

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT YAR'ADUA AND PRESIDENT
JONATHAN'S FOREIGN POLICIES, 2007-2015**

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RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Background to the Study

The recent outbreaks of civil wars and conflicts in Niger (2007), Guinea Bissau (2008-2009), Côte d'Ivoire (2011), Sudan (2009-2014), etc., have received little or no pro-active peace support operations from Nigeria. This is in sharp contrast to the past active engagement of Nigeria in the sub-region. The aggressive articulation of African-centeredness in Nigeria's foreign policy under General Murtala Mohammed (1975-1976) made the colonial and apartheid regimes in South Africa to reduce or stop their activities. At a point, Murtala challenged the United States of America and South Africa when they planned to install a puppet regime in Angola.¹ General Obasanjo equally employed cultural diplomacy to assert the supremacy of Nigeria in the region by hosting high level international conferences like the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC 77'), the World Conference for Action against Apartheid and ECOWAS Heads of State Summit, etc. The government also applied militancy in its foreign policy by 'nationalizing' British assets in Nigeria such as the British Petroleum in retaliation to Britain's decision to sell crude oil to South Africa. This action, coupled with leading other African countries to boycott the 1978 Montreal Olympics forced the British government under Thatcher to reverse its proposed recognition of and

¹ Nigerian Army. *Geo-Politics: Lecture Notes For Senior Staff On 'Nigeria In International Affairs'*. Abuja, 2011, p.6

support for the minority racist government in Zimbabwe.²

The country's foreign policy has taken a new turn, leaning more toward the citizens. President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration (2007-2010) who took over from President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) concentrated more on the internal restructuring of Nigeria than on external relations. He worked on fighting corruption and literally settled the problem of the Niger Delta by offering Amnesty to the militants. However, critics have labeled his foreign policy posture as 'inactive, dormant and unfocused'.³ It was typified by last minute cancellations of international appointments and a lull in filling ambassadorial positions, including that of Washington. While the country paid its dues to Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), it did little to pursue an assertive diplomacy in the region. In the end, Nigeria entered the world scene as a terrorist country as a result of the attempted bombing of a US-bound airplane by Nigeria-born Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab.⁴

In 2009, the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua apologetically lamented the non-representation of Nigeria at the G-20 Pittsburgh Summit of heads of states. According to him, it is a sad thing "when 20 leaders in the leading countries in the world are meeting and Nigeria is not there. This is something we need to reflect upon. We have the population, we have the potentials, we have the ability and the

² Obioma P. O. "The Foreign Policy Process of Nigeria". (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis), University of Edinburgh., 1986, p.6

³ Niyi A., The Domestication of Nigeria's Foreign Policy. *The Punch Newspaper*, Tuesday, October 4, 2011.

⁴ Lauren P., *Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*. Congressional Research Service, p.11

capacity and we have the will. What do we lack?"⁵ By implication, the foreign policy stance of Yar'Adua rested on population, resources and other traditional elements of power. However, the administration did not claim a regional power status based on these power indices.⁶ Rather, he advocated citizen diplomacy where the implementation of the 7-Point Agenda took the centre-stage instead of the historical African centered foreign policy.

The "Transformation Agenda" of the former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan is anchored on the promotion and protection of the welfare of Nigerians citizens at home and abroad. However, the dilemma of modern day diplomacy has been one of the challenges of the present administration: either to continue with the traditional African-centeredness policy or evolve a 21st century policy that will make Nigeria survive in a competitive global world.

Insecurity, poverty and corruption have been the greatest challenge to administrations of Yar'Adua and Jonathan. In the words of Chief Emeka Anyaoku, a former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs, "The insecurity in the land is a drag on our foreign policy no doubt, because our standing up abroad depends to a large extent on our domestic conditions. So, to the extent that we have insecurity

⁵ *ThisDay* Newspaper, April 6, 2009, p.80

⁶ Reuben, A. "A Sad Yar'adua and the G-20 Summit". April 5, 2009. Accessed from www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/columnists/a-sad-yaradua-and-the-g-20-summit.html 30/12/2013.

at home, it is a draw back to our foreign policy.”⁷ Based on this, the Jonathan’s administration directed the Presidential Advisory Council on International Relations (PACIR) to coordinate the reviewing of Nigeria’s current foreign policy to be investment oriented. Coupled with his interactive pulse with Nigerians abroad during his foreign visits, the President asked the nation’s foreign policy experts, seasoned diplomats, professionals and the intelligentsia to ‘chart a new way for the future without discarding the past’.⁸

Given this background, this study sets out to comparatively examine Nigeria’s engagement with the rest of the world under these two leaders: former President Umar Yar’Adua (2007-2010) and President Goodluck Jonathan.

Research Questions

1. What relationship exists between the foreign policy posture of President Umar Musa Yar’Adua and President Ebele Goodluck Jonathan?
2. Did the 7-Point Agenda of Yar’Adua and the Transformation Agenda of Jonathan have any significant impact on Nigeria’s economic status as a regional power in Africa between 2007 and 2015?

⁷ R.O. Ajetunmob and T.F. Omotere, “African-Centeredness Of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Moving From Anthropological Diplomacy To Citizen Diplomacy”. A Paper presented at the biennial conference of the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Abuja, 2012

⁸ Adelusi, O.P. and Oluwashakin, A., “Foreign Policy And Nigerians In Diaspora: An Analysis Of President Goodluck Jonathan’s Foreign Policy Review (2011)” <http://olufemiadelusi.blogspot.com/2013/10/foreign-policy-and-nigerians-in.html>

3. How did insecurity in the Niger Delta affect the status of Nigeria in the comity of nations under Yar'Adua?
4. What implications has Boko Haram insurgency have on Nigeria's position in the comity of nations under Jonathan?
5. Is there a nexus between Yar'Adua and Jonathan's foreign policy toward Citizen Diplomacy?
6. Are there differences in their patterns of engagements with peace-support operations in Africa?

This study adopts a historical research method will be used in carrying out this study. However, a critical examination of the dramatic relations between Nigeria's foreign policy and development will be analyzed using findings from both primary and secondary sources.



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