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## **Coordination of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: A Reflection on Direct-Dial Diplomacy**

**Offor, E. Ogbonnaya; Nwankwo, Oliver U.; Elechi, Felix Aja**  
Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

### **Abstract**

*Essentially, the traditional institutions and personalities responsible for the formulation, control and coordination of Nigeria's foreign policy unarguably revolve around the president, National Assembly and the Minister/Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The idea and practice of direct-dial diplomacy which became increasingly popular and challenging has continually impeded on the statutory institutions that control and coordinate foreign policy; as government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) relate directly with their international counterparts without recourse to the grand-norm. The study sets out to appraise the implications of direct-dial diplomacy on the Nigeria's foreign policy. The study is hinged on decision making theory, which avers that policies are the outcome of decisions made by leaders or those in authority. Anchoring our discourse on qualitative research approach, via trend design, documentary method of data collection, and qualitative method of data analysis, the study argues that direct-dial diplomacy has come to stay, but could impede on the essence of foreign policy control and coordination if not well managed. The study deciphered that information and communication technology (ICT) in contraction and expansion of the globe into a global village contributes greatly to direct-dial diplomacy, which in turn, affects the coordination and control of foreign policy in Nigeria. The study recommends amongst others, that the Nigerian government should develop her ICT sector and device mechanisms for monitoring and checking direct-dial diplomacy.*

**Keywords:** Coordination; Foreign Policy; Diplomacy; Direct-Dial Diplomacy; and Decision Making.

### **1. Introduction**

The centrality of foreign policy in a state's international relations cannot be over emphasized; hence, every state has a set of goals or objectives which it sets out to promote in relations to other members in the international system. It is through foreign policy that a nation will state its interests as well as terms and conditions of relations with other states. A country's foreign policy, also called foreign relations or foreign affairs policy, consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve goals within the international milieu. The approaches are strategically employed to interact with other countries. In recent times, due to the deepening level of globalization and transnational activities, the states will also have to interact with non-state actors (Hill, 2003; Offor, Nwankwo, and Nnaji, 2017).

The aforementioned interaction is evaluated and monitored in attempts to maximize benefits of multilateral international cooperation. Since the national interests are paramount, foreign policies are designed by the government through high-level decision making processes. The accomplishment of National interests can occur as a result of peaceful cooperation with other nations, or through exploitation. Usually, creating foreign policy is the job of the head of government and the foreign minister (or equivalent). In some countries the legislature also has considerable effects (Hill, 2003). "A state announces its foreign policy principles or goals to the rest of the world to provide a prism through which other states in the international system can establish a link with it and read its mind" (Sesay, 2011, p. 10). It has become an established norm for independent and sovereign nations to engage in external relations. In other words, gaining of independence by a state confers on that state the sovereign power to conduct foreign policy, which is seen in all independent countries of the world. For instance, Nigeria started the conduct of its foreign policy in 1960 (the year she gained independence from Britain) under late Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa.

Prior to 1960, the country had no independent foreign policy of its own since it was still a colony of the United Kingdom which controlled external relations. Thus, since independence and with the establishment of the Ministry of external relations, first called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, Nigerian government have continued to engage in foreign relations, and the making of foreign policy. However, the methods, processes and institutions for the making of foreign policy have changed over the years, depending on the type of regime that held power, as well as the character of both the leaders, their foreign affairs ministers and advisers (Sesay, 2011; Offor, Nwankwo, and Nnaji, 2017).

In democratic societies it is increasingly difficult to sustain the traditional notion that foreign policy is incompatible with democratic decision-making and scrutiny and that state sovereignty in this domain is the exclusive, unquestionable competence of the federal executive government and the presidency, as the perceived sole representative of the state. As the core institution of democracy and elected representatives, the executives are increasingly expected to contribute to resolving complex foreign policy and international issues which are impacting more and more directly on the Nigerian state and her citizens' live by controlling, coordinating and discussing diverse views on strategic direction and policy priorities, by legitimising complex policies and initiatives and by building up public trust (and support) on complex issues in a way that is comprehensible to citizens (Bajtay, 2015).

For instance, the Presidency/ministry of foreign affairs and the National Assembly are the important actors in the making, implementing, controlling and coordinating of foreign policy. Their roles were clearly spelt out in the Constitution. As stated in the 1999 Constitution, as amended, the Presidency is in-charge of the day-to-day responsibility for making polices, both domestic and foreign; and the National Assembly is empowered to make laws for governing the country in line with the country's domestic and external affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also

charged with the management of the country's external affairs (Nigeria Constitution, 1999; Bajtay, 2015).

There are also other governmental ministries and agencies whose operations are advisory and supportive to the above institutions. Their functions are also central to foreign policy advice, making and implementing. These ministries are Finance, Defence, Internal Affairs, Agriculture, Trade and Investment; Power and also agencies such as, the National Agency for Food, and Drug Administration Corporation (NAFDAC), the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) etc. (Folarin, 2010). The major actors in the making and implementations of Nigeria's foreign policy and coordination of same from Obasanjo's administration in 1999 to the present Buhari government are not without issues too herculean to the carrying-out of these onerous tasks, mostly as a result of direct-dial diplomacy (Jola, 2016).

The idea and practice of direct-dial diplomacy which became increasingly popular and challenging has continually impeded on the statutory institutions that control and coordinate foreign policy; as government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) relate directly with their international counterparts without recourse to the grand-norm which is the constitution. The study sets out to appraise the implications of direct-dial diplomacy on the coordination of Nigeria's foreign policy.

## **2. Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Foreign Policy**

Foreign Policy, according to Frankel (1967) consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and others. Accordingly, Keith and Morrison (1977, p. 47) defined foreign policy as "a set of explicit objectives with regard to the world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives." In other words, foreign policy of a state is pursued by the state, in the interest of the welfare of its people. Put differently, foreign policy could be seen as the totality of all actions, decisions, overtures, or interactions between states in the international system. Such could be directed or based on economics, politics, culture or creating understanding or-cooperation (Adesola, 2004). Foreign policy is defined as purposive courses of action adopted by a state in the interest of the welfare of its peoples.

Albeit, the term foreign policy refers to a state's international goals and its strategies to achieve those goals while interacting with other states of the globe. Foreign policymakers follow the same five steps with which public policy is made, viz.:

1. Agenda setting: A problem or issue rises to prominence on the agenda.
2. Formulation: Possible policies are created and debated.
3. Adoption: The government adopts one policy.
4. Implementation: The appropriate government agency enacts the policy.
5. Evaluation: Officials and agencies judge whether the policy has been successful.

Unlike domestic policy, however, foreign policymaking usually involves fewer people and less publicity. In the United States, the president serves as the chief

diplomat and is charged with running American foreign policy. The president employs three tools to conduct foreign policy: (1). Diplomacy; (2). Foreign aid; (3). Military force (Folarin, 2010; Jola, 2016).

The formulation and execution of Nigeria's foreign policy from independence have been carried out in no fewer than fourteen different administrations through the external affairs ministry. From Tafawa Balewa's administration in 1960 to President Obasanjo's administration in 2003; from the administration of President Musa Yar'Adua through the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, to the current Buhari's administration.

#### **a. The Objectives of Nigeria Foreign Policy**

Section 19 of 1979 and 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic had gone further to set the foreign policy objectives of the Nigerian state thus: The foreign policy shall be:

(1). Promotion and protection of national interest; (2). Promotion of African integration and support of African unity; (3). Promotion of international cooperation for consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination in all its manifestation; (4). Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and (5). Promotion of a just world economic order, (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).

#### **b. The Principles of Nigeria Foreign Policy**

The principles of Nigeria's foreign policy as enunciated by Okibe (2000) viz.:

(1). Principle of Non-Alignment; (2). Principle of Legal Equality of all Countries; (3). Principle of Non-interference in the Domestic Affairs of other Countries; (4). Principle of Multilateralism; and (5). Africa as the Centre Piece of Nigeria's Foreign Policy. Most recently, other Principles or Foreign policy postures include: Economic Diplomacy; and Citizen Diplomacy.

#### **Diplomacy**

According to Satow (1966) diplomacy is defined as the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states. Diplomacy is aptly defined as the application of intelligence, wits, and tact in the interactions between and amongst states in the international system through the accredited agents or diplomats who are meant to pursue their state's interests at all cost.

Simply put, diplomacy is the act of dealing with other nations, usually through negotiation and discussion. Diplomacy involves meetings between political leaders, sending diplomatic messages, and making public statements about the relationship between countries. The American president, for example, often hosts leaders and chief diplomats of other nations at the White House in order to discuss a variety of

issues. Most diplomacy occurs behind the scenes as officials hold secret negotiations or meet privately to discuss key issues.

### **Approaches to Diplomacy**

States generally pursue diplomacy in one of three ways:

- Unilaterally: The states act alone, without the assistance or consent of any other state.
- Bilaterally: The state works in conjunction with another state.
- Multilaterally: The state works in conjunction with several other states.
- There are pros and cons to each of these three approaches. Acting unilaterally, for example, allows a state to do what it wants without compromise, but it must also bear all the costs itself. Acting with allies, on the other hand, allows a state to maintain good relations and to share the diplomatic burden, but this often requires compromise (Offor, Nwankwo, and Nnaji, 2017).

### **Foreign Policy and Diplomacy: The Nexus**

The interplay of foreign policy and diplomacy cannot be over stressed. Palmer and Perkins, (2010) fleshed out some salient points, in their words:

...the foreign policy of a state is the substance of foreign relations, whereas diplomacy proper is the process by which policy is carried out. Policy is made by many different persons and agencies; but presumably on major matters in any state, whatever its form of government, it is made at the highest levels, though subject to many different kinds of controls. Then it is the purpose of diplomacy to provide the machinery and the personnel by which foreign policy is executed. One is the substance; the other is method (Palmer and Perkins, 2010, p. 84).

In other words, diplomacy is the vehicle through which foreign policy is driven and achieved. Hence, all diplomatic activities are propelled and guided by foreign policy, but foreign policy is not diplomacy. That is to say, the essence of diplomacy is gotten from foreign policy planks or frameworks. Personifying the two concepts, it will be apt to say where ever and whenever diplomacy appears, it was sent by foreign policy (Offor, Nwankwo, and Nnaji, 2017).

### **Direct-Dial Diplomacy**

According to Berridge, Llyod, and Alan, (2012) direct-dial diplomacy refers to the connections with overseas body conducted by international section of a Ministry, Department and Agency, for instance defence, health, transport, and/or trade and investment, which bypasses the ministry of the state from which foreign interactions and communications originates. Direct-dial diplomacy is especially prevalent between member states of the European Union (EU). It is the great growth

in this form of international communication that has often led the foreign ministries to assert importance of their coordinating function.

Added from the forgoing, Direct-dial diplomacy entails the relegation and circumvention of the ministry of foreign affairs as the statutory ministry for foreign relations by other ministries, organisations and/or regions, states, provinces and cantons vis-à-vis foreign relations and matters concerning their ministries occasioned by the expansion and contraction of the globe essentially through information and communication technology. In other words, it refers to the diplomatic channels or windows whereby other state's ministries and government bodies interact swiftly with their counterparts abroad without the control and coordination of the agencies in-charge of foreign relations.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on decision making theory which is an off-shoot of the behavioural or scientific school of thought in the social sciences. The theory was developed in the work of Simon (1948). The theory is associated to different fields like psychology, sociology, political science etc. that study human behaviours. The development of this theory is hinged on the fact that areas like gambling and making choices have existed for millennia, so humans have a long history of making judgments of probabilistic events. Major proponents of the theory include: Von Neumann, J. & Morganstern, O. (1944); Simon H.A. (1948); Frankel Joseph (1963); Rosenau, James N (1971); Hans Morgenthau (1978); Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1979); Rosati, Jarel A. (1980); Asogwa, Felix C (2009); etc.

Decision making theory of foreign policy does not recognise the state as the principal actor in foreign policy relations of a state, rather it emphasises on the individual characters, perceptions, and idiosyncrasies and perceptions involved with the formulation of foreign policy. The theory stresses that the state and the institutions can neither make policies nor implement same, because the state is seen as an abstract mental and socio-political construct that cannot speak, walk or take any action. Rather it is the individual members in authority within the geographical territory or state that can speak, walk or take any action on behalf of the state and the citizens they represent.

Decision theory can be broken into three strands: normative decision theory, which gives advice on how to make the best decisions, given a set of uncertain beliefs and a set of values; and descriptive decision theory, which analyses how existing, possibly irrational agents actually make decisions; and prescriptive decision theory, which tries to guide or give procedures on how or what we should do in order to make best decisions in line with the normative theory (Asogwa, 2009; Steele, & Stefansson, 2015).

The theory according to Steele and Stefansson (2015) hold that:

1. There are number of alternatives, before a policy/decision maker and while making decision he is to select one or more alternatives which will be suitable for him or which will serve his purpose.

2. There must be rationality in decision making process.
3. An important characteristic of decision-making is that it is never a product of a single man. It does not originate from a single brain; it is always the product of several men or brains who work together. Different agencies or organisations or institutions overtly or covertly participate in the decision-making process.
4. Decision-making does not relate to one issue or question but to a number of issues.
5. Experts of public administration and governmental organisations are of opinion that though rationality is the predominant determiner of decision-making process very often irrationality or partiality enters into decision making process and it is believed that this is inevitable in a democratic set up. Even in non-democratic systems irrationality becomes the focusing point of decision.
6. It has been observed by many scholars that irrationality and rationality conception gives birth to a lot of confusion because the policy maker is chiefly motivated by real situation which sometimes gives no credence to rationality. In other words, conflict arises between rationality and reality or the general welfare of the body-politic.

Some of the categories of decision have been identified by Asogwa (2009):

- (a) Who made the decision? (b) What was the decision? (c) When was the decision made? (d) How was the decision made? (e) Where was the decision made? (f) What were the characteristics of the decision situation? (g) To what class or subclass of decisions does the decision belong? (h) Why was the decision made?

Whenever a ministry, a department or an agency of a government takes any decision or decides to take a decision that automatically comes into any one of the above noted categories. The decisions are never taken in vacuum. The decisions are made to serve definite purposes/purpose. We have already noted that behind every decision there must be rationality of the decision maker and there is no place of idiosyncrasy.

### **Application of the Theory on this Study**

The decision making theory is relevant and germane to this study, in that it explicitly explains the actions and inactions of foreign policy makers and enforcers in Nigeria as a fall-out of their perceptions, personalities, character, idiosyncrasies and the general behaviour of those saddled with the responsibility to make and implement foreign policy. The theory explains how and why leaders take decisions that impacts on the state. And why various agencies, institutions and other levels of governments chose to act and/or relate with their counterparts in other parts of the country without recourse to the statutory institutions and personalities saddled with the duties to carry out external relations. It is however acknowledged that the various institutional heads interact globally because they also assume and see themselves to be performing the role of policy makers no matter the level or institutions of government. More so, these uncensored foreign interactions persist due to silent decision of those who are



legitimately saddled with the responsibility to act externally in the stead of the entire entity called Nigeria.

#### **4. Discussions**

##### ***Functions of the President and Ministry of Foreign Affairs***

Universally, the President is the primus in the external diplomacy of a state, even though there are mechanisms and structures that compel the president and presidency to accommodate domestic pressures and constraints in foreign policy making (Folarin, 2010). The 1999 Constitution as amended clearly delineates the role of the Presidency in the formulation and implementation of the Nigeria's foreign policy. Even though according to the Constitution, there are three distinct arms of government (executive, legislative and judiciary), 'the executive branch, personified by the president, is a very powerful one' (Fawole, 2004). It is the president that directs the affairs of the nation, and that includes both domestic and foreign affairs. The functions granted to the president in the executive legislative list include conduct of Foreign affairs where he also conducts summit diplomacy, negotiates and signs bilateral and multilateral treaties as well as agreements, receives ambassadors/high commissioners, and attends meetings. The president (the chief executive) 'is the pivot of the foreign policy process' (Ogwu, 1986) and is entrusted with the formal executive authority to run the affairs of the nation on a day-to-day basis.

The responsibilities of the Ministry as spelt out in chapter 2, section 19, of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria include:

1. The promotion and protection of the national interest;
2. The attraction of direct foreign investment into Nigeria and securing of market access for Nigeria Products and for the enhancement of her capability in the pursuit of the country national interest;
3. Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts in troubled spots in Africa, particularly West Africa;
4. Promotion of international Cooperation for the consolidation of Universal Peace and Mutual respect among all nations and elimination of racial discrimination in all its ramifications;
5. Respect for International Law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiations, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication and promotion of a just world economic order.

Other functions of the ministry of foreign affairs are:

Staffing and supporting missions abroad; Public diplomacy; Policy advice and implementation; Policy coordination; Dealing with foreign diplomats at home; and Building domestic support (Berridge, 2005; Owuzu, 2016).

##### **Control and Coordination of Foreign Policy and Direct-Dial Diplomacy**

Irrespective of the role of the National Assembly in ratifying certain foreign policy/decisions, the burden of foreign policy rests on the presidency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in formulating and implementing foreign policy for the state. It is

however not limited for it to have the same influence in the administration of international relations towards other ministries departments and agencies (MDAs). Nevertheless, the policy coordination is an informal discussion in all states with the other departments in government. Such as trade, interior/internal affairs, finance, defence, transport, environment, the central bank is now in use of direct communication not only with their foreign counterparts but with the various agencies abroad. Simpson (1967), in United States Department, when trying to praise the military diplomacy, pointed out that there is a need for them to go into negotiation with the national ministries of labour, welfare, finance, and foreign affairs (Berridge, 2005; Rozental, 1999; Hocking, 1999; Langhorne and Wallace 1999; Simpson 1967).

Under this function, the 'direct dial diplomacy' became very popular that made other government departments to have their international sections, (Rozental 1999). Berridge (2005) explained that the ministry of foreign affairs insisted that all calls abroad should be through their portals to assure firmness in foreign policy and prohibit foreigners from playing on one ministry against another. And he pointed out that the department of foreign affairs could no longer aim to be the states gatekeeper or International operator anymore. The development of direct dial diplomacy was the cause of growing complications and the international problems during the twentieth century.

This growth does not mean that the presidency and ministry of foreign affairs have renounced its task of elevating firmness in the general design and implementation of foreign policy. On the contrary, it has used this direction with others to emphasize the weight of this function and explore a skill in a more humble way of coordinating foreign activities of the other government departments (Hocking, 1999; Owozu, 2016). In doing this, it would help in organizing the ministry, as it was pointed out, that coordination is the mechanism of understanding the task of diplomacy and foreign ministries at the developmental stage (Langhorne and Wallace 1999; Berridge, 2005).

Essentially, foreign policy is controlled and/or coordinated via the following instruments: (1). requiring that all diplomatic officials attached to missions abroad report home via the ambassador; (2). Placing ministry of foreign affairs (MFA) personnel in key positions of foreign affairs committees; (3). Vetting treaties and agreements with foreign governments; (4). Coordinating foreign trips by officials; (5). Chairing inter-agency committees; (6). Exchanging staff with other ministries; (7). Absorbing other ministries (Berridge, 2005).

### **Direct-dial Diplomacy in Nigeria and the Inherent Issues**

In most states of the world today the presidency/ministry of foreign affairs must formally share influence over the conduct as well as the making of foreign policy with other ministries and executive agencies as they engage in 'direct dial diplomacy.' Nevertheless, in many of them, the influence that it retains is considerable (Owozu, 2016). Expressing his view, Jola (2016) surmised that:

...If the Nigerian president, governors and/or other public officials were to be collecting estacode in Naira, would they still travel as often? Their estacode

are in dollars. It is reported that every of the president's foreign trip is estimated at \$1m which will cost tax payers about N400m (Jola, 2016, p. 12).

“Six governors embarked on a 3-day trip to Germany to discuss areas of partnership and cooperation with a select group of German technocrats and investors...” (Bello-Barkindo cited in Marwan, 2017, p. 6). Unlike any other time, the above announcement made by the Governors forum spokesperson for a planned trip by Governors elicited a lot of complaints. The travel will particularly be beneficial where the cause is fully harnessed. A corresponding drawback, however, is where governors end up acting otherwise and hence making it look as a jamboree trip. Ideally, the guiding philosophy to any overseas travel by government officials should be to provide development opportunities to the society. The key significance of foreign trips is diplomacy and it is aimed at:

- involving treaties/agreements between high level officials;
- Dialogue amongst academics, business, religious and NGOs to foster relationships in various sectors;
- People-people diplomacy aimed at building understanding between hostile communities (Marwan, 2017).

Obviously and based on the information given by their spokesperson, the trip is aimed at the first two parts of the diplomacy mentioned above. It is noteworthy that even in the developed world, the Governors embark on foreign trips to woo both investors and investment in various sectors. A clear indication therefore, is that foreign trips bring about integration and consequently societal development. In the last one and half decades of Nigeria's democracy, in order to woo investors virtually all the governors during the period embarked on various foreign trips. The key question therefore is: Have they yielded anything positive? Of course, the answer is no, as these public officials embark on foreign trips for their selfish aggrandisement. The considerable evidence with some states governors' lack of carrying along their people's interest is connected to how people feel about their overall governance. The basic view of Nigerians generally, is that instead of governors to first explore the opportunities provided locally, they resort to globe-trotting, an action that is seen by many as selfish.

According to Jola (2016) at the end of one of their meetings in 2015, the governors' forum publicly complained about their inability to harness/access the many federal government intervention programmes. This will further make people believe that even some of international grants and aids that are channelled through the federal government are as well being found inaccessible by the governors. If these are true, then instead of most “jamboree” trips, why will the governors not stay at home and finish the needed?

They often claim that the global partnerships they are seeking will cover non-oil sectors such as agriculture, health, renewable energy and vocational training institutions that could employ our teeming unemployed and jobless youths. Accordingly, Ibeh (2017, p. 6) surmised that:

...the trip that is being embarked upon is as Spartan as possible as no governor is traveling with more than one aide, who is also responsible for the area of need as it relates to their region, and they will be visiting several industrial installations, vocational training centres and theme-parks to get a first-hand feel of how they are organised so as to replicate same in their domains.

But before the journey, it is however necessary for the governors to justify to the populace on whether or not they have locally explored such opportunities from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Bank of Industry (BOI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), and many other federal government's intervention programs in various sectors, and to no avail. These opportunities that abound locally are also in the non-oil sector and skill acquisition in tandem with the governors' quest of the travel. In furtherance of this, state governors should as much as possible create a strong synergy with the federal government in such a way that they can quickly tap into the openings brought by the ministry of foreign affairs and foreign services, the president's travels and foreign aid that abound. Another important function that each state government ought to do is to give opportunities to local investors and periodically make a review of how much they have succeeded in tapping from these openings rather seeking for foreign partnership (Jola, 2016; Ibeh, 2017; Marwan, 2017).

According to Ugo (2000) on a daily basis our state governors travel abroad to seek economic and foreign investors, and in the process travel with a large group of people for that purpose, and you can imagine the kinds of money that is involved in these ventures and travels. The governors should try first of all to make for instance, Kano State, Enugu State, Rivers State Benue State etc. conducive, crime free, motorable roads, and improve educational system to attract a market woman from Sokoto State or a business woman from Oyo State to their respective state. If these governors can guarantee and improve condition for business people from other parts of Nigeria to come to their States, then that will be a good example for foreign investor to use as a reason to come, you know it is said that charity begins at home. It is believed that if any state will stand out and make business people or market people from other states comfortable and create access to good schools, motorable roads, running water and of course electricity available, Nigerians will invest in that State (Marwan, 2017).

According to Ibeh (2017) State Governors in Nigeria delight in global-trotting. Since 1999, the trend has been ridiculously etched in the psyche of state governors and their hordes of political appointees. They feel incomplete without junketing to foreign lands as soon as they assume office. The decent ones among them officially claim the foreign trips are meant to source for foreign investors in sectors like power energy, roads and water plants construction and acquire modern agricultural techniques and equipment. In the same vein, some advance flimsy reasons for the trips such as medical tourism, sight-seeing of Western countries when

on annual vacations; personal visits to family members and friends or attending international conferences, but on themes which have no bearing whatsoever on any development platform in their states (Ibeh, 2017).

Governors in Nigeria have been identified as obsessed with global-trotting. And in some cases, the governors themselves fail to do as much as feigning an official or unofficial reason for the foreign trips, which are hugely funded with tax payers' money. Peculiarly, almost all the governors claim the foreign trips are to woo or source for foreign investors. The unconvincing tales also laughably speak of direct foreign investments in areas like Agro-business, automobiles, industrial partnership, irrigation technology and farm equipment. What is intriguing about the foreign trips is their failure in virtually all the states, yet, the Governors have refused to let go their flair for global-trotting. It is to our greatest chagrin that despite the multiple foreign trips, of these public officials, none can pinpoint to any foreign investor or any advantage the state has received from such trips, outside lining their pockets with estacode allowances, catching fun in foreign lands and shopping abroad (Ibeh, 2017; Marwan, 2017).

When citizens in their states demand for dividends and accountability of such trips, they only reply with words like "expecting it soon" and the shamefaced ones simply prefer silence. These trips provide them with diplomatic cover to ferry sleaze money abroad, under the guise of sourcing for foreign investors and it is the sole reason no public benefits have been derived from the visits. Yet, these public officials simply forget their impoverished people, poorly developed states and rural communities, coupled with the undeserved penury imposed on them would continue to shockingly haunt them. Very many of the foreign expertise or technology they claim to seek outside the shores of Nigeria can be obtained locally. And these diplomatic relations, intelligence and/or information they seek can be gotten through the various departments in Nigerian foreign missions abroad of the states they desire to relate with. In other words, the Nigerian missions abroad can serve as a nexus between any home ministry and agency of government in achieving whatsoever they desire from the state; as there exists departments of agriculture, technology, health, education/scholarship, consular services etc. in all diplomatic/foreign missions abroad.

### **Globalisation and Direct-Dial Diplomacy: The Internet (or ICT) as a Necessary Evil**

The internet and/or information and communication technology (ICT) as one of the tools of globalisation is the decisive technology of the information age, and with the explosion of wireless communication in the early twenty-first century, we can say that humankind is now almost entirely connected. States, government, people, companies, and institutions feel the depth of this technological change. Although, the media often report that intense use of the Internet increases the risk of isolation, alienation, and withdrawal from society, but available evidence shows that the Internet neither isolates people nor reduces their sociability; it actually increases

sociability, civic engagement, and the intensity of family and friendship relationships, in all cultures (Castells, 2014).

Today, social networking sites are the preferred platforms for all kinds of activities, both government, business and personal, and sociability has dramatically increased, but it is a different kind of sociability. Most Facebook users visit the site daily, and they connect on multiple dimensions, but only on the dimensions they choose. The virtual life is becoming more social than the physical life, but it is less a virtual reality than a real virtuality, facilitating real-life work and urban living (Dutton, & Helsper, 2007).

Multidimensionality, states/governments, marketers, civil society and private individuals (state actors and non-state actors) are migrating massively to the networks people construct by themselves and for themselves. At root, social-networking entrepreneurs are really selling spaces in which people can freely and autonomously construct their lives. Sites that attempt to impede free communication are soon abandoned by many users in favour of friendlier and less restricted spaces (Christodoulides, 2005).

Perhaps the most telling expression of this new freedom is the internet's transformation of socio-political practices. Messages no longer flow solely from the few to the many, with little interactivity. Now, messages also flow from the many to the many, via multi-avenues and interactively. By disintermediating government, ministerial and corporate control of foreign, communication, horizontal communication networks have created a new landscape of social and political change. It is worthy to note that internet and particularly wireless communication has helped social movements pose more of a challenge to state power (Dutton, and Helsper, 2007).

It is however very easy for any government official to make diplomatic contact (direct-dial diplomacy) through the internet without difficulties. This new trend of globalisation is not unconnected to the ever growing wave of the social media, availability of mobile networks and data for myriads of virtual communications on air, without physical contact with corresponding government counterparts abroad, which most of the times impede on the foreign policy formulation, implementation, control and coordination of states.

### **Internet Diplomacy: The Future of State's Traditional Diplomacy**

According to Westcott (2008) it is germane to ask whether the internet really makes much modification in states' relations at all. Although, the internet is merely a new means of communication that reinforces trends that already existed. Trends like Global terrorism and NGOs were major factors in international relations before the wake of internet, hence people can more easily participate in foreign policy debate. Albeit, over, 70% still have little or no interest in doing so. More so, diplomacy is still conducted primarily between the governments of nation states, because they hold the levers of law and power that enable things to happen; and the most crucial

discussions will still be conducted face to face, because that is necessary to establish the level of trust that allows decisions to be taken (Soloman, 2007).

Despite the above position on traditional diplomatic and foreign policy engagements of nation states, the argument is that the internet has come to powerfully influence the traditional foreign policy formulation, implementation, control and coordination of foreign policy. In the words of Westcott (2008), the internet has three fundamental impacts on international relations, viz.:

- It multiplies and amplifies the number of voices and interests involved in international policy-making, complicating international decision-making and reducing the exclusive control of states in the process;
- It accelerates and frees the dissemination of information, accurate or not, about any issue or event which can impact on its consequences and handling;
- It enables traditional diplomatic services to be delivered faster and more cost-effectively, both to ones' own citizens and government, and to those of other countries.

According to Soloman (2007), the internet introduced changes of form that create changes of substance. The effect of the first two points above is to enhance the importance of ideas that influence people's actions and organisations' decisions, and of the networks that carry these ideas. Actors in international relations, (i.e. states and non-state actors), will have to take greater account of the first two points in the future. They have no choice but to make full use of the opportunities the internet offers if they are to remain effective, but strive yet, more to combat the dangers of direct dial diplomacy.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Traditionally, the onus lies within the auspices of the state's apparatus in controlling and coordinating foreign policy, but this erstwhile exclusive constitutional right in Nigeria for example has been challenged unknowingly by direct dial diplomacy, occasioned by the expansion and contraction of the world via globalisation and the internet. Albeit, international relations and foreign policy have always been greatly affected by technology like aeroplane in the past century. Interestingly, the Internet has a profound influence on states' relations. It constitutes, along with the information and communication technology (ICT) systems connecting a significant leap in people's ability to communicate both one-to-one and one-to-many via myriads of social media and gadgets. Just as ocean-going sailing ships enabled the expansion of Europe in the mercantilist era of 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the telegraph reinforced the empires of the 19th century, and the aeroplane, radio and TV transformed international relations in the 20th century, the internet creates a new set of opportunities and risks for the world today. The main difference is that the changes will happen faster as direct dial diplomacy does not only thrive in aeroplane travels but with the speed of the internet.

The effects of direct dial diplomacy and the internet on the relations between people across borders and between states are enormous. But it is necessary to

establish a framework for analysing the changes, as the business sector has done, and will help nation states and other international actors take strategic decisions based on reality, rather than on an outdated view of how things happen. Prediction is a poor basis for strategic planning, but a more sophisticated risk analysis of how the direct dial diplomacy through the internet is changing international relations and foreign policy control and coordination will help improve strategic decisions, and indicate how to engage better with international actors to achieve the desired ends. Also, whenever foreign travels are proposed, the proposal should give full justification of the travel, including reviewing the previous travels and the expected outcome of the proposed one.

The study therefore recommends thus:

1. For Ministries, managing a growingly complex spectrum of relations with numerous states require the utilisation of the proficient intranet services and smart databases with ensured security and deep search possibilities, allowing for easy instant access at any point, in order to checkmate direct-dial diplomacy.
2. The Nigerian state foreign policy control and coordination should build its cyber technology and mechanisms for monitoring and checking direct-dial diplomacy.
3. The Nigerian state through the foreign policy coordinating channel should create and develop a simple diplomatic-app (i.e. software application) that will convey vital elements of Nigeria's foreign policy actions and endeavours, provisions, major achievements in international relations, promote opportunities, decency in the country's foreign missions and attract valuable suggestions domestically and diaspora for improvements, which will certainly be remarkable as milestone for Nigerian government in strengthening the country's foreign policy and diplomatic space.
4. It should be emphasised that as digital or internet diplomacy is gaining traction, as important tool in the delivery and promotion of a nation's foreign policy as shown by many countries within the global north and south; hence Nigeria will achieve a lot more if she can quickly tap into this enabler for advanced foreign policy and diplomacy.

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