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Nigeria-U.S. Economic Relations During Jonathan's Administration, 2010-2015

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Abstract

This study assesses Nigeria-U.S. relations during the Jonathan's administration of 2010-2015. It looked at the external and domestic dynamics that influenced the relation especially in the economic realm. While President Goodluck Jonathan had employed economic diplomacy to attract foreign investments, however, Nigeria was constrained by challenges ranging from effects of oil price downturn, the global economic recession, the emergence of new oil drilling technology in the U.S. and the continuing internal insurgency of the Boko Haram sect. The major objective of this study is to appraise the Nigeria-US relations in the light of these challenges and to diagnose its future prospects at a time its political relationship with the U.S. is not so rosy. Data for this study was generated from secondary qualitative sources while its analysis is historical and descriptive as well as comparative. The paper employs the Structural-functionalist theory to drive its major assumption. The major finding, among others, is that in spite of this political setbacks as a result of the seeming anti-Jonathan posture of the United States in the hill of the presidential election of 2015, the economic relationship of the two can withstand any future constraints or challenges. However, Nigeria may be the big loser not only because of the emerging technology of electric cars, but because of "horizontal fracking" as a new technology in oil production. It recommends, among others, that Nigeria's territorial security should be beefed up to dismantle the activities of the Boko Haram insurgency, an issue of which helped to deteriorate Nigeria-U.S. relations during the period under study.

Keywords: Economic diplomacy, foreign investment, fracking technology, insurgency

Introduction

Every administration in the world has a set of policy options available for the realization of its goals and objectives. Nations therefore in their quest to achieve their national interests formulate a wide range of guidelines and principles upon which her relationship with other nations would be determined. Those guidelines and principles are encapsulated in her foreign policy. Foreign policy thus becomes the fulcrum upon which state goals and aspirations are realized.

Ofoegbu (2000:140) asserted that one of the key determinants to a nation's success in realizing her goals and objectives depends to a large extent on her foreign policy guidelines. Foreign policies are highly beneficial in the pursuit and realization of a nation's national interests in the contemporary state system.

In the last democratic regime in Nigeria, led by President Goodluck Jonathan, the government demonstrated strong commitment to her economic relations with the western nations especially the United States of America, realizing the relevance and impact of economic diplomacy on sustainable development of any nation. The regime fully realized the importance of economic diplomacy on the attainment of a nation's national interests by relating with the U.S on a number of issues of mutual concern ranging from bilateral trade relations, collaboration in scientific and technological transfer, manufacturing, defense, health and education, among others. The thrust of Jonathan's economic diplomacy with her United States counterpart is a demonstration of the strategic position which the United States occupy in global affairs as her counterpart's immense economic antecedents.

Runkel (2007:80) noted that one of the main goals of foreign policy is to fast track sustainable economic development of a state as well as to foster international understanding among sovereign states.

In this study, the dynamics of U.S-Nigerian economic relations under the President Goodluck Jonathan's Administration (2010-2015) is examined to assess the degree of success it recorded in terms of boosting the nation's economy, enhancing the U.S.- Nigerian's socio-economic relations as well as to critically assess the myriads of challenges that beset such relations, considering the wide range of socio-economic and political problems that was confronting the Nigerian state at that period.

Problem Statement

Foreign policy, which refers to the guidelines, principles and other attributes which determine inter-state relations, is a very crucial and useful tool for achieving national interests, which is the core ideals and aspirations of a state. To show the utility of foreign policy as a tool for international relations, there is the tendency for governments to exhibit caution in their foreign policy formulation and implementation. This is based on the fact that the success or the failure of a state as an entity depends to a very large extent on her relationship with other states. In other words, the ability of a state to achieve her economic, political and cultural goals in the event of socializing with other states in international relations largely hinges on the posture of her foreign policy.

Considering the obvious fact that no nation is an autarky, that is in isolation, a situation which is accentuated by the growing level of interdependence among sovereign states via the process of globalization which has reduced the gap in communication, increased access to markets, reduced the bottlenecks to international immigration, closed the gap in technological advancements among others, it therefore becomes pertinent for nations to turn to this pattern of international relations, which is development-oriented.

During President Goodluck Jonathan's Administration (2010-2015), the United States and Nigeria thrived in mutual economic relations with the latter's volumes of external trade increasing. President Jonathan's regime employed the use of economic diplomacy to attract foreign investors into the country, however, the drive for foreign investment into Nigeria was constrained by a number of problems or challenges, ranging from the adverse effects of petroleum oil price fluctuations in the era of global economic recession as well as the growing level of insecurity in different parts of Nigeria especially in the North-Eastern region of the country.

Besides these, however, Nigerian administration faced a major challenge in its economic relations with the United States stemming from both external and internal environments. On the domestic setting was the effect of Boko Haram insurgency on Direct Foreign Investment as their activities, no doubt, discouraged multinational corporations from carrying with the activities as expatriate staff of foreign companies operating in Nigeria were targets of kidnapping and assassination. In addition to this was the trickle-down effect of the 2008 international global recession that affected many countries which Nigeria experienced directly or indirectly. The economic downturn suffered by Nigeria which was due, in part, to the near refusal of the United States to patronize Nigeria's crude oil following the development and use of horizontal "fracking" technology for oil drilling in the U.S. in considerable measure affected the relationship between the United States and Nigeria during the period under study. This new regime and/or technology in crude oil production increased the U.S. domestic output astronomically and affected the volume of crude oil export of Nigeria to the United States. It should be noted, according to CNN Money Magazine aired on March 26, 2016, that the United States was the largest destination of Nigeria's crude oil export to the global market. Thus the economic relation between Nigeria and the United States was, to that extent, affected to Nigeria's disadvantage as this even caused major paucity of funds to execute the war on the internal insurgency as well as funds for other development efforts.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the Nigerian-U.S. economic relations under Goodluck Jonathan's Administration (2010-2015). Specifically, the research seeks to:

- Assess Nigerian-U.S. economic relations during Jonathan's Administration.
- Identify the challenges that confronted Nigerian-U.S. economic relations during Jonathan's Administration.
- Examine the future prospects for the Nigerian-U.S. economic relations in the years ahead,

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Structural-functionalism as its theoretical perspective. Structural-functionalism was developed for political analysis by Gabriel Almond, a renowned American scholar. In his work, *Civic Responsibilities* (1960:12), Almond

posits that all political systems have structures as well as functions they perform in order to maintain relevance. Almond (p. 100) identified four input functions and three output functions performed by all political systems. The input includes political socialization, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication, while the output includes rule making, rule application and rule adjudication.

According to him, the input function of political socialization is performed by the government and nongovernmental organizations, interest articulation by pressure groups and interest groups, interest aggregation by political parties and finally, political communication by schools, mass media and religious institutions. While the output function of the rule making is represented by the legislature; the rule application by the executive; and rule adjudication by the judiciary.

Apter (2003:83) noted that the basic assumption in structural-functionalism is that functions and structures distinguish political systems. The unit of analysis in structural functionalism is that all systems have functions that can be identified and that the parts or elements of these increased level of trade between both countries and which had in all fostered friendly relations between them (Alao 2011).

By using this theoretical framework, one may begin to look at the structural dysfunction created by both the external and internal dynamics of foreign policy in order to understand the degree to which internal insecurity as a result of the Boko Haram phenomenon, international economic meltdown and the associated international oil price downward spiral, and the emergence of “horizontal fracking” in oil production technology may have created unhealthy atmosphere for the realization of the objectives of the Nigeria-U.S. economic relations during the period under review.

Nigerian-U.S. Economic Relations Under Jonathan's Administration

Nigeria and the United State have for a long time enjoyed cordial relations economically. In fact, since she gained her independence from her former colonial master Britain in October, 1960, Nigeria has always related well with the Western nations mainly the United States of America. Her interest with the United States of America stems from the fact that apart from being a strategic economic giant in the globe, the US is a key player in the world with a very strong economy.

Aluko (2005:300) noted that Nigeria attaches much importance to her economic relations with United States for so many reasons- first, the U.S is a major key player in global development, with a gross domestic product that stands at ninety-four percentage. Second, Nigerian-U.S economic relation is very remarkable because apart from playing key role in Nigeria's economic growth through the manufacturing industry, U.S is an important trade partner. In virtually all the regimes in Nigeria, the U.S government has played profound role in the economic plans. In particular, under President Goodluck Jonathan Administration, the United States had played very useful role in the economy. Immediately he assumed office as President, Jonathan realizing the strategic importance of U.S- Nigerian relations, formulated a comprehensive foreign policy that will increase her economic nexus with the U.S being Nigeria's greatest economic partner.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Mr. Olugbenga Ashiru had dreamt up a Master Plan that will improve on U.S -Nigeria relations so as to foster accelerated economic development in Nigeria and to bring the United States government to invest heavily in Nigeria. To this end, on 15th May, 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S Department for Homes Affairs through the country's embassy in Nigeria, with a view to enhancing greater U.S-Nigerian economic relations.

Former U.S Ambassador to Nigeria Mr. Walter Carrington observed that "the Nigerian government under Goodluck Jonathan had shown keen commitment to work in collaboration with the U.S government to enhance the economic potentials of both countries through a wide range of economic activities, including the petroleum industry, aviation, manufacturing, health, among others" (Vanguard Newspaper, 26, Feb 2014).

Sustained economic co-operation with the U.S was one of the cardinal objectives of the Jonathan's Administration. In 2011, some United States economic experts were invited into Nigeria by the Jonathan's government to help improve the Nigerian economy. These economic experts were drawn from diverse sectors that are of interest to both states with a view to driving the nation's economy. The delegation was led by Dr. James Lindon, a World Bank expert and a developmental Researcher and it sought to find ways of increasing the economic growth and development of Nigeria, to make it a veritable economy before the end of 2020" (Afolayan, 2012:50).

President Jonathan, on the other hand, travelled to the United States on several occasions to sign bilateral economic agreements with her U.S counterpart. In March, 2012, he signed a bilateral agreement with the Obama Administration in the area of technology transfer and the manufacturing sector. This bilateral agreement among other things sought to draw the U.S government to the nation's economy in many ways, mainly in the industrial and manufacturing sectors.

Nigerian-U.S economic policy is intended to boost the nation's economy through direct participation of the U.S in Nigerian economy. The essence of this bold step by the Jonathan's Administration is predicated upon her strong commitment to diversify the nation's economy and to de-emphasize dependency on mono-economy, i.e dependency on petroleum. Ocho (2001) opined that the Nigerian-U.S. economic relations have since been directed at stimulating the economy and towards reducing over reliance on the petroleum industry.

In 2013, the Jonathan's Administration signed the mutual Economic Development Pact with her U.S. counterpart. This Pact has serious positive impact on both the U.S. and Nigeria economic development. Under this regime marked by synergy, both the U.S and Nigeria hoped to explore all avenues to work hand-in-hand with each other to foster sustainable economic growth and development in their respective nations.

Former Finance Minister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Mrs.), while reacting to a proposal to boost the nation's economy by granting access to U.S. investors in key sectors of the Nigerian economy, observed that "such collaboration with U.S. will in all increase the level of growth and development of the Nigerian economy and also

increase the volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country considering that the West reposes strong confidence on Nigeria, which has a very strong and consistent economic blueprint, such closer partnership is worthwhile"(The Punch Newspaper, 30 June, 2014).

Through the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Jonathan's Administration used economic diplomacy with the United States of America to drive the nation's economy. Ejiofor (2009) maintained that the Nigeria - U.S. foreign policy touches on many areas that are of benefits to both states, including the health sector, industrialization, manufacturing technological transfers and service delivery.

Furthermore, in the aviation industry, the Jonathan's Administration signed a number of agreements with the U.S. government to guarantee development in that sector. One of the major areas of collaboration with Nigeria in this regard is in the area of craft maintenance. This bilateral agreement with the U.S. ensured that sale, service of aircrafts were strictly handled by the U.S. while maintaining the best internationally accepted standards.

In the energy sector too, the U.S.- Nigerian economic nexus was also felt under Jonathan's Administration. Jonathan's Administration showed strong commitment to end Nigeria's energy crisis by privatizing the sector in order to bid for greater foreign investments. Ex-Minister of Power in Nigeria, Professor Chinedu Nebo had led the Nigerian delegation to the United States to drum support for the Jonathan's Administration in the energy sector. In September, 2014, he invited some selected energy generating industries domiciled in the United States to come and invest in the country as a way of ending the country's energy crisis (The Vanguard Newspaper, 26 Feb, 2014). Therefore, Jonathan's U.S.-Nigerian economic relations had attracted U.S. investors into Nigeria for various investment opportunities that existed in the country at that period.

Trade Relationship between Nigeria and the U.S. during Jonathan's Administration

Both Nigeria and the U.S. have long been trade partners. They enjoy mutual benefits from their trade relations over time. The U.S. has one of the world's largest markets. With an impressive record of being one of the largest markets in the world, the U.S. is a trading partner to almost all the nations in the world, including Nigeria (Kindleberger, 2011:180).

Successive Nigerian governments have traded with the U.S. in recent times, including the government of President Goodluck Jonathan. Jonathan's Administration had shown keen interest in working hand-in-hand with the U.S. government in matters relating to trade.

Apart from having one of the world's largest markets, the U.S. boasts of a highly developed economy and with a strong gross domestic product (GDP). U.S. is also one of the world's greatest manufacturers. Her active participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) enables her to perform very well in trade. She has a long history of trade with Nigeria in multifaceted areas - she boasts of having the lead in automobile industry, in aviation, in agriculture, in service delivery, among others.

The U.S. has been enjoying trade relations with the Third World States, including Nigeria.

In 2013, under President Jonathan's Administration, Nigeria signed a trade agreement with the U.S. government on automobile manufacturing. General Motors, an American automobile manufacturing company signed an agreement with Nigeria to have increased access to Nigerian markets. It is believed that such collaboration will among other things increase the industrial sector of Nigeria and at the same time create jobs for the populace (Okafor, 2013:145).

Constraints to Nigerian-U.S. Economic Relations under Jonathan's Administration

President Goodluck Jonathan's Administration was beset with a number of constraints and challenges, which affected the level of implementation of most of her economic policies, especially the one towards United States of America and other Western nations that were her economic partners. Among these constraints are:

i. Political Instability

President Jonathan inherited a highly turbulent socio-economic and political environment occasioned by insurgency in many parts of the North of Nigeria. In states like Yobe, Adamawa, Borno and other places in the North-East and North-Central, the activities of the terrorist group - Boko Haram was a very big challenge to the newly sworn in government headed by Goodluck Jonathan. The heyday of the conflict was the occupation of some areas in the affected states by the terrorist group. Many lives were lost during the occupation and thereafter.

Okafor (2011) posited that in the midst of all these attacks and killings of Nigerians by Boko Haram, the country was seen by foreign nations as an unfavourable environment for investments. Many prospective foreign investors were scared to invest in the country due to the level of security challenges all over the country. The economic implication of such development was quite profound as it had resulted in the decline of economic development in Nigeria through foreign direct investments.

The level of insecurity in Nigeria as a result of "hostilities by Boko Haram had made the Administration of Jonathan to invest heavily on defense so as to fight and win the insurgents at all cost. Adedayo (2010) noted that the Goodluck Jonathan's administration invested heavily on defense of the nation from the insurgents, an action that sapped the nation's treasury and stalled rapid development of the nation.

In the midst of all these conflicts in the North-East, the U.S. though it had shown support and solidarity to Nigeria, had warned all her citizens in Nigeria about the volatility of Nigeria as a result of the series of attacks by Boko Haram. Consequently, U.S. firms in Nigeria gradually packed up for fear of being victimized by the insurgents. Beside the United States of America, other Western nations equally began to see Nigerian markets as precarious due to the turbulent nature of her economic environment.

ii. *Paucity of Funds*

Paucity of funds also presented a big challenge to the effectiveness of U.S-Nigerian economic relations under Jonathan's administration. The global economic recession which reached its apogee under the administration was a great set back to the implementation of the U.S-Nigeria economic relations. The precarious economic situation of Nigeria during that period was indeed a big problem to her ability to implement her economic policy especially with the United States of America.

iii. *Arms Deal Affair and the Anti-Gay Bill*

In 2014, President Jonathan assented to the Anti-Gay Bill passed by the National Assembly of Nigeria. The Obama Administration of the United State expressed their reservations for the passage of this Bill. In addition, the Human Rights body-Amnesty International indicted the Nigerian Armed forces for Human Rights abuses in their fight against the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East of Nigeria.

These two events necessitated the Obama Administration to Invoke the "Leah Doctrine" on Nigeria. This phrase "Leah Doctrine" describes the policy that the United States will not support a country which policies are inimical to the dreams and aspirations of the government in power. For instance, the Democratic Party of Obama's government is liberal in nature and supports the Gay rights and frowns at human rights violations.

Consequently, the U.S refused to supply to Nigeria the "Cobra" Helicopters which Nigeria had initially requested from them with a view to execute their fight with the Boko Haram insurgent group. The United States went as far as stopping Israel from supplying arms to Nigeria.

Similarly, the attitude of the United States towards Nigeria made the Jonathan's administration to source for arms from private arms dealers that led to the embarrassing event of the Nigeria's cash-for-arms debacle during which a private Nigerian aircraft was intercepted by South African Security men loaded with \$15 million in cash at Johannesburg International Airport meant for purchase of arms.

iv. *Nigeria's Inability to Attract Foreign Direct Investment*

One problem that characterized the Nigerian-U.S. economic relations during Jonathan's Administration was the inability of the Nigeria to attract foreign direct investment. There was a colossal wastage of public funds or the tax payers' money by top government officials on frequent foreign trips, all in the name of attracting foreign investments into Nigeria.

For instance, in 2011, it was reported that the Minister for Trade and Investments, Mr. Segun Ashiru made more than ten foreign trips to foreign countries such as the United States, Britain, Germany, Canada, China and Japan, and others. The purpose of these visits was to attract diverse foreign investments into the country. (Vanguard Newspaper, 26 Nov, 2011).

Such trips by these top government officials though well intended, apparently dissipated the nation's public funds. The reason for these trips was defeated because

instead of attracting the much needed foreign direct investments into the country, the reverse was the case-many of the investors, that is the prospective investors refused to play any useful role in the nation's economy due to fear of insecurity in many parts of the country, especially in the North-Eastern region that was under siege by the Boko Haram sect.

One Remarkable event that strained the Nigerian-Western economic relations under the Jonathan's Administration was the case involving Mrs. Stella Oduah, a onetime Minister of Aviation under Jonathan's government, who was indicted in the popular armored car transaction that gulped more than twenty-three Million United States dollars. Stella Oduah's case though publicized by the Nigerian media, and foreign media, was handled shabbily, giving the impression that the federal government was after all not doing enough to address the issue of corruption in the country (Punch Newspapers, 22ndMay, 2012). All these had affected the image of Nigeria in the global scene negatively and had reduced the level of foreign investments into the country.

Okoro (2014:25) asserted that the issue of corporate fraud among top government officials and especially those in charge of finance and management of the economy, was by and large one of the greatest impediments to the success of implementing majority of the country's economic policies especially in the area of external economic relations. The degree of fraud among government officials under Jonathan's regime was quite unprecedented and received widespread international condemnations.

The Nigerian-U.S. economic relations during Jonathan's administration was constrained to a large extent by the former's handling of corruption cases of those in government. It was also believed that the refusal of the U.S. President, Mr. Barrack Obama to visit Nigeria during his Africa trip was as a result of the nation's poor handling of the issue of corruption as well as the country's poor human rights records which was exacerbated by extra-judicial killings in many parts of Nigeria especially in the North East.

v. ***Emergence of “Fracking” Oil Production Technology***

It was in the heart of Jonathan's administration that the use of fracking technology in oil production in the United States, reached its apogee, hence impacting on the U.S. oil import regime as well as affecting Nigeria-U.S economic relations. The CNN Money Magazine aired on March 26, 2016 captures this variable more succinctly where reflecting on it, Matt Egan observed that:

The rise of “fracking” has reshaped the global energy landscape. It recently hit a new milestone in the U.S. Fracking now accounts for more than half of all U.S. oil output, according to the Energy Information Administration. It's a stunning feat considering fracking made up less than 2% of American oil production in the year 2000...Hydraulic fracking technology, more commonly known as “fracking” paved the way for drilling into America's enormous shale deposits. It has fueled a dramatic boom in U.S. oil

production...fracking has allowed the U.S. to increase its oil production faster than at any time in its history.

The essence of the above as it relates to the Nigeria-U.S. economic relations particularly is that while Nigeria was hitherto the second largest U.S. source of the U.S. oil import, during the Jonathan's administration, this has reduced to almost nothing. According to Africa and Global Energy Center, "the United States was the top destination for Nigeria's oil for the most of the early 2000. Imports picked at 1.3 million barrels per day (BPD); (around 9% of total U.S. oil imports) in 2006; that year nearly half of the NNPC exports went to North American buyers. But between 2010 to 2014 (when Jonathan was in power), the average daily imports of Nigerian oil to the United States fell by almost 96 percent, to 58,000 bpd. The cause of this slump is blamed on the fast-tracking development of the U.S. shale oil, also called "light tight oil" Of all the oil suppliers to the United States, Nigeria has suffered the most (Nigeria's Oil Revenue Crunch).

Future Prospects

It is expected that the United States will continue to consider Nigeria as an indispensable friend with the context of other policy – political and economic – with the Sub-Saharan region. Part of this consideration will stem from Nigeria dominant position and influence not only in the West African sub region, but its burgeoning economic status as the largest economy in Africa. Similarly, Nigeria's extraordinarily large population vis-à-vis other African regional states will continue to help her in retaining her prestige within the international politico-economic system on the one hand, and will continue to be a source of market for American goods including a major destination for especially "American spec" automobile, computer, and related electronic gadgets and devices.

Within the global political arena and in consideration of few issues of disagreement like the Same-Sex marriage and the western alleged international human rights violations in the cause of Nigeria's war against Boko Haram insurgency, Nigeria's foreign policy is likely to continue to be pro-west, which America is a part, than towards Russia and its socialist allies.

At a more informal level, America will continue to be a major choice destination for Nigerian immigrants as remittance from American-based Nigerians to families/friends at home and for private investments at home will continue to be a source of 'unofficial foreign aid' from the United States to Nigeria.

Summary and Conclusion

In this study, Nigerian-U.S economic relation under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration has been examined. Before the period under review, Nigeria and the U.S. enjoyed relatively mutual economic cooperation in the areas of trade and investments as well as in other sectors of the economy especially in crude oil import and export.

However, the Nigerian-U.S economic relations encountered series of constraints and challenges during the same period. These challenges stemmed from among others, the political instability in the North East where the Boko Haram terror group reigned supreme, paucity of funds on the side of Nigeria as a result of the decreasing revenue from oil export and for the implementation of the bilateral agreements reached by the two countries, inability of Nigeria to attract foreign direct investments as a result of insurgent activities of the Boko Haram sect and the attendant poor security guarantee for multinational expatriates. These events created the impression that the Nigerian government was encouraging corruption. In addition, Nigeria's anti-gay bill and the cash-for-arms debacle in South Africa caused a major strain in the relationship between the two countries.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are in order:

1. The Nigerian government should focus on how to make the political and economic environment of the country conducive for foreign direct investment by ensuring that the terrorist group Boko Haram is totally eliminated.
2. There should be a total review of Nigeria's economic policy as it relates to dependence on crude oil export in the light of the global oil demand and outlook so as to benefit Nigeria's short and long term economic interest.
3. Nigeria has a large population and abundant natural resources. Therefore, government officials need to harness and effectively utilize this rich endowment for sustainable development. This can be achieved by diversifying the economy and improve on human capital development through qualitative education.
5. Nigeria should focus on fashioning a more creative means of attracting foreign direct investments, development assistance, trade ties, military relations and technological assistance. It is crucial for Nigeria to maintain a strong and mutually beneficial bilateral relationship with the United States because of the central importance of America in the global economy, politics, and international security.

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