Obasanjo's tours took him to places of economic importance for Nigeria.

On a whole, Obasanjo's visits yielded remarkable results. Apart from the swift readmission of Nigeria into the Commonwealth in barely one month of the government, Obasanjo's diplomatic shuttles directly or indirectly yielded some economic dividends for Nigeria which include the increase in Development Finance Inflow (DFI), FDI from \$1,177.7 million in 1999 to \$12,453.7 million in 2007, Portfolio Investments, the canceling of \$18 billion of the country's over \$30 billion external debt owed the Paris Clubs (Sanubi and Oke 2017).

Similarly, for Umaru Musa Yar'adua (Obasanjo's successor), foreign travels are a tool for not only rebuilding Nigeria's international image but also, most importantly fine-tuning the international economic environment for the attraction of foreign investment/capital. Yar'adua's administration advanced a citizen-centric foreign policy, a seeming paradigm shift from Afro-centrism with the introduction of citizen diplomacy. The thrust of the policy was to seek the involvement of Nigerians at home and in the diaspora in its effort to develop the country economically and politically.

On the 5th of May 2010, President Musa Yar'adua who has been battling heart disease, and pericarditis died in Saudi Arabia. This paved way for his Vice, Goodluck Jonathan who was sworn in as the President on 6th May 2010 and later won the 2011 Presidential election which kept him in office till 2015. Jonathan's foreign policy was a continuation of Yar'adua's economic and citizen diplomacy.

Like the two preceding governments, Jonathan's administration's pursuit of economic diplomacy resulted in shuttle diplomacy from one country to another. His first foreign visit was to the United States President, Barack Obama, where he appealed for US assistance in the

implementation of his administration's *Road Map for Power Sector Reform* a reform of the inept power sector in Nigeria, also for the removal of Nigeria the United States Terrorist Watch List (Adeola and Ogunnoiki 2015:439).

The visit yielded dividends when President Obama pledged that Nigeria would benefit from the financial package worth \$7 billion he promised Africa to boost the power sector and power generation capacity of their respective countries. In another development, President Jonathan paid a trade visit with a member of his key cabinet ministers to China where they were warmly received by China's President Xi Jinping. He was able to secure a \$1.1 billion low-interest loan for the improvement of Nigeria's hydropower, road transportation, and the light-rail system as well as airport terminal infrastructures (Adeola and Ogunnoiki 2015:441).

Muhammadu Buhari's Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Shuttles

On the assumption of office on May 29, 2015, the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari found itself in a hostile environment characterized by deteriorated security caused by Boko Haram Insurgency and other sects; monumental corruption at all levels of governance; and dwindling oil prices, among other challenges. The totality of these had a concomitant effect on the country's state economy and thereby required urgent and pragmatic engagement. In what appears to be a response, President Muhammadu Buhari has resorted to frequent foreign trips in his external relations. The objectives of these trips were to garner support for the fight against insurgency, enhanced the recovery of funds and reparation of funds stolen and stashed abroad, attract foreign investors and fresh financial flows; attract infrastructural development and promote Nigeria's export trade.

Shortly after the inauguration, President Muhammadu Buhari's first port of call was the neighboring African countries of Niger (June 3, 2015), Chad (June 4, 2015), Cameroon (July 29 – 30, 2015), and Benin Republic (August 2– 3, 2015), where he sought for regional offensive and cooperation against the Boko Haram Insurgency, which was the major challenge that devastated Nigeria's economy and image as at the time he took over the leadership of the country. The success of these visits resulted in a strategic alliance that strengthened and revitalized the Multi-National Joint Task Force and its attendance relocation from Nigeria to Ndjamen, Chad Republic. (Iorkegh, 2018)

Apart from neighboring countries, Buhari's globe-trotting also took him to places of prime economic importance for Nigeria. Prominent among these are the United States of America, which continue to be the largest single buyer of Nigeria's most important commodity, oil, Britain, a historically important trading partner and one of Nigeria's largest creditor-States, and other members of the European Union, among which were Germany, France, and Russia. He also visited key economic players in the Asian continent namely India, China, and Japan.

Table 1: List of Presidential Foreign Trips made by President Buhari (2015-2020)

COUNTRY	AREAS VISITED	DATE	PURPOSE
Niger	Niamey	June 3, 2015	Anti-Boko-Haram Summit
Chad	N'Djamena	June 4, 2015	State Visits
Germany	Munich	June 7 – 8 2015	42nd G7 summit
South Africa	Johannesburg	June 12 – 13 2015	African Union Summit
Cameroon	Yaoundé	July 29 – 30 2015	State Visit
Benin Republic	Cotonou	August 2 – 3 2015	Independence Celebrations
United States	Washington, D.C.,	July 20, 2015; September 20, 2016; April 30, 2018	State Visits
Ghana	Accra	7 September . , 2015	State Visit
France	Paris	September 14 – 16 2015	State Visit
United States	New York City	September 24 – 29 2015	70th session of the United Nations General Assembly
India	New Delhi	October 26 – 30 2015	Third India Africa Forum Summit
Sudan	Khartoum	October 30, 2015	State Visit
Iran	Tehran	November 22-24 2015	Gas Exporting Countries Forum
United Arab Emirates (UAE):	Abu Dhabi	January 17 – 20, 2016	World Future Energy Summit
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	January 26, 2016	26 th Summit of Africa Union Heads of States and Government
Kenya	Eldoret, Nairobi	January 27 – 29 2016	State Visit
France	Strasbourg	February 2 – 4 2016	Official Visit
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina	February 22 – 27 2016	State Visit
Qatar	Doha	27 – 28 February., 2016	OPEC Meeting
Equatorial Guinea	Malabo	March 14, 2016	State Visit
China	Beijing	April 11 – 14, 2016, September 2018	State Visit
United Kingdom		May 12, 2016	Anti-corruption Summit
Kenya	Nairobi	August 27- 28 2016	Tokyo Conference
Germany	Berlin	October 13-16 2016	State Visit
Morocco	Marrakesh	November 14-18 2016	United Nations Climate Change Conference
The Gambia	Banjul	December 13, 2016	ECOWAS Summit
The Gambia	Banjul	January 13, 2017	ECOWAS Mediation Meeting
Mali	Bamako	January 13-14, 2017	27 th African France Summit
United Kingdom	London	April 16-20 2018	Official Visit
United States	Washington D. C.	April 30, 2018	Visit Official
Morocco	Marrakesh	June 11 – 13, 2018	US Climate Conference
Poland	Krakow	December 2-3 2018	Working Visit
United States	New York City	September 2019	Working Visit
South Africa	Pretoria	October 2 -3, 2019	State Visit
Russia	Sochi	October 21 – 23, 2019	Working Visit
UK	London	January 2020	Working Visit
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	February 2020	Working Visit

Source: Culled from Nigeria Project Initiative (2019)“Outcomes and Gains of President Buhari’s Foreign Travels 2015 – 2019”, and Udeogu Celestine & Albert Okorie (2020) “Presidential Abuse of Foreign Trips and Crisis of Governance in Nigeria: A Reflection on Muhammadu Buhari’s Regime, 2015-2019 Pp 10-20.

The table above contains the list of official presidential foreign trips of President Muhammadu Buhari between 2015 and 2020. This is excluding medical and vacation trips embarked on by the President. It captures the emphasis given to diplomacy shuttling in the search for foreign investors by the Nigerian government.

Many of Buhari's foreign shuttles were reciprocated. French President, Emmanuel Macron paid a reciprocal visit on July 3-4, 2018. His visit witnessed the launch of a Franco-Nigerian Economic Forum (the Inaugural Meeting held in Lagos on July 4, 2018, bringing together 300 Nigerian and French companies) and also a Franco-Nigerian Business Club – the first of its kind in Africa. Also, the British Prime Minister, Theresa May visited Nigeria on August 29, 2018, during which Nigeria and the UK signed a Security and Defence Partnership, the first between the two countries (NPI, 2019). Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel also paid a reciprocal visit to Nigeria on August 30, 2018. During her visits, the Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) was established, a collaboration between the Governments of Nigeria and Germany, and Siemens AG of Germany, to upgrade Nigeria's power transmission and distribution infrastructure.

III. BENEFITS OF BUHARI'S DIPLOMATIC SHUTTLES ON NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The resolve of President Muhammadu Buhari to resort to frequent international trips as a strategy in seeking to convert foreign policy activities into concrete economic achievements has been a subject of criticism among Nigerians in the intellectual circles and other critical stakeholders, citing among others the economic implications of such trips and the lukewarm, attitude towards pressing domestic insecurity issues such as Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeastern part of the country, banditry in the Northwest, herdsmen's activities nationwide, rampant kidnapping across the country and constant communal strife. However, amidst the cacophony of criticisms lie some benefits of the President's diplomatic shuttles on Nigeria's economic needs. Therefore, this section examines the impacts/benefits of these trips. In examining these benefits, the following issues areas as they related to economic growth and development are examined. The infrastructural development, foreign direct investment, trade, and bilateral relations.

(a) *Infrastructural Development*

Over the years, Nigeria has been confronted with infrastructural deficits. From epileptic power supply to poor road networks, poor railway networks, degrading aviation sectors, and shortage of housing problems. Nigeria's infrastructural development has been nothing to write about. However, since the commencement of the Buhari administration, the narrative has witnessed slight improvement, especially in the area of power, housing and rail transportation. Such improvement is not unconnected to the pay-offs of the frequent international trips of President Muhammadu Buhari.

More than any of the visited countries, China has been a major benefactor of Nigeria's infrastructure development under Muhammadu Buhari's administration. No doubt, the Sino-Nigeria relation has been cordial over the years, the relationship seems to have been taken to high heaven under Buhari's administration with the numerous infrastructural project signed between both countries with the April 2016 President Buhari's visit to Beijing. Through the visit, Nigeria secured China's commitment to fund many high-profile infrastructure projects, including; the construction of 300 megawatts of solar power in Shiro, Niger State, Lagos-Kano Rail modernization, Lagos-Ibadan Rail Project, Mambilla Hydro-electric projects, among others (Bello et al, 2017:50; NPI, 2019). While many of these projects are yet to be completed due to relax in the supply of funds, considerable progress has been made especially on major ones such as the Lagos-Ibadan Rail Project and Abuja Kano Rail Line (Love, 2021)

Table 2: 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	\$15billion	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: Bello et al (2017) "Comparative Analysis of Nigeria Foreign Policy under Muhammadu Buhari Administration 1983-1985 and 2015-201" Pp 50

In a similar development, the visit of President Buhari to Russia between October 21 and 23, 2019, led to the signing of the agreements between Russia and Nigeria to enhance infrastructural development and industrial activities in Nigeria. One such agreement is the Joint government-to-government Agreement for the Russians to return to Ajaokuta Steel Complex, to complete and operationalise it. The construction of the Steel Company was first awarded to the British and later undertaken by the Soviet Union (Russia)

under a cooperation agreement with Nigeria. Suffice it to say here that since its establishment in 1979, the Steel Company has remained incomplete and is yet to produce single steel. The new agreement between Russia and Nigeria if wholly implemented will resuscitate the Company from its unproductiveness and serves as a veritable source of foreign exchange earnings. Also, part of the agreement is MEDPROM, one of Russia’s leading rail companies, which indicated an interest in building the 1,400-kilometer Coastal Rail Line that will run from Lagos to Calabar (NPI, 2018).

(b) Foreign Direct Investment

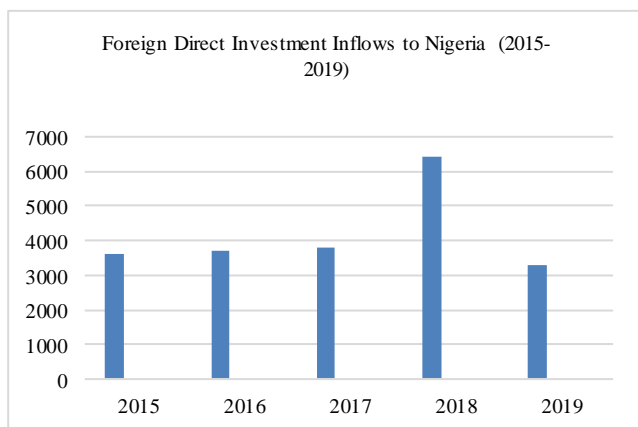
Foreign direct investment is another area in which Buhari’s foreign trips have been beneficial to Nigeria’s economy. On the assumption of office, President Muhammadu Buhari met a Nigerian state that was unsafe for foreign investment owing largely to the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents, banditry, and other sects. The administration in line with its campaign promise to revamp the economy, therefore considered it needful to encourage old foreign investors that had left due to insecurity; attract new investors and fresh financial flows, and promote Nigeria’s export trade. To achieve this, the President has made several bilateral and multilateral visits to major economies of the world (United States, China, Britain, Japan, France, Germany, Russia, and South Korea) and other friendly countries such as South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Many of these visits have attracted several FDI and other foreign revenue sources into the country, thereby increasing the FDI inflow.

Table 3: Foreign Direct Investment Inflows to Nigeria (2015-2019)

Year	FDI INFLOW(In millions \$)
2015	3592.00
2016	3681.12
2017	3813.10
2018	6401.04
2019	3299.00

Source: UNCTAD, World Investment Report, 2020

Figure 1: Foreign Direct Investment Inflows to Nigeria (2015-2019)



The details of FDI inflow into Nigeria for the period 2010 to 2019 are shown in Table 3 above. The figure in the table as generated from UNCTAD (2020) Report is the foreign direct investment inflows in the oil and gas sectors in Nigeria. It shows the progressive increase in FDI in the country since 2015 with the exemption of 2019. While the little increase in FDI inflows is unconnected to the efforts of the government through its numerous foreign trips, there is gross underperformance in the areas of non-oil, particularly in the areas of the industrial and manufacturing sector of the economy.

(c) Creating and Building Trade and Bilateral Relations

Beyond creating and building investment relations, Nigeria’s external relation under President Muhammadu Buhari has also witnessed creation of trade and bilateral relations and the improvement of the existing ones. In this regard, Nigeria-US trade and economic relations have been taken to a high level. For example, in 2016, the US exported goods worth USD1.9 billion to Nigeria and imported goods worth USD4 billion, leaving the US with a trade deficit of USD2.3 billion with Nigeria (Onyeiwu 2018). By the same token, the visit of the President to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Saudi Arabia raised the falling oil process, launching Nigeria as a significant negotiator among OPEC member countries.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having gone thus far, this paper reveals the economic benefits accruable from the numerous presidential trips to various parts of the globe. These include infrastructures and implementations of various capital projects, foreign direct investment flow as well as the building of trade and economic relations. Despite the considerable achievements of these efforts, there is still much to be done in Nigeria’s external relations to salvage, revive, and build its economy for sustainable development. In particular, there is the need for Nigeria to seek and negotiate for foreign capital (more particularly FDI) flow in the non-oil, particularly the industrial and manufacturing sector and subsector of the economy. This critical sector if explored is most likely to expand the country’s foreign exchange earnings through the manufacture of unique products and goods in which Nigeria has a comparative advantage in the international market. It will equally reduce the country’s overdependence on oil. There is also the need for a redirection of Nigeria’s external relations and negotiations toward addressing the critical issue of infrastructure as an internal dynamic that can substantially strengthen the country’s foreign policy architecture and emplace the country in a vantage position for more robust international engagements.

REFERENCES

[1] Adeola Gabriel & Ogunnoike Adeleke (2015) The Pursuance of Nigeria’s Domestic and Foreign Policy in the Fourth Republic: Complementarities or Contradiction” Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Vol. 1, No. 4, 2015, pp. 434-444

[2] Ajayi Kunle (2004) “Laying the Foundation: Nigeria’s Foreign Policy under Balewa” in Dipo Kolawole (Eds) Nigeria’s Foreign

- Policy since Independence: Trends, Phases and Changes Julius and Julius Associate Publisher.
- [3] Ajayi Kunle (2004) "Domestic Unpredictability and Foreign Policy Stability: Nigeria under Babangida" in Dipo Kolawole (Eds) Nigeria's Foreign Policy since Independence: Trends, Phases and Changes Julius and Julius Associate Publisher.
- [4] Akinboye, S.O. (1999) "Nigeria's Foreign Policy" In Anofowse and Enemu (ed.), Elements of Politics. Lagos: Sam Iroansi Publications, 377
- [5] Akindele, R. A., (2003) Foreign Policy in Federal Politics: A Case Study of Nigeria. Lagos: World Press.
- [6] Bello I, Othman M, & Dutse A (2018) "Comparative Analysis of Nigeria Foreign Policy Under Muhammadu Buhari Administration 1983-1985 and 2015-2017" Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences, Vol. 4 No. 4, October 2017. Pp 43-52.
- [7] Duke O, Agbaji D, Charles R, Glory A & Alagba E (2018) "Nigerian Foreign Policy Posture And Global Image: An Assessment Of Nigeria's Foreign Policy In The Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari's Administrations (2011 –2017) Journal Of Humanities And Social Science. Volume 23, Issue 9, Pp 58-73
- [8] Homas, G. (1961) Social Behaviour: Its Elementary Forms. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- [9] Iorkegh Mnenna (2018) "Gains of President Buhari's Diplomatic Shuttles" www.von.gov.ng Accessed on June 19, 2020
- [10] Maina William Apikin (2003) "A Critical Appraisal of Nigeria's Foreign Policy under the Military Regimes:1966-1998" An Unpublished Master's Dissertation
- [11] Nigerian Project Initiative (2019) "Outcomes and Gains of President Buhari's Foreign Travels 2015 – 2019
- [12] Love Alexander (2021) Rail Projects Set for Completion in 2021" Retrieved from <https://www.railway-technology.com/features/rail-projects-set-for-completion-in-2021/> Accessed on September 5, 2021.
- [13] Olaleye A. O (2004) "From Pariah to Acceptability: Nigeria Foreign Policy under Abubakar" in Dipo Kolawole (Eds) Nigeria's Foreign Policy since Independence: Trends, Phases and Changes Julius and Julius Associate Publisher
- [14] Okajare Solomon Tai (2003) "A History of Nigeria's Foreign Relations, 1960-2000" in S. O Arifalo and Gboyega Ajayi (Eds) "Essays in Contemporary Nigerian History" First Academic Publishers.
- [15] Oke Leke (2004) "Domestic Authoritarianism and Foreign Policy Pursuit: The Buhari Years" in Dipo Kolawole (Eds) Nigeria's Foreign Policy since Independence: Trends, Phases and Changes Julius and Julius Associate Publisher.
- [16] Oluwole, J. 2016. INTERVIEW: Buhari's govt. will go down if he confronts me—Fayose.Premiumtimes.RetrievedMay12,2016,fromhttp://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/197252-interviewbuharis-govt-will-go-down-if-he-confronts-me-fayose.html.
- [17] Omar Ali (2013) "Is There Anything New in Neoclassical Realism"? <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/02/13/is-there-anything-new-in-neoclassical-realism>
- [18] Omotosho Femi (2004) "Years of Isolation: Nigeria Foreign Policy under Abacha" in Dipo Kolawole (Eds) Nigeria's Foreign Policy since Independence: Trends, Phases and Changes Julius and Julius Associate Publisher.
- [19] Oni Ebenezer & Taiwo Abayomi (2016) "Re-Thinking Nigeria's Foreign Policy Beyond "Big Brotherism" Towards Economic Diplomacy" Canadian Social ScienceVol. 12, No. 10, 2016, pp. 62-71
- [20] Onyeiwu Stephen (2018) "What Buhari and Trump stand to gain from State Visits".
- [21] Orobator S.E (1983) "The Nigerian Civil War and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia" African Affairs, Oxford University Press Pp 201-214
- [22] Owa Egbara & Owa Wisdom (2017) "The Conduct of Nigerian Foreign Policy since Independence-1999" International Journal of Political Science Volume 3, 2017, PP 1-9
- [23] Sanusi Franklins & Oke Chris (2017) "Diplomatic Shuttles in Foreign Policy: Were Obasanjo Trips during his Tenure of any benefits to Nigeria" Journal of Social and Management Sciences Volume 12, No. 1
- [24] Udeogu Celestine & Albert Okorie (2020) "Presidential Abuse of Foreign Trips and Crisis of Governance in Nigeria: A Reflection on Muhammadu Buhari's Regime, 2015-2019" International Journal of Political Science Volume 6, Issue 3 Pp 10-20.
- [25] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2020) World Investment Report, New York and Geneva. www.unctad.org/wir or www.unctad.org/fdistatistics www.von.gov.ng "Two Years of President Muhammadu Buhari's Diplomatic Shuttles" Accessed on December 2, 2020