Nigeria-America Diplomatic Relations and National Security; Interrogating the Boko-Haram Sect 2009-2015

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Abstract

This study examines Nigerian-American Diplomatic Relations and National Security, Interrogating the Boko-Haram Sect 2009-2015. The work explores the diplomatic relationship that existed between Nigeria and the United States of America from 2009 to 2015 with specific reference to the security challenges facing Nigeria. The study employed the descriptive analysis and use ex-post facto research design. Primary and secondary data sources were used. The study findings revealed that Nigeria in the face of the Boko Haram insurgency and in an effort to increase its cooperation, approached United States of America for military weapons and other lethal equipment's which failed to some extent, because of the conflicting interest of United States. The paper concludes that, the international system is in state of flux and anarchy and nation-states do everything possible to safeguard their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity against any form of aggression. The relation between Nigeria and the United States, from 2009-2015, is defined in the context of security partnership between both countries. Nigeria, as an ally of the United States had sought its assistance to bring an end to the activities of Boko Haram, especially following the abduction of the chibok school girls. The Paper recommend that, the nation's security institutions, especially the military, should be strengthened, restructured and modernized in order to effectively address contemporary security challenges such as insurgency operations in the course of equipping and training its military.

Background to the Study

There is a consensus among scholars of international relations that no nation has all the needed human and material resources for its sole existence, Therefore, nations must as a matter of necessity relate with one another if they are to achieve their national goals and objectives which are well defined and articulated in their national interest. National security and the national interest have become labels that may be applied to varying that: When political formulas such as 'national interest' or 'national security' gain popularity they need to be scrutinized with particular care. They may not mean the same thing to different people. They may not have any precise meaning at all. Thus, while appearing to offer guidance and a basic for broader consensus, they may permit everyone to label whatever policy he favors with an alternative and possibly deceptive name. States relate with one another in the pursuit of their national interests and must necessarily come into conflict due to the anarchic nature of the international system, notwithstanding the level of co-operation and peace among them. While states interact, the possibility of conflict among them cannot be ruled out. Onuoha (2008), in defining the concept of international relations, identified three kind of relationships that exist among and between states in any given time. He represents them as 3cs of the international system, which are co-operation, competition, and conflict. It is in the light of these 3Cs, especially co-operation and conflict that the study is undertaken in order to understand the diplomatic relationship that existed between Nigeria and the United States of America from 2009 to 2015 with specific reference to the security challenges facing Nigeria.

In spite of the cordial and mutual relations that have existed between both countries, especially from the inception of a democratically elected government in 1999, diplomatic relations assumed a negative dimension, particularly in the area of security. In December 2009, a Nigerian national was involved in a suspected act of terrorism in the United State of America. The incident, according to reports from cable Network News (online version, 2009), involved a Nigerian man by name Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab who arrived Amsterdam from Lagos, Nigeria and then travelled to the U.S city of Detroit. Farouk, an al-Quada suspect, attempted in vain to blow up a United States' passenger air plane with 278 passengers on board. In a quick response, the government, in January 2010, blacklisted Nigeria in a group of fourteen nations suspected of sponsoring and promoting terrorism (cable News Network, 2010). That incident tarnished the image and position of Nigeria in the international community as Nigeria was accorded the status of a terrorist nation and her citizens had to undergo unnecessary and high security checks at the airports of not only united states but also in other countries that share similar security concerns with the U.S. The earlier acts of terrorism, particularly the 2009 Boko Haram uprising in Maiduguri and Bauchi and other surrounding cities in the Northern Nigeria, provided support and justification for the actions of the United States against Nigeria and her citizens. Several diplomatic efforts by the Nigerian government led to the delisting of Nigeria from the terror list in January, 2010, and steps to reconcile the perceived differences between both countries were undertaken by the government. In the cause of fighting against the insecurity, security forces were reported to have committed gross human rights abuses against innocent civilians and suspected terrorists: and which at the

same time sought security assistance from the United States. Against this backdrop, this work is set to unravel Nigeria-American Relations and National Security between 2009-2015.

Conceptual Clarifications

Security challenges in Nigeria have never witnessed so much attention like the Boko Haram insurgency that ravaged the northern part of Nigeria, especially the northeast, and destabilized the economic and social life of the region. National insecurity has become a major policy concern for nation-states in the international system, especially in this age of global terrorism. Security is an important element for the maintenance and survival of states and survival of the state. The concept security does not lead to itself a generally accepted definition and has, thus, generated a lot of scholarly debate about its definition. This is so, because it is a across cutting, multi-disciplinary concept. According to Nnoli (2006), security can be perceived from objective and subjective senses. Objectively, security can be defined as the absence of threat, anxiety or danger, while subjectively, it the absence of the fear that threat, anxiety or danger will be materialized, thus causing harm or damage. When situated in the context of a nation- state, it is termed "national security", which is the opposite of national insecurity.

Diplomacy is a very vital tool for the conduct of relations among nation-states in the global politics. Without diplomacy, there will be no room for interactions and exchange in the international system whether in the area of trade and commerce, politics, security, culture or even war. Mbah (2007), "diplomacy is a conduct and management of relations between sovereign states in accordance with established rules and usages, with a view to obtaining maximum advantage for the diplomat's own state, and with minimum friction or with resentment." Another scholar, Ernest Satow, cited in Egbo (2003) defined diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states". Therefore, inferring from the above definition of diplomacy, diplomatic relations can be described as the relations between or among sovereign states in the international system.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are lenses through which we see the world" international relations theory according to a deliberate systematic body of knowledge that helps the scholar to speculate, but also interpret, describe, explain and predict global politics." Therefore, we predicate our analysis on the complex interdependent theory as developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye and popularized by the work of Richard Cooper in the late 1970s..These theorists recognized that the various and complex transnational connections and interdependencies between states and societies are increasing, while the use of military force and power balancing are decreasing, but remain important. Complex Interdependence on the contrary highlighted the emergence of transnational actors vis-à-vis the state. Focus was the rise of international regimes and institutions that compensated traditional military capabilities and the new importance of welfare and trade in foreign policy matters compared to status and security issues. Complex

Interdependence actually became a central component of the neoliberal perspective and has been widely used in the analyses of international politics trying to understand willingness of states to enter into cooperative alliances with one another under conditions of anarchy and dependence.

Basically, Keohane and Nye highlighted the following assumptions of Complex Interdependence theory as follows:

1. There exist multiple channels that connect societies. These channels can be in form of interstate, trans governmental and transnational relations;
2. The agenda of interstate relationships consists of multiple issues that are not arranged in a clear or consistent hierarchy. This means inter alia, that military security does not consistently dominate the agenda, distinction between domestic and foreign issues becomes blurred while inadequate policy coordination on these issues involves significant costs;
3. Military force plays a relatively minor role in international relations mainly because 'it is not used by governments toward other governments within the region, or on the issues, when complex interdependence prevails" Having understood the basic arguments of the complex interdependence as a theory of international relations, the issues with which the study is basically concerned, that is the United States- Nigeria diplomatic relations, will therefore be examined in the context of the theory, complex interdependence theory. The international environment in which Nigeria finds itself is characterized by state and non-state actors that dependents upon one another as argued by the complex interdependence theorist. Over the past decades, terrorism has been a reoccurring issue that has threatened international peace and security and has since become a major security challenge to states of the international system. Nations of the world are now interested in ways of fighting against terrorism as well as countering and containing it through cooperation and interdependence with one another.

United states-Nigeria diplomatic relations are well defined in the context of the complex interdependence. Nation-states would always want to co-operate and come into alliance for the achievement of their self-interested goals. Nigeria is no doubt a notable and close ally of the United States since their independence in 1960, when diplomatic and bilateral relations were established. Since then, both countries have been involved in a complex relationship of co-operation and conflict at one point in time or the other. Nigeria in the face of the Boko Haram insurgency and in an effort to increase its cooperation, approached United States of America for military weapons and other lethal equipment's, it failed to some extent because of the conflicting interest of United States. The Nigeria military in the cause of carrying out the counter-insurgency war against Boko Haram, committed numerous human rights violations. The United States argued that it would not sell arms to Nigeria as a consequence for these violations of human rights. While Nigeria accused the United States for not helping Nigeria to defeat Book Haram, this therefore brings about interaction and interdependence which is the part of the assumptions of the complex interdependence theory.

The state of security threat in which Nigeria finds itself can be attributed to the idea of globalization. According to the arguments of Keohane & Nye that the frequent cooperation and competition emphasizing the growing importance of interaction between states, International Organizations (IOs) and Multinational Corporations (MNCs) it is conceivable to agree that the reduction in the encroachment of Boko Haram insurgency on the territorial sovereignty of Nigeria is due to the cooperation with stronger military force. The wrong application of interaction on the part of Nigerian government led to the state of high security threat in the country's northern region. The Nigeria government failed to address the problem as real issue of security, instead they treated the insurgency with kid gloves, blaming religious and ethnic divisions for its cause, thereby endangering the lives of citizens and the sovereignty of the state. This brings to the attention the principle of channels that connects the societies, it can be interstate, trans government, and transnational relations.

Interrogating the Security Assistance from United States of America and Activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria
Nigeria has witnessed numerous types of conflict and challenges, including insurgencies, religious extremism, ethnic militancy and armed rebellion. Other crises include economic and political marginalization, resource conflicts, ethnic wars, secessionist conflicts, boundary and territorial disputes, illegal drug trade, struggle for political power, inadequate social and physical infrastructure, governance ineptitude, coup d'états, corruption, human rights issues, poverty and low standard of living, diseases, piracy, national indebtedness, and so forth.

The security of the Nigerian people is endangered by poverty, hunger, unemployment, health hazards, environmental degradation, and depletion of ozone layer, ethno-religious conflicts, politically assassinations, militancy, poor governmental policies and ecological problems affecting food security. In addition to the above, Nigeria is experiencing a host of other challenges such as increase in cross-border crimes, including illegal oil theft and piracy, drug trafficking, modern day slavery and trafficking in persons, corruption, lack of development, poor security network, infrastructural challenges, inequality in the sharing of resources, illiteracy, proliferation of small arms and light weapon, money laundering and illicit arms transfer, which all pose threat to national security Onuoha and Ezirim (2013:33).

There is no agreement among scholars on the actual time that the Islamic militant group called Boko Haram emerged in Nigeria. However, it was revealed that the Jama" atul Ahlus Sunnah Lidda' Awati wal Jihad (Brethren united in the pursuit of Holy war), also known as Boko Haram, started off its activism in 2001 under the leadership of the Slain Mallam Mohammed Yusuf, who successfully radicalized the group and opened it to foreign collaboration, especially with the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (formerly known as the Algerian Salafist group). Late Muhammed Yusuf won the respect of some clerics and youths in Northern Nigeria who becomes his followers; while the bulk of his followers however come from the Almajiri. Akinbi (2015:34) The leader of the sect

according to Danjibo, (2009) and Nigerian Tribune (30/01/2012), were after 2004 given training on combat and use of improvised explosive devices (IEDS) by AQIM, and through the training acquired, they were able to show dexterity in handling of weapons and manufacture of what is called "dirty bombs" through IEDS. Prior to the failure to liberate the Chibok schoolgirls, the Nigerian military's manifest inadequacies for the task, and the Jonathan government's visibly weak political will has prompted some in Congress and the media to call for U.S. military intervention to liberate the girls. Any such course is fraught with peril. In earlier kidnapping episodes, efforts to free the victims by the use of force have led to their captors murdering them—a possible fate for the schoolgirls in the event of a military operation.

At a news conference in Abuja in June 2014, a United States Congressional Delegation consisting of Steve Stockman, Sheila Jackson-Lee. Frederica Wilson and Lois Frankel explained that United States troops were ready to assist in the search for the missing girls of the Chibok schoolgirl kidnapping. An interdisciplinary United State team has been sent to assist the Nigerian military to rescue the Chibok girls and curb insurgency in Nigeria. However, U.S. military intervention also risks further alienating the Muslim population in Nigeria and across the Sahel. Already, northern Nigerian field preachers have issued warnings in sermons against European and American military boots on Nigerian ground.

Retired general and former President Olusegun Obasanjo, probably echoing widespread views among Nigerian officers, has publicly criticized President Jonathan's request for outside assistance against Boko Haram, particularly from Europe or the United States. So far, the U.S. military has trained only small numbers of Nigerians to participate in international peacekeeping forces. The U.S. Department of State's budget request for International Military Education and Training (IMET) for Nigeria in fiscal year 2015 is only $700,000. (IMET is a vehicle for the provision of such U.S. training to a foreign country. (U S council report on foreign relations, 2014).

Nigerian reluctance to accept further U.S. training with its requirements for fiscal accountability and transparency has inhibited the program's expansion in the past. In addition, Department of State, clearly stated that the United State training is suspended until the host government brings to justice those responsible for human rights violations. Military units are rotated through the north, making them vulnerable to credible charges of human rights violations. There is no public indication that a significant number of military perpetrators of human rights violations have been brought to justice. Contributing to the debate, Kola (2004) described the abductions as the climax of Boko Haram violence. He noted that the lukewarm attitude of the Jonathan government provoked national and international outrage and increased calls for military assistance from the United States, France and Britain; thus, asserting to the notion that the abduction led to foreign military assistance from the United States and its allies to release the girls and end terrorism.

In May 2014, the U.S. Department of Defense deployed twelve active-duty U.S. soldiers to Nigeria to train a 650-man Nigerian ranger battalion for combat operations in North Eastern part of Nigeria, which presumably free of the taint of human rights violations. This was the first time in years that the United States trained Nigerian military units for operations other than peacekeeping missions. However, isolated trainings are unlikely to have a lasting effect on Nigerian military culture. Nigeria idea toward security cooperation with the United States continues to be unenthusiastic, despite President Jonathan's request for assistance in the aftermath of the Chibok kidnappings. Nevertheless, improving the professionalism of the Nigerian military and other security services is in the interests of the Nigerian people, Nigeria's neighbors, and the United States. The Nigeria government however, investigate the allegations of human rights abuses by the security forces, and the security services receptive, the door would create greater U.S. assistance that over time could improve their professionalism and thereby their performance. At the request of the Nigerian government, the United States is deploying drones and surveillance aircraft concentrated on finding the Chibok schoolgirls. How valuable the intelligence acquired by such surveillance will be in finding and liberating the Chibok girls remains to be seen. The expanded surveillance option would require the United States to deploy additional assets, which would likely require more support personnel, especially in a region that lacks basic infrastructure. Increased deployment will make the U.S. presence more obvious to a Muslim population that is already suspicious of the West. Opukri, and Ebienfa, (2013: 112). argued that The U.S. political response to Boko Haram continues to be hobbled by a lack of understanding about the latter's methods and goals. Given Boko Haram's threat to the Nigerian state and its potential for stronger links to international terrorism, the United States needs to deepen its understanding of the organization's leadership, structure, funding, and sources of support. United States efforts should be coordinated with other governments that have significant on-the-ground knowledge of the Sahel, perhaps by means of a contact group. An increasingly brutal civil war between Islamist radicals and government security forces capable of the most egregious human rights abuses poses potential pitfalls. American missteps such as an overly militarized response in northern Nigeria could compromise U.S. interests throughout Muslim West Africa. Protecting those interests in Nigeria and in the Sahel will require trade-offs.

Empirically, a stronger Washington stance on Nigerian human rights abuses could make Abuja less cooperative in such venues as the UN Security Council, at least in the short term. But, it is the policy with the best prospect for mitigating Boko Haram's radicalization of West Africa's largest Muslim population.

Diplomatic Relations Between Nigeria and the United States of America and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria
The widespread perception of the geopolitics of Nigeria's relations with the contiguous states in the policy-making circle has in the past underscored the policy of "good neighborliness" which emphasized peaceful co-existence and the primacy of diplomacy over coercive force. This policy was in turn rooted in and emphasized in certain

normative principles which Nigerian decision-makers since the First Republic have variously seen as a "third basis" of security in intra-African system relations.

Diplomacy is a very vital tool for the conduct of relations among nation-states in the global politics. Without diplomacy, there will be no room for interactions and exchanges in the international system whether in the area of trade and commerce, politics, security, culture or even war. According to Mbah (2007:481), defined diplomacy as a conduct and management of relations between sovereign states in accordance with established rules and usages, with a view to obtaining maximum advantage for the diplomat's own state, and with minimum friction or with resentment." Onuoha (2008:239) view diplomacy as a complex game of maneuver in which the goal is to get other players to do what you want them to do. The players can number from two in bilateral diplomacy, to many in multilateral diplomacy.

Another scholar, Ernest Satow, cited in Egbo (2003:17), defined diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states." Therefore, interfering from the above definitions of diplomacy, diplomatic relations can be described a s the relations and exchanges among or between states that are conducted in a manner that is peaceful and tactful in order for the achievement of the respective interests of the states concerned. Kwaghga and Robert (2011) also stated that the activities of the Boko Haram insurgency, posted security threat and affects the foreign policy of Nigeria with other nations. The emergence of Boko Haram signifies the maturation of long festering extremist impulses that run deep in the social reality of northern Nigeria. Obaro (2013). But it is important to note that the emergence of Boko Haram is a symptom of decades of failed government and elite negligence and political delinquent that finally developed into social chaos. According to researchers, there was widespread & quot; disillusionment & quot; with the way sharia was implemented in twelve states in Northern Nigeria after its introduction in Zamfara state in 1999. Boko Haram tapped into this dissatisfaction and stated to promote the idea that an Islamic state would eliminate the inconsistencies. Injustice and poverty, as well as the belief that the West is a corrupting influence in governance, are root causes of both the desire to implement sharia and Boko Haram' s pursuit of an Islamic state (Johnson, 2011).

The reason behind terrorism by the Boko Haram insurgents as identified by researchers are both religiously and socio-politically motivated (Hafez, 2007; Hassan, 2011). Those who cite religious factors as an important influence noted that religion provides the framework because the bombers believe they are acting in the name of Islam and will be rewarded as martyrs. Since martyrdom is seen as a step towards paradise, those who commit suicide while discarding their community from a common enemy believe that they will reach an ultimate salvation after they die (Oliver, & Steinberg, 2004). The Boko Haram sect treats anything western as completely un-Islamic as their name implies. It considers western influence on Islamic society as the basis of the religion's weakness. Hence the sect's declaration that conventional banking, taxation, jurisprudence, western

institutions and particularly western education are infidel and as such must be avoided by Muslims (Obaro, 2013). Thus, their ideological mission which is to overthrow the secular Nigerian state and impose strict Islamic Sharia law in the country must be implemented. Its members are motivated by the conviction that the Nigerian state is a cesspit of social vices, thus 'the best thing for a devout Muslim to do was to "migrate" from the morally bankrupt society to a secluded place and establish an ideal Islamic society devoid of political corruption and moral deprivation' (Straziuso, 2012; Onuoha, 2011). Ironically the sects resolve to do away with western influence and called it "evil" turns around and make use of the same western technology such as ICT, light and heavy weapons of mass destruction to propagate and execute their nefarious atrocities against the citizens and the state.

The Western nations agreed to assist Nigeria fight the Boko Haram insurgents especially after the adoption of over 250 Chibok school girls in April 2014. As stated by the commander of U.S. Special Forces operations in Africa with regards to information technology, "the United States military will share communications equipment and intelligence with African allies to assist them in the fight against Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram (Flynn, February 17, 2015). It was further stated by Major General James Linder of the United State Army that, as part of the annual U.S.-sponsored & quot; Flintlock & quot; counter-terrorism exercises this year in Chad, the United States would introduce technology allowing African partners to communicate between cell phones, radios and computers. This technology "would allow soldiers in the field to transmit photos from a remote location in the Sahel immediately to a central command room and can also precisely pin-point the coordinates of personnel (Flynn, February 17, 2015). The U.S. military will also be introducing a & quot; cloud-based & quot; technology to allow African allies to quickly share intelligence across borders, such as mapping information on the location of potential targets. Despite all the promises of assistance by the US and its Western allies, they have done little or nothing in the fulfillment of the promise. They have rather refused the sale of these technological driven weapons to help in the fight against insurgent in Nigeria, citing human rights violation and the fact that U.S. military intervention will risks a further alienating the Muslim population in Nigeria and across the Sahel (Campbell, 2014). The US government also cited that "the expanded surveillance option would require the United States to deploy additional assets, which would likely require more support personnel, especially in a region that lacks basic infrastructure. Increased deployment will make the U.S. presence more obvious to a Muslim population that is already suspicious of the West." (Campbell, 2014). Base on the cited reasons, the US government and its Western allies put up suspicious responses to Nigeria's counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency efforts.

The Government of Nigeria turned to the East, Asia and Africa for help in the fight against insurgent. This strategic move was instrumental in the acquisition of the right kinds of armoury that has helped to change the game against the terrorists with the recent liberation of many towns and communities from the stronghold of the insurgents (THISDAY, February 23, 2015). Some of the technological generated equipment used are

bush trackers that exposes where their enemies were going, an old-fashioned art that proved vital in Boko Haram Forest hideouts. & quot; Good trackers can tell the age of a track as well as indicate if the enemy is carrying heavy loads, the types of weapons he has, if the enemy is moving hurriedly, what he is eating, and so forth, this is also followed up with specialized ground to air communications between surveillance platforms, aerial attack platforms and ground troops & quot;(Barlow, 2015).

In the cause of the assistance of the United States of America, the Boko Haram fleeing many of the towns including part of Sambisa Forest they once controlled, leading to the freeing of hundreds of girls and women who were used by the insurgents as slaves and bush wives. United States and Western nations appealing to help Nigeria develop including the fight against insurgent are often perceived as hypocritical with political undertone, with their own aid offers being viewed as an infringement on Nigeria's sovereignty, since it frequently comes with strings attached, while China and the East, although not without stain, is perceived as non-hypocritical and more respectful of the African peoples and aspirations to manage their own affairs without fear of interference by a foreign nation.

Conclusion
The international system is in state of flux and anarchy and nation-states do everything possible to safeguard their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity against any form of aggression. The relation between Nigeria and the United States, from 2009-2015, is defined in the context of security partnership between both countries. Nigeria, as an ally of the united sates had sought its assistance to bring an end to the activities of Boko Haram, especially following the abduction of the Chibok school girls. Nigeria, however, turned to other countries for the satisfaction of its military needs and the achievement of its national interest- national security, by all means and at all cost. The strained relations between Nigeria and United states were defined in the context of the Boko Haram insurgency. At the climax of the dispute, was the Nigerian government outright accusation against the United States for frustrating Nigeria's effort to defeat Boko Haram. The status accorded Nigeria as one of the most terrorized nations of the world is unacceptable. In view of this, the study stressed the need for an accountable and responsive government that will be human development-oriented, in order to cater for the social and economic needs of the people. Poverty is implicated as one of the causes of and crime, poses a threat to national security. Thus, by addressing and finding lasting solutions to poverty, people will not be readily available to engage in crime and imbibe extremist ideas.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, we therefore recommend the following:
1. The nation's security institutions, especially the military, should be strengthened, restructured and modernized in order to effectively address contemporary security challenges such as insurgency operations in the course of equipping and training its military.

2. The government, in collaboration with religious institution, should discourage the teaching and spread of extreme (violent) religious fundamentalism, both in Islam and Christianity, whereby people will be taught to imbibe good virtues and religious tolerance.
3. Improvement in border security is also recommended for solving the country's security challenges as it will help to check the flow of suspected criminals and terrorists into the country.
4. The government and religious institution should discourage and check the teaching and spread of violent, religious fundamentalism, both in Islam and Christianity, whereby people will be taught to imbibe good virtues and religious tolerance. Educational institutes should also take part in the inculcations of political and religious tolerance through civic and moral education studies. These would help to address the problems of youth violence and extremism.

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