

# Shifting the paradigm in Nigeria's foreign policy: Goodluck Jonathan and Nigeria's vision 20:2020

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**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of Nigeria's comprehensive framework for transforming herself into one of the twenty leading economies by the year 2020, this paper examines the foreign policy initiatives of current Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan. Identifying the welfare of the State and its people as the ultimate goal of foreign policy, it interrogated the relative extent this goal is the driving force of Nigeria's foreign policy under Jonathan. It found out that the foreign policy initiatives of President Jonathan are focused more than ever before on Nigeria's domestic priorities especially as captured in the vision 20:2020 document. This, the paper argues, marks a shift in paradigm when compared with the past when African issues dominated Nigeria's attention. Noting that challenges still abound in all sectors, the paper makes recommendations aimed at improving Nigeria's chances of attaining the goals and objectives of Nigeria's vision.

**Keywords:** Vision 20:2020, Foreign Policy, Domestic Priorities, Paradigm Shift

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## 1. Introduction

States seek to attain different goals and objectives in the process of governing their sovereign entities. While some of the goals can be attained by the States on their own, i.e., without reference to any other entity, others can only be attained with the cooperation and or active support of other similar entities beyond their borders. All decisions in form of actions or reactions, dealing with such matters requiring cooperation and or active support of others across the borders of a given State for their attainment, fall within the ambit of foreign policy. Thus for Rosenau (1974), foreign policy is authoritative actions taken by governments or are committed to take in order either to maintain the desirable aspects of the international environment or to amend its undesirable aspects.

As a necessarily calculated and goal-oriented activity, foreign policy is purposive. This purpose, as indicated above is altering or creating a condition outside the sovereign boundaries to gain national advantage, usually defined in terms of national interest (see also Wilkenfeld et al, 1980, Legg and Morrison, 1971). Thus for Beard (1934) foreign policies are not built upon abstraction, but are the result of practical conceptions of national interest measurable in terms of security and prosperity. Though security and prosperity remain the persistent goals pursued

by States with their foreign policies, any definition of the concept must also encapsulate strategies and tactics designed to achieve the goals. In this vein, foreign policy is not only a set of explicit objectives with regard to the world beyond the borders of a given socio-political unit, but also encapsulates sets of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives (Legg and Morrison, 1971).

From the above, national (and not international) goals as well as the strategies for attaining them are the key components of foreign policy. Consequently, the foreign policy of any nation will ultimately be judged by how much of national goals (goals that benefit the State and its people) it achieves. Yet, defining and adopting strategies to attain goals requires resources. Variations in nations' ability to attain set goals are related to variations in resource availability so that Crab Jr., (1972) would consider national goals and resources for attaining them the two most fundamental ingredients of foreign policy.

Indeed, the interaction between the goals and resources is the perennial subject of statecraft, and in this no two governments or regimes even in a single country are exactly the same. Given the diverse and at most times conflicting range of demands that each leadership of Nigeria had to process and pursue in their international relations at different epochs in history vis-à-vis the national resources at their disposals, Nigeria's foreign policy under each of the various leaderships that have ruled it is unique.

Notwithstanding the fact that various regimes have tried to pursue the country's foreign policy under almost the same objectives, the style and vigor of their leadership, agenda setting, mobilization of critical material and immaterial resources have differed with consequent difference in concrete national goal attainments. Thus one can speak of the foreign policy not just of Nigeria, for instance, but of a specific leader. This paper intends to look at Nigeria's foreign policy under Goodluck Jonathan.

One is not unaware of the robust international engagements that interspersed practically all Nigerian leaders' foreign policies, including the weakest President Yar'Adua. The nation's commitment to the cause of international peace and security especially in Africa, involvement in non-alignment movement, decolonization of the continent, the frontline role in the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa, commitment to the cause of democratization in Africa, etc. were purposeful at their various times, and, image boosting for Nigeria. They all can conveniently be articulated largely within the framework of Afro-centrism. However, such engagements have hardly been embedded in, or linked to, the nation's domestic priorities such that *The Guardian* (2011) would opine that a Father Christmas attitude underpins Nigeria's engagement with other countries (*Guardian* Editorial, Wednesday, 25 May 2011).

Yet, assumed as rational self-interested actor, the first and foremost concern of any State's foreign policy, including Nigeria, should be with her security and prosperity. In the case of Nigeria, this would imply that even her Afro-centric policies in terms of which she has proudly defined her foreign policy over the years, ought to have been pursued from the perspective of the nation's security and prosperity. The failure of such policies over the years to impact domestic priorities of Nigeria is the background to the recommendation of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) on Vision 20:2020 report on Foreign policy (2009) that Nigeria (not Africa) should henceforth be the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Indeed, vision 20:2020 represents contemporary attempt at focusing policies on Nigeria's domestic priorities. The foreign policy component of that document is also embedded in these domestic priorities considered necessary to catapulting Nigeria into the G.20 club.

Since the production of technical report on foreign policy component of the Vision, two administrations have managed Nigeria's international affairs: President Yar'Adua (2007 – 2010) and President Goodluck Jonathan (2010 – date). The lethargic character of Yar'Adua's administration is of little interest to this paper. The focus of this study is on the administration of Jonathan.

## 2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework of Analysis

The study rests on the theoretical assumption that nations

in their international engagements act for their own benefit and not for the benefit of others unless both interests happen to be assimilated (Washington, 1787 as in Fritzpatrick, 1933). This logic of Realpolitik which underlies or should underlie national interest theory is, key to understanding contemporary Nigeria's foreign policy engagements. According to this logic advancing the specific interest of the state or what Wolfers (1962) referred to as possession goals are immutable aspects of national interest. Wolfers used possession goals in contradistinction to milieu goals which, while related to states interest are essentially concerned with the wider international environment. It is the pursuit of this goals concern, especially in Africa that has significantly dominated Nigeria's foreign policy in the past. However, for any nation to realistically pursue its interest, milieu goal turnout to be a requisite towards the fruitful pursuit of possession goal, and, which in this paper is defined in terms of domestic priorities. Indeed, Wolfers (1962) acknowledged this basic fact when he observed that "efforts to promote international law or establish international organizations" and I may add engage in peace keeping operations, give assistance les privileged nations among others undertaken consistently by Nigeria in past "make sense if nations' have reason to concern themselves with things other than their own possession" Milieu goal turnout to be a station towards possession goal.

The paper interrogates the current foreign policy initiatives of Nigeria under Jonathan. How far so far? To what extent has Jonathan's foreign policy contributed to the welfare of the Nigerian State and people as to hope for the realization of the dreams embodied in vision 20:2020 document? Using qualitative method of collecting and analyzing data generated from secondary sources, it brings to light the gradual but definite transformation going on in Nigeria's contemporary foreign policy arena such that one can confidently speak of paradigm shift. The paper is divided into seven main parts. The introduction is followed in section two by brief explication of theoretical and methodological questions. Brief description of Vision 20:2020 which are assumed as outcomes intended to be consequent upon Nigeria's contemporary foreign policy initiatives are discussed in section three. While section four x-rays the political machinations that led to the emergence of Goodluck Jonathan as Nigeria's President "without electoral contest", the fifth section steps back to examine the contours of Nigeria's current foreign policy initiatives and investigates the relative extent they are linked to the nation's contemporary realities which are domestic in character. Based on findings which highlight the challenges, the paper in section six proposes reasonable approach to reforms that might realistically place Nigeria on a firm pedestal arising from national strength from which she can more effectively engage the ever changing global arena. Some conclusions are finally drawn in section seven.

### 3. The Foreign Policy Component of Vision 20:2020

Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 was articulated under the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999 – 2007) in the fourth republic. The vision captures among other things, the road map and blueprint to achieving national economic growth and becoming one of the twenty largest economies in the world by 2020 (Itua, 2011), or more specifically becoming one of the twenty most developed countries by the year 2020 (NTWG, 2009). The administration of Yar'Adua (2007 – 2010) that took over from Obasanjo set up the National Council to develop a blueprint for the Vision in collaboration with the National Planning Commission. The blueprint which was presented to Nigerians in November of 2007, formed the basis for various technical groups including the one on foreign policy, to workout actionable objectives.

Being a developed country is much more than economic in nature. It is an interconnection of various variables many of which require formidable engagement with the rest of the global community. Herein comes the vital role of diplomacy and therefore, of foreign policy formulation and implementation. Against this background, the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) on foreign policy component articulated in 2009 specific foreign policy objectives for the vision as follows:

- i. Articulate a better image for Nigeria and improve the country's relationship with the outside world by cultivating goodwill for Nigeria
- ii. Seek closer and better relations with the major and emerging powers
- iii. Pursue the acquisition and transfer of technology, promotion of trade, investment and cultural relations to boost Nigeria's ailing economy
- iv. Facilitate rapid and sustained economic growth and development
- v. Assist Nigeria to achieve systemic equilibrium, peace, stability and good governance
- vi. Ensure Nigeria's leadership role in Africa and the ECOWAS region is sustained and safeguarded
- vii. Use diplomacy to persuade Nigerians in the Diaspora to be part of nation building efforts
- viii. Assist Nigeria in securing a permanent seat in the United nation's Security Council
- ix. Ensure Nigeria's strategic role and military capability
- x. Seek and encourage high level visits by government officials and private sector to countries abroad that have strategic relevance to Nigeria's interests and vice-versa, for achievement of our goals in vision 20:2020
- xi. Use success stories elsewhere and domesticate these for national Interest
- xii. Ensure Nigeria's domestication and compliance with bilateral and multilateral obligations and treaties

Along the lines envisioned by NTWG on foreign policy, these objectives serve as benchmarks for the evaluation of Nigeria's foreign policy. It becomes, therefore pertinent to interrogate the relative extent to which the nation's foreign policy under President Jonathan has been dynamic, proactive and resilient in the pursuit of the agenda enunciated in the vision using the above benchmarks. More specifically, to what extent has the president's actions and reactions on the global stage leveraged Nigeria's large economy and population to harness the opportunities in the global environment for sustainable socio-economic development of the country and attainment of the Vision?

For the avoidance of doubt, various works have addressed the question of the attainability of the Vision (Adeputun, 2008; Abdullahi, 2009; Itua, 2011; Onyenekenwa, 2011; Okere, 2012; Olutokun 2013) with almost same negative conclusion focused on the timeframe. Indeed, to be among the first twenty in the world Nigeria would have to replace at the least a country currently in the club. Using the 2009 IMF ranking, Nigeria would have to overtake Indonesia then ranked 20<sup>th</sup> with Nigeria ranked 41<sup>st</sup> (Abdullahi, 2009). It would have to compete with Malaysia also engaged in the same struggle and even with the same timeframe. In essence, Nigeria would have to compete internationally with few States already in the club who would not want to be relegated and many States who want, like Nigeria, to join the league of first twenty. It is within this international setting that this paper focuses on the foreign policy component of this comprehensive framework. As a comprehensive framework, Vision 20:2020 is much more than economic and certainly much more than what domestic policies can attain. This paper focuses on efforts in the direction which brackets the attainability of the goal within the time frame of 2020.

### 4. The Emergence of Goodluck Jonathan

Under normal competitive environment, Goodluck Jonathan could never have emerged as the president of Nigeria. Competition, however, remains a great deficit in Nigeria's political matrix. With low socio-economic background, his personal dispositions, his belonging to the minority group in a country in which three ethnic groups consider themselves as the principal share holders in the Nigerian enterprise, it would be unthinkable that he would become the president of Nigeria. It was not much an outcome of good luck as some contend than outcome of devious machinations of "emperor" Obasanjo to perpetuate himself in power. Thus from his official entry into political arena in the contest for power, he never really contested election to become a governor in 2005 and a president in 2010.

His ascension to political power began as a running mate of Diepreye Alamieseigha in the Bayelsa State gubernatorial election of 1999. The known contestant was

not him, but Alamieseigha. He obediently served as a deputy Governor and not much was heard of him until his boss fell out with Obasanjo, the then President of Nigeria in 2005. Obasanjo's administration was characterized by personalism rather than institutionalism. Obasanjo was able to mobilize federal apparatuses, especially the EFCC to bring down Alamieseigha in a most bizarre manner. This paved the way for Jonathan who was Deputy Governor, to be sworn in on 9 December 2005 as Governor in accordance with the law on succession. He functioned as Governor of Bayelsa State for the remainder of the term which was to elapse on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

It was expected that he would have filed his papers to contest his first election as the Governor of Bayelsa State. Obasanjo, however, decided to use him allegedly to perpetuate himself as the President of Nigeria after his botched third term agenda. To achieve the goal, Obasanjo crippled open competition among interested candidates for the office of the President of the country and picked a sickly Umaru Yar'Adua, Governor of Katsina State to carry the flag of the party in the 2007 presidential election. As competition was crippled by Obasanjo at the Party level so was it also at the national level. This meant that who ever emerged as the Party's flag bearer was sure to emerge as the President of Nigeria. It was widely alleged that Obasanjo had full medical record of Yar'Adua and knew he would not survive his first term as President. In fact, some alleged that Obasanjo was "informed" that Yar'Adua had only a year to survive and this informed his choice of Goodluck Jonathan as Yar'Adua's running mate, Vice President, and by laws of succession, President to be used as his stooge.

True or false, it is not for this paper to investigate the allegations except to state the well known fact earlier stated, that under normal competitive environment neither Yar'Adua nor Goodluck Jonathan would have smelt the presidency of Nigeria. Like Obasanjo, Yar'Adua administered Nigeria more personally than institutionally. Thus in the absence of the President, Goodluck Jonathan as his Vice was in no position to stand in for him except in situations where members of the President's inner circle could not thread like chairing the Federal Executive Council. In other situations, and they were many on the international arena, when the incapacitated President could not perform, he could not bring himself to delegate to his Vice. The consequence was that the ship of the Nigerian State was sailing rudderless on the international waters of foreign policy. It is speculated that Yar'Adua's inner circle dominated by Mrs. Yar'Adua, may have, for selfish motives, prevented the President from transferring temporary authority to the Vice President as stipulated in the nation's constitution, creating in the process a headless government.

Without functional institutions and without a leader, Nigeria's foreign relations and indeed the State of Nigeria also went into coma when Yar'Adua went into coma in Saudi Arabian hospital. Nigeria failed to show up at

important international meetings, lost many positions in multilateral associations, forsook obligations, and found herself in a situation where many of her allies started wondering what had gone wrong with Nigeria (Abati, 2012). On the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2010, a federal high court had conferred on Jonathan the power to carry out State affairs while President Yar'Adua 'received medical treatment in Saudi Arabia'. Even then it took extra constitutional measures engineered by some Governors of the federating States and the Senate through its 'doctrine of necessity' to actually get the Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan working as the acting President on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Even with all these the clique prevented him from functioning effectively until he was finally sworn in on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 following the formal announcement of the death of the President the previous day. Goodluck Jonathan became on that date the 14<sup>th</sup> Head of State of Nigeria and her "4<sup>th</sup> elected" executive President.

Just as it happened with his ascension to power as the Governor of Bayelsa State, Jonathan ascended the Presidency without contest. He subsequently presented himself as a candidate for the 2011 presidential elections which he won and was sworn in for another four year term on 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2011. As the 14<sup>th</sup> Head of State of Nigeria, Jonathan has to date piloted the affairs of the nation for 4 good years, equivalent of a full tenure of an elected President within which period, this paper argues, "Nigeria" rather than "Africa" became the centrepiece of Nigeria's foreign policy in practical terms. This shift in Nigeria's foreign policy is significant. Stepping back to examine his foreign policy, vis-à-vis Nigeria's vision 20:2020 which he received as a working document, is the focus of next section.

## 5. Foreign Policy Initiatives of Jonathan

In his capacity as the acting President, Jonathan embarked on a number of diplomatic shuttles, as part of a deliberate attempt to reassure the world that Nigeria was well and secure despite the internal political challenges especially with the challenges of succession it was going through. Nigeria literally returned to the international arena. One of the shuttles took him to the USA where he met with his American counterpart. The delisting of Nigeria from the discriminatory rule of the Department of Homeland Security on special screening of passengers on international flights to the United States that specifically targeted Nigerians (consequent upon the Christmas day attempted bombing a US airline by a Nigerian) was the effect of the re-invigorated diplomatic contact. Earlier he recalled Nigeria's ambassador to Libya in protest of suggestion by Muammar Gaddafi that Nigeria should separate into a Muslim North State and a Christian South. The action was aimed at checkmating the excesses of the then Libyan leader and sending a strong signal that Nigeria can no longer tolerate such undue interference in the nation's internal affairs from any State.

The relationship between Nigeria and US continued to improve under Jonathan. This is most exemplified in the signing of the first US–Nigeria Bi-national Commission, in April 2010. This Alao (2011) noted, aimed to establish a mechanism for sustained, bilateral, high-level dialogue to promote and increase diplomatic, economic and security co-operation between the two countries. The commission's main objectives are the following: (Nnoma-Addison, 2010)

- Promote and co-ordinate the diplomatic, economic, military, commercial, technical, social and cultural co-operation between the two countries.
- Address areas of mutual interest and/or concern and develop strategies for tackling these issues with assistance and co-ordination from both governments.
- Assist in the implementation and follow-up of agreements and all other legal instruments already concluded between the governments.
- Create favourable conditions to carry out co-operation programmes and projects as may be decided by mutual consent and help to resolve any difficulties that may arise in carrying out any such programmes and/or projects.
- Evaluate the development of co-operation between the two countries as well as initiatives from each government aiming to expand co-operation to new areas.

It is evident from the above that the Commission's main focus is Nigeria's domestic priorities. These key domestic issues include good governance, electoral reform and preparations, transparency and anti-corruption, energy (electricity supply) reform and investment, as well as food and agricultural development (Alao, 2011), which are all key components of what Jonathan termed his transformation agenda.

The foreign policy agenda of Yar'Adua of 'Citizen Diplomacy' was followed up by Jonathan with visible actions. Thus in all his diplomatic shuttles, for which he was, like Obasanjo, criticized, he took time to interact with Nigerians abroad and showed himself ready to take up their problems with host countries. In fact, he engineered a purposeful mobilisation and instrumentalisation of Nigerians in Diaspora for national development. Not only has the regime encouraged the formation of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) in all countries where there are Nigerians, it has gone further to establish a Diaspora Commission to take charge of the affairs of Nigerians in Diasporas and ensure their effective instrumentalisation. Remarkably this is a component of the foreign policy objectives of Vision 20:2020. His prompt response to the denigrating deportation of Nigerians by South Africa *quid pro quo* sent a very strong signal that Nigeria "has come of age" and that any attempt to denigrate her will have consequences. His diplomacy of consequence is one with visible actions. The diplomatic way he was able to manage the said Nigeria-South Africa face-off was highly welcomed by Nigerians. He was also quick to order

the evacuation of Nigerians trapped in the crisis torn countries like Libya in 2011 and Egypt in January 2012. In fact Nigeria was the first to airlift her citizens from Egypt. In January 2012 Nigeria hosted the fifth Nigeria/EU dialogue aimed at streamlining migration in a globalizing world and in the interest of all parties. These affirmative action's projected vividly the citizen centred focus of Nigeria's Foreign Policy.

Shortly after his re-election as the president of Nigeria, Jonathan directed a review of Nigeria's foreign policy, "to reflect current realities". According to him, "after 50 years of independence, it is time to review the country's foreign policy, in line with modern realities and international developments" (<http://dailytimes.com.ng>). In his address to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Foreign Affairs, earlier setup by Yar'Adua, he hinted the direction of the review, namely, foreign policy with focus on Nigeria's domestic priorities. Thus in a follow up seminar the President clearly noted that although the country had played a leading and facilitating role in the emancipation of the African continent from colonialism, racial discrimination and reintegration in the past, there was now need to focus on new priorities and challenges, such as job creation, economic progress, poverty eradication and security, which, he said, were topmost on the nation's national agenda. According to him also,

*in the era of globalization; at a time of grave challenges to national and international security such as we face from terrorism and transnational criminal networks; at a time of massive poverty and youth restiveness in our country, we have no choice but to adjust and adapt the way we conduct foreign policy. As we respond to the forces of globalization, our diplomacy must be put at the service of our domestic priorities* (Jonathan 2011).

Putting diplomacy at the service of domestic priorities is the driving phrase. Accordingly for him, Nigeria's diplomacy must articulate and vigorously market the country as an environment where business can thrive. Thus foreign policy came rightly to be seen as the externalization of domestic priorities and the aspirations of citizens. If Yar'Adua anchored his government's policies on "seven point agenda", Jonathan called his own "transformation agenda" which in essence entail all the elements of the seven point agenda. Its key priorities which include Real sector, Agriculture & Rural Development, Water Resources, Commerce & Industry, Mines & Steel Development, Physical Infrastructure, Defence and Security, etc address issues central to the people of Nigeria. It is such domestic priorities that have continued to propel Nigeria's actions and reactions on the international arena.

As part of the economic diplomacy which is evidently at the centre stage of Vision 20:2020, strengthening of Nigeria's economic interest through the protection of the country's businessmen and women wherever they exist in Africa and the rest of the world became a top priority of Government (<http://www.radionigeriaibadan.com>). Today, more than ever, while the organized private sector are following the

Nigerian diplomatic flag around the globe to generate needed development at home, Nigeria's diplomacy, at the same time is following trade and sources of foreign direct investment for the same reason. The administration is giving special attention to the improvement and strengthening of economic ties with the country's partners in the international community as a foundation for stability and growth. (<http://dailytimes.com.ng>). According to the Jonathan (2011), Nigeria's foreign policy and diplomacy are now anchored on the realization of the Transformation Agenda through the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment. This, the Minister of Foreign Affairs re-echoed when he observed:

*"We believe that foreign policy must be used to support domestic programmes of government because your primary responsibility is to ensure that there is peace, progress and economic development Africa and we are using our foreign policy today to support all government efforts in that direction"* (<http://www.compassnewspaper.org/index.php/politics/90-front-page-/5430-jonathan-receives-revised-foreign-policy>) Some successes have been registered as Nigeria is number one investment destination in Africa with \$8.9 billion according to UNCTAD's 2012 Investment Report.

For the first time, there are conscious efforts by Nigeria to ensure that her sacrifices of lives and resources towards restoring peace to many countries in Africa no longer go without commensurate national benefit. It marked a paradigm shift in Nigeria's foreign policy. To recall is that over the years, Nigeria had merely made sacrifices without returns. In the current dispensation, Nigeria's foreign policy while upholding Nigeria's leadership in Africa, strives to ensure that such role supports and benefits domestic programmes. This means that focusing on Nigeria's domestic priorities has not meant the abandonment of African issues. In fact in partnership with the African Union, Nigeria continues to lead the process for democracy and development in the continent. The main focus of this initiative is to see that at least within the continent there are true democracies where people elect their leaders. This policy focus according to the President is very much compatible with Nigeria's economic diplomacy. In his words,

*"economic diplomacy is entirely compatible with democracy promotion, for at least two reasons. First, building a strong economy will help us build a strong, stable, prosperous and peaceful country, where democracy will thrive and business will flourish, and where citizens can live and pursue their dreams with dignity under the protection of the law. Second, it is in Nigeria's interest to promote the culture of democracy across Africa, since it is the surest way to guarantee peace, justice and happiness in the continent"* (Jonathan, 2011).

It is on this commitment that the regime and through its leadership in ECOWAS effectively managed the ouster of Laurent Gbagbo of Cote D'Ivoire when he refused to hand over power, after the 2010 Presidential elections in that country. Similar crisis of self-perpetuation in office in

Niger was also dealt with by the regime. The regime's quick recognition of the National Transitional Council of Libya sent a clear message to Muammar Gaddafi to quit. This move has been criticised as falling into a Western plot and a betrayal of AU. Nevertheless, for Jonathan it was in Nigeria's national interest. To note is that the relations between Nigeria and Libya at the material time was not the best since the Libyan strong man's unprovoked meddling in Nigeria's internal affairs. As the Chairman of ECOWAS for two years Nigeria gradually returned to its position as a very highly influential player in the sub-regional and continental affairs and received accolade by the end of her tenure in February 2012. Nigeria's intervention in the crisis that rocked Mali and support for the democratic process there has led to the conduct of election that ushered in a new Government in that country.

Globally, Nigeria strives to deepen partnerships with other countries. This partnership for the President must be anchored on mutual respect and responsiveness. In the absence of "mutual respect and responsiveness" consequences would follow. This was exemplified in the "Iran arms scandal". To recall is that on the 26th October, 2010 Nigeria's relations with Iran became turbulent as a result of the discovery of thirteen containers arms and ammunitions surreptitiously shipped to Nigeria from Iran. This was happening at a time of growing insecurity in Nigeria. Iranian Mission not only got an immediate response, but Nigeria promptly reported the incident to the United Nations. Perhaps where Nigeria exhibited courage and asserted the independence of her foreign policy was at the United Nations General Assembly's vote on admission of Palestine as Non-member State of the body. Prior to the voting, most Third World countries were under immense pressure from Israel and United States to vote no! Nigeria was among the majority that voted for the admission of the State of Palestine in the UN. Similar to the above is the President's position on the International Criminal Court vis-à-vis its planned trial of the Kenyan President which clearly shows courage and independence in foreign policy.

Nigeria's visibility on the globe outside the peacekeeping/peace enforcement operations began picking up under the regime. Through lobbying and campaigning, Nigerian candidates got into positions in international organizations: Presidency of the Executive Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) based in Montreal, Canada; member UN Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); AU Commissioner for Political Affairs; Commissioner Political, Peace and Security at the ECOWAS Commission. In October 2011 Nigeria was also elected to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Vice Presidency of INTERPOL representing Africa. In November the same year, Nigeria was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO for a term of four years while Nigeria's Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Hon. Mohammed Bello Adoke, was re-elected to the International Law Commission. Others include the election

of Dr. Chile Eboe-Osuji as one of the six judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in a tightly contested election in New York in November, 2011 and the election of Nigeria as the first President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: UN Women (Abati, 2012). Jonathan has also pursued Nigeria's desire for permanent membership in a yet to be reformed UN Security Council with proactive diplomacy. In May 2011 Nigeria discussed this with France, one of the key powers, and received France's promise of support in this regard (Ikuomola, 2011). Similar support came from China during the historic visit of the President to that country. The recent election in 2013 of Nigeria as non-permanent member of Security Council is an expression faith in Nigeria by the international community.

Measured in terms of Nigeria's visibility in the global community and the amount of foreign direct investment and foreign trade inflow which are indices of effective engagement with outside world, Nigeria under Jonathan has made significant progress touching all the objectives of the Vision 20:2020. It is perhaps these efforts that have earned the Nigerian President international recognition of being among 100 most influential leaders of the world in 2012 by *Times International* magazine. Challenges, however, still abound in all the spheres including the key priorities in his transformation agenda. It is perhaps the enormity of these challenges that have made scholars describe the Vision as myth (Itua, 2011) or over ambitious (Olutokun 2013).

## 6. Foreign Policy and the Challenges of Sustaining the Vision

More than external challenges, it is internal challenges that are the dampening factor in Nigeria's attainment of great power status which Vision 20:2020 envisages. Key internal challenges include Poor governance, insecurity of lives and property, power supply (Olutokun, 2013), the quality of the nation's educational institutions; its capacity to innovate; the quality of its democracy and the ability to build consensus and resolve conflicts (Okere, 2012). More specifically, the insurgency in the North, the collapse of public education, growing unemployment, oil dependent economy, dilapidated economic infrastructure among others are major issues that deserve attention if not radical government intervention. In spite of these obvious challenges, the commitment of the President to sustaining the policy objectives of the Vision is not in doubt. However, this sustaining and attainment of the Vision even outside the scheduled timeframe requires addressing the challenges in a more positive way.

As is well known, for instance, education of the young ones is the bedrock of any nation. As the heartbeat of any nation these youths are the hopes for the realization and sustenance of the vision. Yet they constitute today the bulk of the neglected. The need, therefore, for Government to comprehensively place this above all others (Itua, 2011) by

addressing the issues of their empowerment and job creation. This will stem the tide of their illegal emigration to countries where they engage in activities that impinge on the nation's image. Without doubt, this youth related problematic lies even at the foundation of the nation's security challenges and which, currently, is sending wrong signals to major prospective foreign investors. It is also a fact that because of the security challenges in addition to the general harsh operating business environment even local investors are relocating to other countries like Ghana. Parts of this general harsh business environment are mismanagement and corruption. How mismanagement and corruption give the nation weak foundation for any robust international engagement is one of the most discussed issues that it does not require any further discussion here.

Diversifying the economy which currently is driven by oil – a depleting resource – is critical to sustaining the Vision. In this regard, there has been more words than action as, comparatively, there has been not much investment in the non-oil sector. Yet Nigeria is richly endowed with abundant raw materials that could support various areas of manufacturing begging for exploitation (Okere, 2012). To address the issue the current trend in the establishment of industrial parks need to be stepped up and properly harnessed to attract foreign manufacturing firms to advantage the manufacturing base of the country. But this assumes the availability of power which currently, in spite some progress, still stands far below acceptable level. Official declaration of a State of emergency on the power sector is not out of place as this will ginger adequate resource mobilization for improvement.

All the above are not only issues that directly affect the economy and the lives of the people, they are also fundamental to constructing a nation that can command attention of the global community and attaining the vision of great power status. Though mainly within the confines of domestic policy action, the intermistic character of contemporary issues makes it near to impossible for any nation to go it alone even in such domestic matters. This importance of the external environment to the internal challenges must be comprehended and appreciated by all policy actors. It is this comprehension that will enable the generation of compatible policy and effective diplomacy that serve national interest. Consequent upon this nexus, key to continued progress in the direction of that Vision is a continued focusing on foreign policy as the externalization of domestic priorities and the aspirations of citizens.

As much as diplomacy cannot be effective under the current context of security challenges, decay in the educational sector as well as weak economic base, yet Nigeria requires diplomacy and official ingenuity to address these challenges. Such diplomacy requires formidable specialized knowledge in many fields of intellectual endeavors with an overlay of generalized training in the diplomacy of the respective issues for any diplomat to make meaningful impact and sell the agenda of this country. In other words, Nigeria's diplomacy requires

high caliber professionals to drive her contemporary diplomacy. Accordingly, capacity building for Nigerian diplomats should be placed on the front burner. The above requirement is however negated by the present practice of settling political friends with diplomatic appointment by the President. To remain relevant in the world of today Nigeria must jettison the politicization of Foreign Service and the Ministry of foreign affairs in general in its recruitment and appointment exercises. This was clearly brought out by the 2010 Round Table on Nigeria's Foreign Policy. The Round Table called on the Nigerian foreign policy establishment to stem the tide of eroding professionalism and decline in foreign service, to take advantage of the prospects and opportunities presented by a changing domestic and external environment, and to seek to confront and address the litany of known challenges in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (*This Day*, October 9, 2010).

Added to the above is the need to re-orientate Foreign Service Officers in the direction of moral rectitude, of integrity, loyalty, good conduct and hard work. This is critical in managing the nation's foreign policies as a tool of development. This need arises from the current perception of Nigeria's diplomatic posts especially by Nigerians in the Diaspora as "centres of officialdom managed by indolent officials who are generally too self-absorbed, haughty, uncaring and irresponsible". As noted by Obijiofor, (2012)

*Nigerian diplomats serving in overseas countries have been chastised publicly for their selfish behaviour and for their contemptuous treatment of, or disregard for, citizens in need of consular services. The Foreign Affairs Ministry must take responsibility for the scandalous conduct of diplomatic staff that has sullied the image of the country at home and abroad.*

This poor impression and lack of confidence by many Nigerians in the Diaspora in Nigeria's Foreign Service as a result of mediocre work ethic, and poor relationship with the public, is a major challenge which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must take responsibility and squarely address. Even the MFA as the coordinating Ministry requires re-positioning. In fact any effective repositioning of Nigeria's diplomatic missions cannot be achieved without a thorough overhaul of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. According to Obijiofor (2012), "it is this supervising ministry that has contributed most appallingly – indirectly and directly – to the ghastly image of Nigerian diplomatic posts". A major problem that has undermined the capacity of Nigerian diplomatic missions to function effectively is adequate funding. The nation cannot maintain poorly funded diplomatic missions and expect the diplomats to perform effectively.

Besides the issue of finance, managing the multi-varied players in today's diplomacy is a major challenge. A key feature of today's diplomacy is the involvement of myriads of actors and the growth of multilateral diplomacy. Non-state actors have proliferated in number and types, ranging from traditional economic interest groups, through to resource, environmental, humanitarian, criminal and global

governance interests. In some instances, non-governmental organizations are closely linked to official administrations, while others are transnationally linked. If one juxtaposes this fact with the original conception of Vision 20:2020 which is designed as bottom-top in approach to allow the real stakeholders, (which are basically private entities and individuals) to be its driving force, then effort must be intensified to maintain collaborative link between public and private sector in the process of articulating and implementing the foreign policies related to the Vision.

In consequence of the above and because of the vital role of the economy in the whole agenda, regular dialogue with private sector operators playing active roles in economic planning, based on market principles need be intensified. This is in addition to the formation of business partnerships/linkages that engender learning and transfer of technology. While forming the said partnership Nigeria must at the same time re-examine all existing partnerships, especially those with the West to ensure that they can enable self-reliance not just for Nigeria but also for Africa in general. In addition there has been a geometric growth in the involvement of a wider range of ministries/departments in the nation's external relations. Such ministries/departments as industry, aviation, environment, shipping, customs, health, education and sports, which get involved in Nigeria's external relations, require coordination just as the non-state actors. This is particularly necessary in matters relating to both formulation and implementation of international agreements. Coordinating these varied actors to ensure the nation acts in unison has become an important distinguishing feature in modern diplomacy

Finally, it is important to note that several well orchestrated projects have "waxed and crashed" in Nigeria. The very reasons for such waxing and crashing are still with Nigeria today: indiscipline and policy inconsistencies. As in the past, Nigeria fancies herself as an actor on the world stage but refuses to muster the discipline, stamina and industry that can translate the potential conferred on her by material endowments into achieved status (Olukotun, 2013). According to Onyenekenwa (2011), Nigerian governments are plagued with institutional/structural inconsistencies and discontinuity. The officials are not committed to the development of policies of their predecessors hence the national landscape is littered with uncompleted projects (Okigbo, 1989; Oladapo, 2004). Counting indiscipline and lack of political will in the formulation and implementation of policies as constituting "the most serious defects in Nigeria", Onyenekenwa opined that "a policy is only as effective as the discipline and will that sustain it". According to him,

*lack of discipline manifests in the infusion of partisan and ethnic politics into the technology of data collection, in the location of government projects and in the application of policies, while poor policy performance is largely attributed to lack of commitment and political will on the part of the leadership.*

Managing the Nigerian Vision to avoid crash requires,



therefore, that the leadership commit to sufficient discipline and political will to enforce policies. How well the leadership does just that as to respond to the changes and challenges facing the Vision, will definitely determine its effectiveness, relevance, and future.

## 7. Conclusion

Foreign policy not only shapes the country's identity at large, but also determines its place and its future in the world. It is within this framework that this paper examined Nigeria's foreign policy under the current administration of Jonathan vis-à-vis Nigeria's aspiration of becoming an important global player. Fully aware of the raging controversy over the attainability of the Vision especially from the standpoint of timeframe which we played down, evidence abound that the regime of Jonathan is making positive effort in the direction of the vision with the instrumentality of foreign policy. The administration is presently taking advantage of the international environment, as is the case with other nations, in enhancing domestic development. Today, more than ever before, Nigeria's foreign policy is giving greater attention to her domestic priorities and herein lies the paradigm shift.

The articulations in the foreign policy component of the Vision call for Nigeria's foreign policy to be great in focus, reciprocal in tactics, and beneficial to Nigerian citizens in outcome (*This day*, 2010). They can take care of today's domestic needs identified as the economic well-being of citizens, enhanced security and massive foreign investment inflow and are related to Nigeria's leadership role in the sub-region, in the continent as well as her global dream of great power. With the involvement of the people and various sectors in driving development process in a very sustainable manner, the paradigm shift gives hope that "the promised land" that the Vision 20:2020 is pointing at may one day be attained subject, above all, to discipline and policy consistency especially in the leadership.

For the avoidance of doubt, most of the ideas expressed in the recommendations of this paper may not be too alien to the Jonathan administration as Nigeria has never lacked in good policies. In fact the various declaratory statements of the president bear testimony to this fact. For instance, in line with the shift in paradigm the Foreign affairs Minister was credited with declaring that Nigeria's foreign policy under the regime would be investment-driven and different from the previous focus on Africa. According to him "Our foreign policy must now reflect the aspirations of Nigerians, our collective dreams, the yearnings of our children, and the fulfilment of the potential of our youths as well as the realization of the manifest destiny of this great country" (as in Anyanwu & Uzoatu 2011). The Minister even outlined ideas similar to some of the ideas canvassed in this paper. The problem which has been the bane is the implementation. The challenge is that of managing official pronouncements to ensure consistency between declaratory and operational policies. This is a legacy which Goodluck

Jonathan can bequeath to Nigeria.

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