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Nigeria Foreign Policy and Sustainable Economic Development In Nigeria: An Evaluation of President Buhari's Administration, 2015-2021

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Abstract

This study examines the Nigeria foreign policy and sustainable economic development in Nigeria under president Buhari's regime. Essentially, the study examines whether Buhari's foreign policy undermined Nigeria's national interest; and to determine if Buhari's economic diplomacy engendered sustainable economic development in Nigeria. By adopting the Concentric Circle theory, documentary method of data collection and ex post facto research design, the study found that Nigeria's foreign policy has been largely Afrocentric in nature, although with different implementation strategies from Nigeria's leaders. Also, by employing a qualitative analysis, the study discovered that Buhari's approach of economic diplomacy through its mercantilist policy is somewhat a slight departure from the norm, and also contradictory, when compared with his unresponsive posturing towards immigrants from Niger, Chad and Mali who have undermined the nation's security and by extension its national interest. After the analysis, the study also found out among other things that the issue of Buhari's economic diplomacy toward Nigeria's sustainable economic development has not been largely unsuccessful, as citizens have suffered hardship arising from high cost of living. Furthermore, based on the above finding the study recommends that Buhari's remaining 8 months in office should be used to take decisive actions towards protection of the Nigeria's national interest by dealing decisively with external elements who are undermining internal security and to replace incompetent individuals manning the economy of the nation.

Keywords: Buhari, Foreign policy, National Interest, Economic Diplomacy

Introduction

Foreign policy according to Levy (2013) is an essential tool with which states relate to states and non-states actors in the international system. The foreign policy is set of tools which are used to pursue and achieve country's national interests. Foreign policy constitutes a critical component of a country's conduct of public policy as it relates to other actors (both state and non-state) in the larger international system or the external environment. As a result of the importance of foreign policy in a country's agenda, consideration must therefore, be given to all the important actors on the international scene that affect the policy-making and implementation processes of the country concerned. The policy decisions include relations with other nations, international and non-governmental organizations, institutions and agencies, as well as key individuals, in so far as they impact on the system of inputs and outputs.

The principles which have imbued Nigeria's foreign policy since independence include: protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nigerian State; promotion of the socio-economic well-being of Nigeria; enhancing Nigeria's image and status in the world at large; respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states; non-interference in the internal affairs of other states; promotion of the unity and solidarity of the African States; total

political, economic, social, and cultural emancipation and rejuvenation of Africa (Ashiru, 2013)..

Foreign policy is the category of actions a government takes which deals with defense, security, and international: political relations and international economic relations. It is the activity whereby a State deals with other States, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and certain individuals. Thus, foreign policy as a range of actions, as well as a set of principles influencing these actions, taken with reference to external situations and factors... the summation of thoughts, actions and principles on external affairs taken by decision-makers with the intention of achieving long-range goals and short-term objectives (Eze, 2010).

The economic conditions of Nigeria have advanced over the last few years as a result of the rapid phase of industrialization. The economy of Nigeria also improved tremendously with foreign investment aided by research and development. Nigeria was under the British colonial rule for a considerable period of time. During this phase, major raw materials and minerals were exported to foreign countries along with food grains which in due course of time spearheaded the rise of slavery and exploitation of labor class by the Europeans. After the achievement of independence in Nigeria, efforts were made to revive the economic growth of the country through a set of economic reforms. It's important to note that before the discovery of oil in Nigeria, the country survived mainly on agriculture (Osuntokun, 2012).

President Buhari assumed shuttle diplomacy between different countries immediately after assuming office in 2015 he was referred to 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 being 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 characterized by dwindling oil prices, terrorism and counter-terrorism, nuclear deals and neoliberalism among others. The president having realized the domestic economic challenges stated categorically during his address to the European parliament on 3rd February 2016:

Our attempt to restore security, curb corruption and fight crime will result not only in improving social stability in Nigeria but will re-open the doors for full economic relations with Europe and the outside world. Those who wish to invest in our country have vast opportunity and we intend to guarantee the security of people and investments brought to Nigeria (Buhari, 2016).

Nigeria's diplomacy still cannot be operated in a vacuum; but within the economic, political, and institutional environment both inside and outside government. It is irrefutable that President Buhari came at a time Nigeria is faced with a myriad of problems which needed urgent attention. These challenges if left unattended, will lead to the declaration of Nigeria a failed state. Against this background, this study seeks to interrogate Nigeria foreign policy and sustainable economic development: evaluation president Buhari administration (2015 – 2021).

Statement of Problems:

Globally, it has been identified that countries design and execute foreign policies in order to guide their external relations as well as promote, protect and defend their fundamental national interests. These include: defense of territorial integrity, promotion of economic, military, diplomatic and strategic interests and all that a country considers as fundamental to its national interest. Therefore, it is expected that Nigeria's foreign policy ought to be fundamentally

guided by its national interest, which ordinarily should serve to either validate or deny the nation's action or inaction in the international system.

As Nigeria became a sovereign state in 1960, the country has engaged in ambitious foreign policy that has seen her part away with large numbers of human resources and huge amount of economic resources, with little or nothing to show for this expensive diplomatic generosity. This has become worrisome to scholars and stakeholders within the country. The study on Nigeria foreign policy and sustainable economic development with special interest in the President Muhammadu Buhari's administration. The study in line with statement of problem seeks to interrogate these research questions;

1. How has Buhari's foreign policy undermined Nigeria's national interest?
2. Has Buhari's economic diplomacy engendered sustainable economic development in Nigeria?

Objective of the Study:

The general objective of the study is to examine Nigeria foreign policy and sustainable economic development: evaluation President Buhari administration, while the specific objective are as follows:

1. To find out whether Buhari's foreign policy undermined Nigeria's national interest;
2. To evaluate how Buhari's economic diplomacy engendered sustainable economic development in Nigeria;

Significance of the Study:

The essence of this research is to see how Nigeria Foreign policy is geared towards Nigeria economic development. As such, the research adds to knowledge and at the same time is useful to the government and to policy makers.

Furthermore the study has both theoretical and practical significance. From a theoretical standpoint, it advances the frontiers of knowledge, especially the dimension of foreign policy relationship with economic development in Nigeria. It has also filled the gap in knowledge on the topic and posited theoretical facet to it.

The practical contribution, in such vein, Policy Makers, Decision Makers, Public officeholders, bureaucrats, the academia, the general public alike, benefits from the study. In all, the study is an input to the understanding of the problems of Foreign policy and Economic Development and how it can be addressed.

Literature Review

Nigeria Foreign Policy

The Nigeria's foreign policy", provided the policy direction when he stated that, it is the responsibility of our foreign policy apparatus to advance the course of our national economic recovery. From Babangida's administration till date, economic diplomacy has guided Nigeria's foreign relations with other states in the international system, including African countries. This is manifest in the area of trade, economic cooperation and technical assistance. This is why Ambassador Ashiru stated categorically that Nigeria's new foreign policy direction is now on investment and economic cooperation. According to him: The emphasis now is on investment and economic cooperation.

The new posture of government is that while we retain the leadership role in our sub-region, and while we play our leadership role on the continent by taking the lead in all major issues on

the continent, the foreign policy direction will also be used to propel the economic and industrial development of our country (Ashiru cited in Osuntokun, 2012:36). Ambassador Adeniji is also an apostle of this new foreign policy thrust, and he could not have been more correct by noting that: Nigeria's foreign policy direction has to lead to where there are development funds and technical assistance, particularly in the light of the weakness in intra-African cooperation, crises and conflicts in Africa, as well as Africa's mobility to bail Nigeria out of her economic doldrums.

Nigeria's fundamental principles of foreign policy have been fairly consistent since they were first espoused shortly after independence in October 1960 (Ashiru, 2013). Nigeria's national interest, according to Olukoshi (1992) and Eze (2010) since independence in 1960 till date, has been very difficult to identify or define. This is because of the numerous diplomatic variations and beliefs adopted by Nigerians over the years. Research has shown that some foreign policy analysts believe that Nigeria has no clear-cut national interest.

Gap in Literature

In discovering the gap in literature on foreign policy and sustainable economic development: evaluation of presidents Buhari's administration, scholars like Morgenthau, emphasize that there is no foreign policy without accepting national interest as a guide. And Al-Hassan (2008) and Onyisi (2011), also argued that the economic diplomacy in Nigeria's foreign policy was a mere hype. In linking Nigeria's foreign policy and sustainable economic development, evaluating president Buhari's administration, national interest has been adopted as an indicator or device for analyzing the fundamental objectives of her foreign policy.

The idea of economic diplomacy equally been adopted to analysis the presidents Buhari's economic approach. However, the effort and the contribution of the writers in extent of the literature revealed has not been properly articulated. It is based on the foregoing that this study find a gap in literature to evaluate and assess the Nigeria foreign policy and sustainable economic development in Nigeria, evaluating president Muhammadu Buhari from 2015 to 2020

Theoretical Framework

Concentric Circles Theory

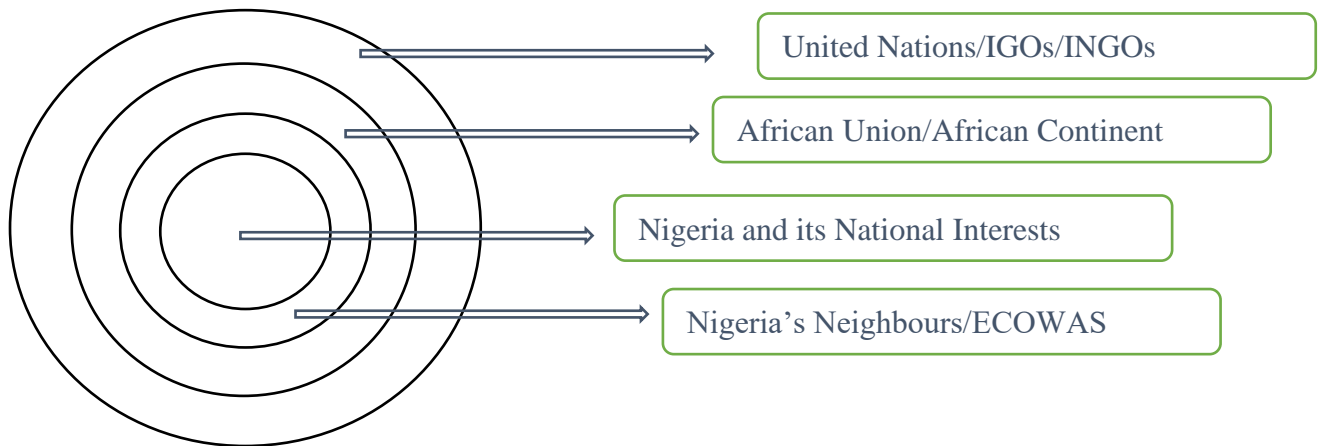
This study is anchored on the synthesis of concentric circles theory. The use of concentric circles theory in international relations, foreign policy and Nigeria's foreign policy making and analysis is credited to Ibrahim I. Gambari(1945) while he was the Nigeria minister of foreign affair. Since 1960 Nigeria's foreign policy is Afrocentric as Yakubu (2014) put it 'Africa as the centre piece of Nigeria foreign policy'. Concentric circles theory takes national interest of Nigeria as a starting point of analysis. According to Hassan (2011) as cited by Nigeria's interest in global affairs should be located in the physical Nigeria.

Ashaver (2014) assert that there three circles in Nigeria foreign policy approach, clearly puts Nigeria's interest first, the West Africa sub-region second and the rest of Africa. He further argued that the foreign policy objectives shall be the promotion and protection of national interest, promotion of African integration and support for African unity: Promotion of international peace and mutual respect in all manifestations, respect for international law and treaty. Thus, with respect to Nigeria and their content there are:

- Innermost of the circle of national interest involves Nigeria's security, territorial integrity and political independence and the neighbour of Nigeria.
- The second circle involves our relations with the ECOWAS sub-region where we intend to take more active interest in development of social, economic and political nature.

- And the third circle of national interest involves supporting self-determination and dealing with large Africa issues.

Yakubu YA (2014) further emphasis, Nigeria relations with fellow Africa countries are thus defined largely in terms of Nigeria's national interest first and financial resources to deliver as second. And that Nigeria is not a global power, therefore, its commitments, preoccupations and expenditure of its resources must be made to reflect its capabilities and interest. According to Ometere (2011) as cited by Olufemi A (2014) analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy shows that her leaders operate within four 'concentric circles' national interest.



Source: Researcher's design based on available data.

The circles which includes:

- The innermost circle represents Nigeria's own security, independence and prosperity and is centred on its immediate neighbours - Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger;
- The second circle involves around Nigeria's relations with its west Africa neighbours;
- The third circle focuses on continent, Africa issues of peace, development and democratisation;
- And the fourth circle involves Nigeria's relations with organisations, institutions and states outside Africa.

Concentric foreign policy idea in Nigeria is the brain child of Dr. Ibrahim Gambari. He succinctly analyzed the dialectical content of the dynamics and tensions that have become the hallmark of Nigeria's foreign policy making in an era that has become increasingly characterized by diminished external revenues from oil production. He argues that declining oil revenues have imposed new economic constraints that have severely undermined Nigeria's ambitious, dynamic and assertive foreign policy objectives especially in relation with the United States and West Europe.

This concentric circle clearly puts Nigeria's interest first, the West African Sub-region second and then the rest of Africa. The foreign policy objectives shall be the promotion and protection of national interest, promotion of Africa integration, and support for African unity; promotion of international peace and mutual respect in all manifestations, respect for international law and treaty.

The overriding national interest was in fact, the impetus that made General Sani Abacha to turn the diplomatic beam light to the East. Professor Bolaji Akinyemi's theory of reciprocity contains elements of concentricism - emphasis mine.

In Nigeria's Foreign Policy, Putting in place a viable policy framework is imperative. In other words, without a well-fashioned and articulated foreign policy framework, a nation would only be heading to a cul-de-sac in international diplomacy.

Hypotheses

1. Buhari's foreign policy has undermined Nigeria's national interest.
2. Buhari's economic diplomacy has not engendered sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

Research design

The research design as a structuring of inquiry aimed at identifying variables and their relationship to one another, which is used for the purpose of obtaining data to enable the researcher test hypothesis or answer research questions. The study adopted Ex post facto research design as a research structure in which the independent variable or variables have already occurred and in which the research starts with observation of a dependent variable and then study the independent variable in retrospect for the possible relations to and effects on the dependent variable. The research design adopted in this study is the ex post facto research design. Content analysis method was adopted as a tool for analysis the work because it is a set of techniques used for analysis and understanding collection of text and information generated in the research work. It also shows clearly relationship between the two variables (independent and dependent variable).

Method of data collection

The study employed the used the documentary method in getting data concerning the research work. The secondary sources of data refers to a set of data gathered and authored by others, usually data from available archives, either from documents or survey result codebooks. Furthermore, documentary method of data collection was used in this study because it is used to obtain in-depth information and concept clarification as to facilitate research inquiry. Documentary method is more useful when used to interpret, illuminate and extract valued information so as to draw inferences from the available evidence to reach conclusion.

Method of data analysis

Data analysis is defined as a process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information for business decision-making. The purpose of Data Analysis is to extract useful information from data and taking the decision based upon the data analysis. Qualitative descriptive method of data analysis was adopted for this research work. Data and information on this research work were gotten from already existing secondary data such as, books, journals, official reports, newspapers report etc.

S/ N	RESEARCH QUESTION	HYPOTHESES	MAJOR VARIABLES	EMPIRICAL INDICATORS	METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION	SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION	MTHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS
1	How has Buhari's foreign policy undermined Nigeria's national interest?	Buhari's foreign policy undermined Nigeria's national interest	<p>X Buhari's approach to Nigeria's foreign policy</p> <p>Y Undermined its national interest</p>	<p>X Buhari's inaction towards migrant herders attack on farmers in the Middle Belt</p> <p>Y Undermined security of the innocent citizens</p>	Qualitative method of data collection based on documentary evidences.	Secondary source of data collection e.g. Books, journals, articles, internet, reports etc.	Qualitative method of data analysis
2.	Has Buhari's economic diplomacy engendered sustainable economic development in Nigeria?	Buhari's economic diplomacy engendered sustainable economic development in Nigeria	<p>X Nigeria Foreign policy</p> <p>Y Sustainable economic development</p>	<p>X Protectionist/mercantilist policy of border closure to boost locally made goods</p> <p>Y The price of rice has increased from N8000 to N30000 from 2015 to 2022</p>	Qualitative method of data collection based on documentary evidences	Secondary source of data collection e.g. Books, journals, articles, internet, reports etc.	Qualitative method of data analysis

Data presentation and analysis

Buhari's foreign policy undermined Nigeria's national interest

Today we understand Nigeria foreign policy core/primary national interest to be security. The task of foreign policy is the task of furthering the absolute necessity to promote, defend, advance the clearly articulated national interest values and goals of a country and as that country interacts with or states in the international system in this memoir, M.K Ibrahim, reasserted the fundamental linkage between the domestic and external politics which shape the external policies of the state based on shared benefits. In this memoir, M.K Ibrahim, reasserted the fundamental linkage between the domestic and external politics which shape the external policies of the state based on shared benefits.

In this regard, Nigeria must continue to establish both in principle and practice the approach that it is no longer enough to seek what your country can do for others, but what we can do together with others in the pursuit of our common interests. And it is our duty and diplomacy to persuade others that is in their own interest to try to support us what we propose, promote as a national interest and if you don't agree with this, just look at what Israel has managed to do with the United States they have made their interest, the interest of the United States.

The impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigeria's National Interest

Terrorism has posed great threat, not just to life, property, human rights, dignity and democratic values, but to the very fabric and existence of Nigeria's as it has attacked both civilian and Military targets with huge casualties and losses. In a series of tweets, President MuhammaduBuhari condemned what he described as "insane and senseless killings by terrorists."

"Nothing is more important than ensuring the security of lives and property of Nigerians. Everything is secondary when security is at stake. I will ensure that more resources are made available to the military and other security agencies to prosecute the war against terrorism."

The appraisal of the performance of the president or the current administration in terms of security," AwwalFaruq, a Nigerian security analyst, said. "The killings and the kidnappings of worshippers in Kanoma, Zamfara State and the slaughter of peasant farmers in cold blood, are another appraisal of what is happening," Faruq told DW. "There is no need to say the government is underperforming. It has been now more than ten years, and the insecurity is becoming bigger."

NasirAyitogo, (2021) Premium Time Newspaper, were AuduBulamaBukarti, a security analyst specialized in violent extremist groups in sub-Saharan Africa at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, said no one could blame the communities for expressing their anger and frustrations. "As a leader, you take credit for every good thing achieved by your government, but you also take the blame when there is a mistake from your government," BulamaBukarti told DW.

"What this attack in northeastern Nigeria underlines is the fact that previous suggestions by the Buhari administration that the insurgency has been ended or technically defeated seem to be very much misplaced," Ryan Cummings, a political and security analyst on Nigeria said. Although Cummings noted that Nigerian troops had made significant progress as far as recapturing territory once held by the Islamists is concerned, he added that the war was "far from over." (NasirAyitogo, 2021).

Joseph Atan, a Nigerian resident in the capital, Abuja, believes that Buhari has fallen victim to the same problem he had accused the previous government of Goodluck Jonathan of. "In 2015, when the campaigns were on, the president [Buhari] came out and said the then government was not capable and was not doing enough," Atan told DW. "He said that when he came in, he would eradicate insecurity. That was the reason why Nigerians elected him, but things seem to be getting worse," Atan added. (NasirAytogo, 2021).

Security expert AuduBulamaBukarti said the war against Boko Haram has dragged on for nearly a decade, partly because Nigeria's military is poorly equipped. "There is a need for the federal government to invest more money in the Nigerian military by buying 21st-century military equipment, including telecommunications and intelligence equipment," BulamaBukarti told DW, adding that the money brought into the military should be spent transparently. (NasirAytogo, 2021).

According to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index, which gauges the degree and frequency of violence by terrorist groups across several countries, Nigeria was ranked third only after Iraq and Afghanistan. Essentially, Nigeria, Iraq, and Afghanistan were described as being in a state of war. "That statistic alone really emphasizes that this war is certainly ongoing and that any defeat or victory against jihadists specifically is very far from occurring at this time," Cummings stated. "The Nigerian government and state security apparatus still need to make significant headway to neutralize the lethal threat that insurgents continue to pose within the region. (NasirAytogo, 2021).

Communal Violence (Farmers and Herdsmen) as Security Failure of Buhari's Administration

The crisis between Farmers and Herdsmen are just too alarming with huge casualties on both sides due to animals stray into farms which cause damages to crops. Properties, and death have been recorded as a result of the shrinking grazing lands leading to frequent farmers/grazers conflicts. Excessive drought which affects forest cover will pose problems for fuel, wood supply as climate change induced factor as well (Ahmadu, 2011).

The present crises between herdsmen and farmers are economic and environmental problems. Some politicians and few gullible Nigerians have turned it to a political one. At this moment, the crisis requires both political and socio-economic solutions. Most of us have chosen to ignore the fact that though, crises between nomadic cattle rearer and farming communities have taken some dangerous dimension, and the crisis in Nigeria is as old as the trades (Zayyad, 2018).

According to Nwosu (2017), though the crises obviously predate the Buhari administration, the administration's actions and inactions in the face of continued confrontations have subjected it too much flak by Nigerians. One of the most prominent attacks allegedly perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen in the Buhari's era was the Agatu Massacre in Benue State. In February 2016, over 300 persons from the communities were massacred, while some 7,000 were displaced. Some reports showed that many people died in ten Agatu communities at the hands of suspected herdsmen in early 2016. These killings were accompanied by the destruction of houses and other property as well as allegations of rape. According to their leader, the attacks were reprisals against the Agatu people for killing a prominent Fulani man and stealing his cattle in 2013.

That it took the president more than one week to issue a statement of condemnation and order an investigation, and that his spokesman stated his taciturn stance on the crisis on the grounds that

“[the President] is not a (sic) talkative,” have angered many Nigerians. Moreover, allegations of either inaction or outright collusion with the herdsmen have been leveled against the government and security agencies. In an interaction, the member representing Agatu in the Benue State House of Assembly, Mr. SuleAudu, accused the military of allowing the Fulani herdsmen to occupy the sacked communities, while their cattle’s, numbering over 100,000, freely grazed on their farmlands. That the president is Fulani also added ammunition to his attackers, who saw his slow response as a tacit support for the killers (Nwosu, 2017).

Further south, on 25 April 2016, suspected armed Fulani invaders attacked UkpabiNimbo, a town in Enugu State, killing so many souls. This drew wide-ranging condemnation, and highlighted the potential threat of the conflict feeding other security flash points. The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra, a group agitating for a restoration of the separatist Republic of Biafra, the implication should the killings continue. The group is viewed as treasonously by the government. Some communities in the South-East zone have threatened revengeful attacks.

It is baffling that virtually no successful prosecution or conviction has been secured on any of these incidents of killing and wanton destruction of property by the herdsmen. To aggravate the people’s sense of betrayal, the governor of Kaduna State and a powerful ally of the President, Nasir el-Rufai, accepted settling them in order to stop killing the mainly Christian southern Kaduna people. Kaduna was embroiled in a crisis involving Fulani herdsmen and southern Kaduna residents in December 2016. The most worrying aspect of it is that the attacks were carried out during the 24 -hour’s curfew in the state (Nwosu, 2017).

A related problem is Nigeria’s porous borders. The recent spate of herdsmen-perpetrated violence has been attributed to foreign transhumant Fulani’s. If this is true, the fact that foreigners can travel as far south as Enugu and Osun State to wreak havoc points to an even deeper problem that has plagued successive administrations in Nigeria, and persists under the present Buhari administration: the lack of effective border security. Even the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) regulation does not endorse unregulated and/or armed grazing, and calls for an evolution to ranching (Nwosu, 2017).

To be fair to the Buhari administration, there seems to be some desire to prevent future attacks. Currently, the grazing bill is before the National Assembly. The bill seeks to establish a grazing reserve in each state so as to not only improve livestock production, but also prevent herdsmen-farmers’ conflicts. However, given the charged nature of the problem, it appears the bill hardly enjoys any support from many states of the south. Many see the bill as unjust, alleging that their lands will be expropriated to serve Fulani commercial interests. Others see it as affording the Fulanis a potential leeway to dominate the south. Even more worrying is the fact that some Fulanis are not in the support of the bill, insisting that it is an infringement on their rights to movement. So far, it appears that the federal government has neither embarked on any systematic enlightenment campaign to douse these concerns, real or imagined, nor proposed an alternative feasible solution (Nwosu, 2017).

The lack of a broad-based and coordinated national policy on grazing has the potential to lead to anarchy, where different states take their destiny into their own hands. A case in point is that Ekiti State had enacted Anti-grazing law. The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (the umbrella body representing the herdsmen) has condemned the law, which prohibits grazing outside designated places and times, as well as with fire arms.

Careful analysis of the conflicts indicates that allegations of cattle rustling are at the heart of some of the clashes. Herdsmen accused the settled communities of stealing their cattle and murdering their colleagues and children, necessitating their bearing arms. According to the Chairman of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association in Plateau State, Mohammed Abdullahi, “The Fulani use the AK47 for defence since the government has failed to protect them.” While not an acceptable solution, such self-defence is an indictment of the security apparatus in Nigeria (Nwosu, 2017).

Another security-related question is what the police and other relevant security agencies are doing to either forestall or promptly respond to attacks by Fulani herdsmen. That large-scale massacres and pillage can be carried out during a 24-hour curfew as in the Southern Kaduna Killings is reprehensible and speaks to either an ineffectual security apparatus or worse still, active collusion by security agencies. And the general failure of the government to successfully prosecute most of the perpetrators of the violence on both sides not only fails to deter future attacks, but also encourages a dangerous arms racing on both sides of the conflict (Nwosu, 2017).

Violent crisis in Nigeria, like other parts of the world, have created a rift in human relations, caused serious threat to peace, unity and food security among many other effects (Basil, 2015 in ResearchClue.com). Crisis is inevitable as long as we live together, especially in a multi-ethnic, cultural and religious community like Nigeria. However, violence leaves us with various forms of retardation and underdevelopment resulting from the destruction of lives, farmland and property. The menaces of violent crisis have been on the increase in some most Nigerian cities in the last two decades (Ilufeye, 2009 in ResearchClue.com). Most of these crises are generally regarded as ethno-religious bigotry and antagonism.

According to Kassam (2014) and Basil (2015) in ResearchClue.com, the crises in most part of Nigeria especially the Fulani herdsmen and farmers’ crises are largely uncalled for. Farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of Fulani herdsmen. These Fulani herdsmen and farmers’ crisis have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other. The crisis has had devastating effects on intergroup relationships especially in Nasarawa Egor in Nasarawa State and Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State. Apart from the loss of lives, farmlands, food produce and property, it has profound influence on residential relationships, leading to new trends in the polarization of communities (ResearchClue.com).

However, in supporting the above statements, Ajibefun (2017) stated both the social and economic effects of the crisis. On

- Sexual harassment of women
- Acquiring of weapons/arms
- Reduction in quality of social relationship
- Reduction of social support
- Loss of human life
- High cases of rape

the social effects, he listed the following:

On the economic effects, Ajibefun (2017) listed the following:

- Loss of produce in storage
- Displacement of farmers
- Reduction in output and income of farmers/nomads
- Scarcity of Agricultural products

- Loss of houses and properties
- Infrastructural damages

Table 1: State in Nigeria mostly affected by Herdsman – Farmer Crises

S/N	States	Geopolitical Zone
1	Benue	North – Central
2	Kaduna	North – Central
3	Adamawa	North – East
4	Yobe	North – East
5	Taraba	North – East
6	Borno	North – East
7	Zamfara	North West
8	Nassarawa	North – Central
9	Jigawa	North - West

Source: Nigeria Watch database (2018)

During the past four years, the Nigeria Watch database has recorded 1067 violent deaths related to cattle grazing (1.7%), out of a total of 62,278 violent fatalities in Nigeria. The relatively small number of deaths recorded for this by the Nigeria Watch database may be due to the ethnic and religious categorization of the conflicts by the media which may have led the coders at the database to record several deaths as having either ethnic, religious or political causes. For instance, the tag “Fulani herdsman” may fall easily under ethnic conflict rather than just land issues or just livestock rearing.

According to the Nigeria Watch database, there has been a reduction in the numbers of recorded fatalities in Nigeria since 2014, as indicated in Figure 1 above. A decline of about 56% in lethal violence witnessed in this period can be attributed to the renewed fight against Boko Haram insurgents (which accounts for about half of lethal violence in 2014) that saw the group’s gradual retreat to neighbouring countries. In 2015 alone, the insurgents account for 9264 out of a total of 17024 (Nigeria Watch, 2016). On the other hand, cases of cattle grazing appear to be on the rise since 2014. As shown in Table 2 below, the deaths arising from cattle grazing recorded 386 deaths in 2017 as against 114 in 2015 which is about 239% increase.

Table 2: Violent Deaths in Nigeria Caused by Cattle Grazing (August 2014–December 2017)

	Number of Deaths
2014	79
2015	114
2016	168
2017	386
Total	747

Source: Nigeria Watch database (2018)

In 2017, conflicts between farmers and herdsman in search of grazing and water for their cattle took place in 20 states of the federation including the retaliatory attacks on the Fulani community in Mambilla Plateau, Taraba state. The frequency of the conflicts led states like Ekiti and Benue to pass anti-grazing laws as a means to cope with the problem.

Table 3: Recent Farmer/Herdsman Clashes in Nigeria (January- April, 2018)

Date	Place of Incident(s)	Number of Deaths
05-Jan-18	Akor village of Guma Local Government Area of Benue State.	19
23-Jan-18	Numan district of Adamawa state	6
05-Feb-18	Guma Local Government Area, Benue state	6
08-Feb-18	Saki, Oyo state	1
12-Feb-18	KorakgaUvir in Guma local government area of Benue state.	2
12-Feb-18	Zangwra community, Miango District, Irigwe Chiefdom, Plateau State	3
2-Feb-18	Azege village, Ayilamo in Logo local government area, Benue state	1
13-Feb-18	Itigi, Cross River state	1
05-Mar-18	Umenge village in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State	5
07-Mar-18	Omusu village, at Ojigo Ward, Edumoga in Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue state	26
17-Mar-18	Ugboha, Esan South East Local and Odiguetevia North East Local Government Areas of Edo state	5
11-Mar-18	Bakos, Plateu state	16
15-Mar-18	Rafiki area of Plateau State	2
19-Mar-18	Omala Local Government Area of Kogi state	10
30-Mar-18	BakinKogi, Kaninkon chiefdom in Jama'a Local Government Area of Kaduna State	6
06-Apr-18	Agagbe area of Gwer West local government area of Benue State	10
08-Apr-18	Benin City, Edo state	2
10-Apr-18	Oyi, Anambra state	1
11-Apr-18	Logo and Ukum local government areas of Benue state	15
13-Apr-18	Taraba, Zamfara, Benue	66
17-Apr-18	Benue and Nasarawa states	36
17-Apr-18	Ukemberagya/Tswarev ward of Gaambe- Tiev, Logo local government area of Benue state	1
22-Apr-18	Logo local government of Benue State	1
21-Apr-18	Aniocha North Local Government Area, Delta State.	1
20-Apr-18	Suntai Local Government Area of Taraba State	4

23-Apr-18 Logo local government area of Benue state	1
25-Apr-18 Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State	19
25-Apr-18 Guma local government area, Benue state	39
26-Apr-18 Logo local government area of Benue state	7
30-Apr-18 Gwer West Local Government Area of Benue state	8
Total	320 1

Source: Author's compilations of reports on The Vanguard between Januarys to April, 2018.

As shown in Table 3 above, there was a record of 320 deaths arising from farmers and herdsmen conflicts between Januarys to April 2018. This period witnessed some of the most horrific attacks reported by the media including the killing of 2 clergymen and 17 parishioners at St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Ukpor –Mbalom community in Gwer East Local Government of Benue State 3. In January 2018, MobgalHoreFulbe, the umbrella body group of Fulani herdsmen in Adamawa state raised the alarm about silent killings of herdsmen and rustling of cattle in Numan and Demsa Local Government areas of the state. The author could not verify this claim as such are hardly reported in the media.

Buhari's economic diplomacy has not engendered sustainable economic development in Nigeria

Economic diplomacy is the use of government recourses to promote the growth of a country's economy by increasing trade, promoting investments, collaboration on bilateral and multilateral trade agreements and etc. It can also mean the use of the economy to promote foreign policy objectives. Most commonly known are foreign aid and economic sanctions. Current trends include increasing collaboration between state and non-official agencies, and increased importance given to WTO issues, the negotiation of free trade and preferential trade agreements, double taxation avoidance, and alike.

Nigeria's land borders link the country with four different countries namely, the Republic of Benin in the southwest, Cameroon in the southeast, Chad in North-East, and Niger in the North. These borders, like others dividing many African counties, have been referred to as artificial boundaries because they were arbitrarily drawn by the colonial powers in Africa often separating people of the same tradition and culture into different countries. Nigeria's economy stands perhaps as the largest in Africa, even surpassing South Africa. In West Africa, Nigeria's economy, sustained by its over 200 million national population, clearly stands as the strongest, prompting very robust business activities both at the land borders and between Nigeria and her different neighbours. Two of the Nigerian immediate neighbouring counties, Benin Republic and Niger, are co-members of the sub-regional economic cooperation body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The Nigerian government said it took the unilateral action on August 20, 2019, shutting its land borders to curtail the flooding of rice and other smuggled goods into the country. Forestalling illegal export of petroleum products out of the country was another reason given to support the government decision. Although not openly stated, government was also said to have shut the national land borders to curtail the booming illegal cross-border arms trade.

The Nigerian government's decision has generated much economic and political ripples across the country and the West African sub region, spreading into other parts of Africa. There were widespread fears that protracted closure of the Nigerian boundaries could lead to recession or other adverse economic consequences for the fragile West African economies largely dependent on trade with Nigeria. There were also concerns that the Nigerian border closure could derail the smooth takeoff of the plan by the African Union (AU), through the AfCFTA), to create a single, Africa-wide regional market for goods and services thereby promoting movement of persons and capital across the continent. To underscore their worries, African leaders initiated active bilateral and multilateral diplomatic moves to try to convince Nigeria to end the border closure. ECOWAS set up a special committee in February 2020 to study and make a full report on the closure of Nigerian land borders. Members of the committee and other African diplomats made repeated visits to Abuja with passionate appeals for a reversal of the border closure (Alake, 2020).

The Nigerian government explained that the nation's land borders were shut in the nation's overall best interest. Justifying his government's action, President Muhammad Buhari was recently quoted as saying: "We have saved millions of dollars; we have realised that we don't have to import rice. We have achieved food security-we have curtailed the importation of drugs and proliferation of small arms which threaten our country." (African Review, 15 February 2020). Still, there have been questions whether the Nigerian government action, which negatively impacts the economy of her West African neighbours, contradicts the country's popular political mantra that Africa is the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy. There have also been suggestions that the protracted border closure signified a radical departure from Nigeria's traditional care for all African nations.

Analysis of the Nature of Nigeria's Borders

Nigeria's 923,768 square kilometer land space stretches from the Gulf of Guinea coastline in the south, up to the Lake Chad region to the northeast. The West African nation shares boundaries with four different countries namely, the Republic of Benin in the southwest, Cameroon in the southeast, Chad in North-East, and Niger in the North).The Nigeria-Benin borders are straddled by four of Nigeria's 36 states, namely Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Kwara States. The Nigeria-Cameroon borders in the eastern flank stretches all the way from the south to the north of Nigeria, touching six states: AkwaIbom, Cross River, Benue, Taraba, Adamawa and Borno States. Nigeria's third border area, the boundary with Chad, touches several Borno State towns, including Monguno, Ngala, Bama and Gwoza, and stretches up to the Lake Chad region.The fourth borderland, which separates Nigeria and Niger Republic, runs along Nigeria's entire northern brink, touching seven different Nigerian States:Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe and Borno States (Worldatlas.com)Like the borders dividing many other African countries, the Nigeria boundaries with Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad and Niger have been referred to as artificial because they were arbitrarily drawn by the colonial powers in Africa. Scholars have found that Nigeria and other sub-Saharan Africa countries have, perhaps, the most artificial and arbitral borders than any other part of the world. Up to 44 percent of the African national boundaries were simply drawn as straight lines by the colonial occupiers, thus often separating people of the same tradition and culture into different countries (Green, 2012).It has been established that many Nigerians across the Nigeria-Benin Republic, Nigeria-Cameroon and Nigeria-Niger borderlands have relations and traditional ties with people across the borders, despite the rules of inter-state relations and boundary crossing (Babatola, 2015).

This point was graphically illustrated during the 2014 National Conference when Alhaji Muhammadu Mustapha, the foremost traditional ruler (Lamido) of Adamawa cautioned that he and his people in Adamawa State could easily cross over to Cameroon to join their kith and kin should Nigeria disintegrate. His words: "I am the Lamido Adamawa and my kingdom extends to Cameroon. The larger part of my kingdom is in Cameroon. Part of that kingdom is today called Adamawa State in Cameroon. You see, if I run to that place, I will easily assimilate (Umoru, Erunke & Nwabughio, 2014).

Though exposed to different political and cultural experiences through the years, the different peoples separated by the artificial boundaries still maintain vibrant socio-economic relations. The demarcating line between Nigeria and Benin Republic (formerly Dahomey) drawn by Britain and France, effectively altered the socio-economic and cultural future of the Yoruba and other peoples on both sides of the artificial divide. But the affinity among the population at the borderlands continued to promote lots of trans-border movement, trading and overall socio-economic activities across the artificial boundaries between Benin Republic's 12 million people and their more populous and richer Nigerian neighbours to the south. (Afolayan, 2000). The thriving trade along the Nigeria-Benin border land has generally involved transactions in imported finished goods. Benin has served as a well-known trade route for channeling finished goods, farm products and especially refined petroleum from Nigeria not just to its local population, but to other African countries, reaching as far as Cote d'Ivoire and into landlocked Burkina Faso and Mali.

But the direction of the trade between Nigeria and her immediate neighbours has not just been one-directional, flowing from the richer Nigeria to the poorer Benin Republic, Niger and other neighbours. Nigeria has also been a choice destination for rice, wheat, frozen foods, second-hand cars and clothing imported from Europe and funneled through the neighbouring states, especially Benin Republic. The foundation for these tripartite trade relations involving Europe, Benin Republic and Nigeria was laid by the drastic fall in the value of Nigeria's currency in the late 1980s and changing political policies by successive Nigerian governments. The depreciation of the Naira against the CFA and ban on the importation of certain grades of used cars and poultry products by successive Nigerian governments turned Cotonou into a huge warehouse for receiving, storing, and re-exporting to Nigeria second-hand cars, rice and wheat. The used cars came from Europe, while rice and wheat came mainly from Thailand. The total ban on importation of rice by the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari further complicated the nature of the trans-border trade between Nigeria and her immediate neighbours, boosting smuggling of cars, rice and frozen chicken into Nigeria through the Benin, Niger and Cameroon borders. Black market transportation of refined petroleum products from Nigeria through the borders to Benin, and onward transfer to other West African countries also became rampant.

The borders between Nigeria and all her Neighbors are also known to be very porous. Former Nigerian Minister of Interior Abba Moro said that Nigeria had 84 officially recognized entry points into Nigeria, but there were 1,499 illegal land routes into the country many of which are either mountainous or in the jungle. In Adamawa State alone, over 25 illegal routes into Nigeria have been identified. Due to this ineffective border control, only a limited volume of people, goods and services pass through the authorized border checkpoints. The porous nature of the Nigerian borders promotes heavy smuggling of people, currency and goods, including rice, second-hand cars, used clothing and fake pharmaceuticals. There have also been reports of booming illegal trading in drugs, small arms and light weapons as well as almost unfettered movement of terrorists, e.g., Boko Haram, across the borders (Eselebor, 2014).

Analysis of the Implications of Nigeria's Border Closure

Nigeria is a well-known destination for all manner of finished goods and services, including assorted food items which are imported from Europe, Asia and other parts of the world. The country in 2019 exported mainly mineral fuels which accounted for 87% of the total US\$54 billion worth of goods shipped from Nigeria. Other principal Nigerian exports are miscellaneous base metals and agricultural products such as cocoa, oil seeds, tobacco, fruits and nuts, as well as raw hides, skins and leather. On the hand, Nigeria was reported to have imported US\$47 billion worth of goods from across the globe in 2019. This was 30% higher than the previous year's imports, and a 40% increase in the volume of imports since 2015. Besides machinery, computers and mineral fuels including refined oil, food items including rice and wheat have featured prominently in Nigeria's top imports in recent years. A steady rise in the amount Nigeria spent on food and drink imports, from about US\$3 billion in 2015 to about US\$4 billion by 2017, was reported (National Bureau of Statistics).

Different Nigerian governments over the years adopted various economic policies and strategies to try to discourage the importation of different types of goods and services that could be provided from local sources. Such import substitution policies have ranged from outright ban on importation of certain classes of goods, imposition of higher tariffs on such goods, to the offer of incentives such as subsidies and loans, to local industries and farmers. From 2013, the government of Nigeria started restricting importation of rice, and imposed 70% tax on the commodity. This made it cheaper to import rice through Nigeria's neighbours. Benin Republic and Cameroon quickly took advantage of this and in 2014, while Benin lowered its tariffs on rice from 35% to a mere 7%, Cameroon completely removed its previous 10% tariff. In an apparent bid to placate Nigeria, however, landlocked Niger announced prohibition of export of rice through its borders to Nigeria, a move considered a mere feel-good diplomatic pronouncement. (Orjinmo, 2019).

The combination of these government interventions led to drastic fall in the importation of rice directly from Thailand to Nigeria. It, however, resonated in astronomical escalation of rice import to Benin and Cameroon. It was obvious that much of the rice arriving Benin and Cameroon were eventually channeled into Nigeria through the southern and eastern borders.

After coming into office in 2015, President MuhammaduBuhari, in the bid to boost local agriculture, imposed outright ban on the importation of rice, which is Nigeria's favourite food. As Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) stopped issuance of foreign exchange for rice and other imports, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports showed that the Nigerian government action crashed the country's food and drinks annual import bill from US\$4 billion in 2017 to about \$3.6 billion in 2018 and down to just about \$1 billion in 2019. Nigerian government officials have, however, presented different, conflicting food import statistics. CBN Governor Godwin Emefielein December 2019 said Nigeria's annual food import was \$1.9bn, having fallen from \$7.9bn in 2015. But earlier, in September 2018, former Agriculture minister AuduOgbe said Nigeria spend \$22bn importing food annually (Falayi, 2019).

Overall, as a result of the Nigerian government policy, local production of rice was reported to have risen, even as food prices also increased. But there were also worrying reports that rice smuggling, especially from Benin Republic, had become big business. Nigerian markets continued to be flooded with imported rice that persistently passed through the well-known contraband route between Cotonou, Benin's biggest city, and Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos. Cotonou and Lagos are only a few hours' drive away. Nigeria Customs continued to regularly seize and display

to the media large quantities of rice, wheat and frozen chicken and turkey parts. Just like rice, different secondhand or “tokunbo” goods, including cars, electronics and clothes are also smuggled into Nigeria especially through the Cotonou-Lagos contraband route. Nigeria’s ban on the importation of vehicles older than 15 years made Cotonou a favourite destination for all manner of vehicles, estimated at an average of 10,000 per month, especially from Europe. Many of such vehicles were, in the end, illegally “flown” into Nigeria through the porous Benin-Nigeria borderlands at Seme and elsewhere. On the reverse side, petrol which is cheaper in Nigeria because it is subsidized by government was also heavily smuggled from Nigeria through the porous borders into Benin, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) estimated in 2019 that up to 10 million litres of petrol was smuggled daily out of Nigeria through the land borders, translating to loss of about two billion Naira daily. Following the border closure, the Nigerian government ordered suspension of supply and sale of petrol to communities within 20 kilometers radius of the country’s land borders (Adekoya, Jeremiah & Abuh, 2019).

It is established, therefore, that smuggling of rice, frozen foods, petrol and secondhand vehicles are parallel business activities that have gone on, for many years, through the Nigerian land borders. Successive Nigerian governments introduced different policies and adopted many approaches in trying to curtail the booming illegal business, balancing these against official regional trade that happen across the borders. Until 2019, these policies and approaches, which achieved different levels of success, had come short of outright closure of the nation’s land borders. It is being suggested that the Nigerian government may have finally been pushed into taking the drastic and unprecedented decision of shutting the country’s land border because of reports of growing smuggling of sophisticated arms and weapons into the country through the borders. Many of such weapons used by Boko Haram and other terrorists were increasingly being seized by government security forces in northern Nigeria.

A study published in Aljazeera detailed how Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria has been exacerbated by Nigeria’s porous borders with Cameroon, Niger, Benin, and Chad. Noting that over 70% of the about 80 million illegal weapons in West Africa reported to be in Nigeria, the report outlined how Boko Haram fighters and other terrorists as well as smugglers take advantage of the porous nature of Nigeria’s borders to smuggle small arms and light weapons. Some of such weapons are also trafficked through the normal inter-state borders stuffed inside heavy trucks and lorries laden with goods, taking advantage of the laxity and corruption of some Customs officers at the borders and hiding under the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of persons, goods and services (Onuoha: 2013).

Analysis of the Impact of Nigeria’s Border Closure

Different officials of the Nigerian government, from President Buhari himself, to the Customs and Excise and NNPC chiefs, insist that the closure of the nation’s land borders has achieved its primary goals – drop in rampant smuggling from neighbouring countries, rise in local production of rice, and sharp spike in customs earnings at the ports. Nigeria Customs said in late 2019 its revenue from the ports had dramatically increased to an unprecedented level of about N6 billion per day, while trafficking in illegal arms and ammunition reduced. NNPC said there has been drastic reduction in the volume of petrol consumed in the country following the border closure. (Agboluade, 2019; Nnodim, 2019).

However, the economic shock caused by the border closure is believed to have worsened unemployment in the informal sector as the government action adversely impacted the means of

livelihood of many Nigerians and others involved in small-scale trading in textile, footwear's, alcohol and other goods along the borders. The border closure has also been identified as a contributory factor in the rise in food prices. Following the border closure, the nation's annual inflation rate continued to climb steadily every month. Four months into the border closure, in December 2019, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria's inflation rate rose year-on-year to 11.85%, the highest rise since 2018. The inflation figures continued to rise steadily, jumping to 12.26% by March 2020, seven months into the border closure, with experts speculating of impending economic recession in Nigeria (Nairametrics, December 17, 2019).

The reverberations from the border closure have generated intense socio-political and economic ripples across West Africa and beyond. It exposed the fragile economies of Nigeria's immediate neighbours as it effectively shut them out from Nigeria's very lucrative market powered by the over 200 million Nigerian population. It was natural, therefore, that the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the larger continental body, the African Union (AU) showed much determination to find solution to the closure. They engaged in several multilateral and bilateral diplomatic channels to try to convince the Nigerian government to reverse its action. Many African leaders perceived the border closure as a major threat to the operation of free trade across West African and the rest of Africa. Chairman of the ECOWAS Commission, Jean-Claude KassiBrou, who is Ivorian, said the Nigerian land border closure posed much danger to ECOWAS and threatens to undermine all the gains so far recorded by the community. Other leaders agreed that "the unilateral closure of borders goes against all the trade and free movement treaties signed by Nigeria within the framework of ECOWAS." They described the Nigerian action as "very worrying" and capable of affecting the very foundations of ECOWAS, namely the free movement of people and goods (Africanews, 15 February 2020).

At the continental level, the border closure was quickly identified as a major, potential obstacle to successful implementation of the landmark free trade arrangement, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which aims at creating a "continental market" by boosting the combined consumer and business spending and increase intra-African trade by at least 53.2%. The AfCFTA, already signed by all of Africa's 55 countries except Eritrea, seeks to achieve phased removal of tariffs for up to 90% of goods and allow free access to countries' goods and services across the continent. Nigeria signed the regional trade pact in July 2019, two months after it had come into force in May 2019. Nigeria's border closure in August 2019 was, therefore, described by some commentators as going against the spirit and letter of the regional trade agreement which the country signed just one month earlier (Signe, L., & Van de Ven, C, 2019). Trading under the AfCFTA framework was scheduled to start in July 2020, but this has apparently been impacted by the forced closure of borders by other countries in Africa and elsewhere due to the global health crisis arising from the Coronavirus pandemic. The already closed Nigeria's land borders may remain shut till after the global health crisis.

Besides its impact on regional trade and the economics of neighbouring African economies, concerns have been further raised on the potential political implications of the Nigerian border closure. Statements by some African leaders have implied that the border closure threatens Africa's regional peace. The unilateral nature of the Nigerian government action has been questioned, since the border closure was implemented suddenly without prior consultations with neighbouring countries. By so doing, has Nigeria failed in its duties as a signatory to ECOWAS and the AfCFTA? Did the Nigerian action negate its long-avowed principle which holds up Africa as the centerpiece of its foreign policy? Was the Nigerian government action a

poor imitation of United States President Donald Trump's extreme nationalistic America First Policy?

Judged strictly from the commercial standpoint, the Nigerian border closure may pass as an economic aberration as most countries don't usually close their borders for trade-related reasons. They do so when their security is jeopardized or during periods of disease epidemic out of fear of possible cross-border spread of the disease. Sudan, Rwanda and Kenya are examples of African countries that have walked similar paths in the past, closing their borders during the Ebola disease outbreak. Nearly all countries of the world shut their national borders between March and May 2020 at the height of the Corona virus pandemic.

It appears, therefore, that instead of adducing only economic reasons, it would have appeared weightier if the Nigerian government pushed the more fundamental reason of national security as a principal underlying factor behind its sudden border closure. Before the border closure, there reports that Boko Haram and other terrorist groups were engaged in flagrant cross-border trading in arms. Such national security considerations would have subsumed economic reasons. Nigeria has continued to demonstrate its continued support for ECOWAS. It showed support of the African regional economic cooperation by signing the AfCFTA on July 7, 2019. The country has continued to faithfully fulfil all its obligations to the African Union (AU), and other regional and sub-regional organizations, which is a clear departure from USA President Trump's policies. So, by its demonstrable actions, Nigeria has continued to uphold its concentric circle foreign policy philosophy which places Africa at the center. However, through the unilateral border closure to protect the economic interests of Nigeria, the administration of President Buhari seems to have interpreted the Nigerian concentric circle foreign policy principle to mean that Nigeria's national interests stand at the core of the concentric circle, even as Africa remains a principal focus of the foreign policy. We hold this as the correct and better interpretation of the centricism in Nigeria's foreign policy (Ashaver, 2014).

The very harsh criticisms that have trailed the border closure from Nigeria's neighbours are poignant suggestions of how seriously and dimly they view the Nigerian action. The reasons for the negative reactions are not far-fetched. Reports attest that Benin Republic's economy in the south is heavily dependent on the informal re-export and transit trade with Nigeria, which accounts for about 20% of the nation's GDP. As high as 80% of imports into Benin are destined for Nigeria. Similar linkage and dependence have also been established in the north between the economy of landlocked Niger Republic and that of Nigeria. From Nigeria, food, petrol and other items that pass through the land borders flow into the rest of West Africa, reaching as far as Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali. It would, therefore, come as no surprise if the leaders of Benin, Niger, and other negatively impacted African nations perceive Nigeria's action as a declaration of some sort of economic war on their countries.

Chances, therefore, are high that with time and given opportunities, these nations may want to retaliate against Nigeria. Such opportunities may arise at bilateral or multilateral levels. Nigeria will always need the support and cooperation of her neighbours to effectively contain the activities of Boko Haram and other cross-border terrorist and sundry transnational criminal operations. The situation seems even more precarious when it is considered that all the four Nigeria's immediate neighbours are relatively poorer, which sets the stage for natural rivalry and resentment. Also, all of Nigeria's immediate neighbours are Francophone countries which have been politically groomed to consider the Anglophone Nigeria as a regional political and economic contender.

Analysis of the reflection of Economic Implication of Human Capital Development as a Result of Border Closure

Human Capital Development

Given the key goals of achieving economic recovery in 2021 and sustaining growth into the future in Nigeria, the imperative of investment in human capital development cannot be over emphasized. Poverty and unemployment are pervasive among segment of the population with no formal education. Statistics showed that Nigerians with no formal education are faced with the highest levels of poverty and unemployment. As individuals and households attain higher levels of education, poverty and unemployment rates tend to decline. This raises the question as to whether individuals are poor and unemployed because they have no formal education or whether they have no formal education because they are poor and unemployed. For poverty and education, the relationship tends to be bi-directional while a one-way relationship can be argued for unemployment and education. What is crucial to note, however, is the importance of human capital development in boosting the chances of being gainfully employed in the formal sector with less likelihood of falling into abject poverty. This also implies that while job creation is a necessary condition for poverty reduction, the quality of job matters as individuals with higher educational qualifications are more likely to obtain quality jobs. This is the more reason for huge investment in human development i.e. both health and education sectors.

Health insurance coverage in Nigeria is low. This reflects the predominance of out- of-pocket spending on healthcare delivery in Nigeria, which currently accounts for over 70 percent of total healthcare spending. It has also been estimated that over 90 percent of Nigerians are excluded from social and private health insurance cover. Estimates show that only federal workers, which account for less than 1 percent of the total workforce, are sufficiently enrolled under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) introduced in 2005, with passive participation of state governments. Similarly, several private establishments have also keyed into enrolling their employees on Private Health Insurance; notwithstanding, the enrollees have been estimated to be less than 1 percent of Nigeria's population (see Medic West Africa, 2019).

Inadequacy of personnel arising from brain drain syndrome. Nigeria's health sector has long suffered from a huge deficit in modern health facilities and highly skilled personnel. The number of medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, and midwives, is insufficient to serve the growing population's health needs in Nigeria. The patient-to-doctor ratio remains abruptly high at 2,500: 1, which falls short of WHO's recommendation of 600: 1. The reason for this is not far-fetched as many health professionals and medical experts have sought asylum elsewhere, mainly to advanced countries in search of better working conditions. This challenge along with inadequate health infrastructure have resulted in a high level of outbound medical tourism. According to Price water house Coopers (PwC), Nigeria loses about US\$1 billion to outbound medical tourism on an annual basis. Their estimates also showed that 60 percent of outbound medical tourism are related to vital medical specialties including oncology, orthopedics, nephrology and cardiology.

Existence of mismatch between educational qualification and job requirement. There is an increasing gap between the level of education and the actual industry needs. This suggests the poor state of technical and vocational education, in addition to, inadequate and, in some cases, unproductive internship schemes. The resulting gap in technological know-how stood at 59 percent, far above the global average of 38 percent (see WEF, 2017). The school curriculum is faulty to the extent that graduates remain unprepared to fulfil society's practical needs. This,

therefore, imposes an additional burden on the employers of labour to invest in their employees through on-the-job training, among others. In Nigeria, technical and vocational education is widely perceived as an avenue for academically weak students and school drop-outs only. This has resulted in disinterest in acquiring technical and vocational skills among the youths, who end up as apprentices and casual workers in the informal sector. The low receptiveness and limited relevance of technical and vocational education is reflected in the high unemployment level among non-graduates, which stood at 76 percent of the total unemployed in the second quarter of 2020, according to NBS data.

The Statistical Outcome of Border Closure on the Price of the Rice in Nigeria

PERIOD	METRIC TONS ANNUALLY	PRICE PER BAG	NUMBER OF RICE MILL
1999 to 2015	3.7 million metric tons	N8,000 per bag	15
2015 to 2022	7.5 million metric tons	N30,000 per bag	50

If indeed, there is a boost in local production of rice as the Buhari led government wants Nigerians to believe, how come the price of rice has not come down but continued to soar from about N8,000 per bag which the PDP handed over to the APC in 2015, to about N30,000 per bag today? Painfully, the APC, with its incompetence, counter-productive policies and incurable corruption reversed all the gains made by the PDP in the agricultural sector and triggered a decline in production which resulted in the high cost of food in our country today. APC-led administration failed to protect the farmers and particularly how it blamed over 40 rice farmers killed by terrorists in Borno state instead of going after their assailants.

It maintained that the rice pyramid was, "APC pyramids," stressing that it was nothing, "but huge signposts of their failures and irredeemable proclivity for lies, deception, beguilement and fake performance claims even in the face of unbearable high costs of food, 22.95 percent food inflation rate and our nation's ranking as 98th out of 107 in Global Hunger Index.

However, it is clear that with the 2023 elections in sight, the APC is desperate in pushing its stock-in-trade, pyramid of lies, propaganda, deceit and bogus claims with which they stole power in 2015. What the APC has not realized is that 2023 is not 2015. Nigerians have seen through APC deceits and not even these pyramids of lies can help the APC in 2023, the main opposition party stated.

Summary of finding, conclusion and recommendations

Summary of Finding

From the study, the following findings were made:

To begin with, the findings of the study showed that the Buhari's administration failed to tackle decisively insecurity created by the herders in the northern part the country, which spilled into the south, leading to the loss of lives and property. Specifically, blockage of cattle routes as a result of increase in population and urbanization were identified as the major cause of clashes between herders and farmers, leading to the deaths of many. In addition to that, it was discovered that the

crises were politically, economically and environmentally driven. It was also discovered that in Nigeria, the borders are so porous that bad elements from other countries around come in and commit crimes ranging from killings and other social vices in the country. In light of the above, study further showed that a core aspect of Nigeria's national interest, especially the security of lives and property, were largely undermined. This is regarded as an impeachable offence in other democracies, like the United States America and United Kingdom respectively.

Finally the study finds that the issue of Buhari's economic diplomacy toward sustainable economic development does not record successful outcome so far. However, instead of adducing only economic reasons, it would have appeared weightier if the Nigerian government pushed the more fundamental reason of national security as a principal underlying factor behind its sudden border closure. Before the border closure, there reports that Boko Haram and other terrorist groups were engaged in flagrant cross-border trading in arms. Such national security considerations would have subsumed economic reasons. Nigeria has continued to demonstrate its continued support for ECOWAS. It showed support of the African regional economic cooperation by signing the AfCFTA on July 7, 2019. The country has continued to faithfully fulfil all its obligations to the African Union (AU), and other regional and sub- regional organizations, which is a clear departure from USA President Trump's policies. So, by its demonstrable actions, Nigeria has continued to uphold its concentric circle foreign policy philosophy which places Africa at the center.

Conclusion

Buhari domestic diplomacy as earlier stated, it is observed that the subsisting domestic milieu on the Foreign Policy behavior of Buhari administration. President Buhari promised, during his campaign to tackle three major challenges facing the country, which include insecurity, corruption and dwindling economy. It is however, noteworthy that Nigeria's domestic problems are not limited to the ones stated. Some others as indicated by Akinterinwa include "intermittent polarization and instability, high level of unemployment and poverty, mono-cultural economy and low industrial and agricultural productivity ... the problem of institutional corruption, declining quality of education and ethical standard, as well as infrastructural deficit".

Nigeria will need to develop strategic economic and political policies to manage the future possible fallouts from its border closure. Deliberate policies to woo the neighbouring countries through visible investments to support economic developments in these countries in West Africa and Africa in general is highly recommended. Nigeria may consider initiating an African version of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, a programme aimed at boosting Chinese influence in Asia, Europe and Africa through critical infrastructural investment, enhanced trade and economic ties with key countries in these regions. For sure, the border closure marks a positive shift in Nigeria's foreign policy. It demonstrates the country's determination to push through its national interest over and above other considerations. But the gains of the policy need to be managed very carefully to avoid future adverse backlash from the immediate neighbours. Ahead of the eventual re-opening of the borders, government must also initiate and enforce sustainable policies and actions to lock its porous borders and stem flagrant corruption often reported among the Customs and Immigration officials at the borders which promote unhindered cross-border smuggling. Failure to take these and other necessary steps may erode all the gains from the border closure.

Recommendations:

1. Nigeria's foreign policy must be premised solely on national interest with emphasis on national security and welfare, regional and global peace, as well as robust multilateral diplomacy that is tailored along strong strategic partnership with friendly states in the comity of nations.
2. For a better foreign policy thrust, the Nigerian government must pursue the diversification of the economy from its mono-cultural, oil-dependent nature to a non-oil dependent economy through the improvement of other sectors, such as agriculture, solid minerals, tourism, etc. o Additionally, the government should enhance the security condition as well as the improvement of critical infrastructure in the country in order to boost investor confidence.

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