

THE UNITED STATES AND NIGERIAN RELATIONS: DIPLOMATIC ROW OVER OFFICIAL TERRORIST LABEL

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ABSTRACT

Arguably, the US – Nigerian relations before the events on 25th of December, 2009 was a healthy one. However, the attempted suicide bomb on that day had serious ramifications to the extent that it threatened the, otherwise cordial relationship between the two countries. Consequently, the United States of America put Nigeria on a watch list of potential terrorist countries. This did not only irked the generality of Nigerians (both home and abroad), but also generated calls for a retaliatory response from the Nigerian government. This paper examines the dynamics of the bilateral relations between the two countries, with a view to defining a trajectory, not only for the deadlock, but also to avert future similar occurrences. It recommends that while the Nigerian state should do more to curb religious fanaticism and other domestic crises that negatively impacts state stability, the US government should re-examine her foreign policy host to allow for international cooperation against global terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

The 25th of December 2009 failed suicide bomb attack by the Nigerian born Umar Abdulmutallab Farouk, took the entire world by surprise. Not only did the mere mention of the young man as a Nigerian rattle the country (as no known Nigerian has ever taken such terrorist step before then), but the subsequent inclusion by the Obama Administration of the country in a United States' terrorist list irked both Nigerians and watchers alike. By implications this pronouncement labeled Nigeria a "Terrorist State".

The United States of America (US) and Nigeria are both power brokers in their respective spheres of influences, with each commanding immense clouts on both sides of the Atlantic. The relationship between these two regional powers spans decades. Since 1960, the US has been a strong ally of Nigeria regardless of the occasional hiccups, orchestrated by military dictatorship in the country. Throughout this lengthy period, the US actively supported Nigeria's planned return to democracy economically through direct financial aids, grants,

assistance in securing World Bank loans and politically through active diplomacy (Obiozo, 1992). Also, trade relations between the two countries have improved over the years, especially in the area of natural resources.

However, the decision by the US to enlist Nigeria in the terrorist watch list over the December 2009 incident stood the chance to jeopardize the healthy relations built between the two nations. A lot of questions were raised on why the US took such a stern position on Nigeria. These include: Does Nigeria merit being regarded as a "terror state"? What are the indices of a terror state? Will the ultimatum given to Nigeria achieve the desired result? etc. Although the Nigerian government through the National Assembly gave the US a seven day ultimatum to de-list Nigeria from the terror watch list or face severe consequences, many observers believed this did not put-paid to the magnitude of the US earlier policy decision.

This paper looks at the import of the US policy decision following the attempted bomb attack. The general focus is on the possible implications of such decision, had it been carried out, on US-Nigeria relations. Also, a content

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analysis of the cumulative responses of Nigerian following the near-rupture of bilateral relations between the two countries formed the basis of methodological inquiry in this paper. This was supported by data collected from archival materials used therein. Lessons drawn from this scenario could guide future relations between the two countries. The paper is drawn into the following sections: Introduction, theoretical perspectives, an analysis of US-Nigerian relations beyond the controversy over the terror list, the way forward and a concluding note that includes future pathways for healthy relations between them.

Theoretical Perspectives on US-Nigerian Relations

One of the defining factors in inter-state relations centres on national interest. It helps a nation to maintain or increase its power and prestige. National interest is the predominant concept in foreign policy and international relations. It is the sum total of all national values; that is, the general and continuing ends for which a nation acts. It is thus characterized by its non-specific nature; by a degree of continuing and its connection with political action.

National interests articulate the aspirations of a state and can be used operationally in application to the actual policies and programmes pursued. Also, it can be used polemically in political arguments to explain, rationalize or criticize a state's action. This point finds adequate expression in the definition put forward by Adeniran, who postulates thus:

When statesmen and bureaucrats --- act in their national interest --- they take actions on issues that would improve the political situation, the economic wellbeing, the health and culture of the people as well as their political survival. They are being urged to take action that will improve the lot of the people rather than pursue policies that will subject the people to domination by other countries --- policies which are likely to make them unable to stand among other nations (Adeniran, 1983:191)

The above position clearly establishes a linkage between foreign policy and national interest of a state. Thus, Wolfer posits that; ---the makers of national policies often rise above narrow and sectional economic interest to focus their attention on the more inclusive interests of the whole nation (Wolfer, 1962:23).

Given these explanations of the concept of national interest, it is possible to make the following deductions. Firstly that every state has its foreign policy which is a set of objectives or goals that it must aspire to promote vis-à-vis the objectives of other members of the international community. Second, that the foreign policy of any state must be seen to reflect such identifiable goals. Third, that national interest must and should be directed towards the achievement of goals that would benefit the entire nation. Finally, that national interest can be perverted. Perversion could take several forms such as when the decision makers try to enhance the economic interests of a section of the society because of existing primordial or partisan relationship. The leadership of a country can also manipulate the national interest to suit itself and its supporters to the detriment of the nation-state at large.

Often, nations are seen not to have permanent friends or foes in the international system but permanent interests. Frankel (1964), argues that the notion of national interest is based upon the values of the national community, values which can be regarded as the products of its culture, and as the expression of its sense of cohesion, values which define for men what they believe to be right or just. The relationship between these values is intrinsic and constitutes the focal point of any nation's actions and reactions in the international community.

All statesmen are governed by their respective national interests. This, however, does not connote that they can never agree on anything. On the contrary, they do, but only on the basis of their conception of their respective national interests. Co-operation is conditioned by the existence of a reasonably stable international order within which the actions of other states are predictable and therefore foreign policy possible. From here stem the interests of all states in the international system; again according to their national advantage. If they find this order congenial, they support it and if necessary, defend it; if uncongenially they endeavour to alter it accordingly.

Based on the above analysis, it is clear that the theory of national interest of states appropriately explains the nature of US-Nigeria relations. At this bilateral level, the US has often dictated the direction and pace of events that characterized the relationship based on her national interest (Volman, 2003). This is not surprising though, given the comparative

advantage she has over Nigeria in terms of political, economic and military might. Nonetheless, both nations have benefited immensely from the relationship. This possibly explains why the US decision provoked a monumental response from Nigeria to the extent that some Nigerians called for retaliatory measures (Daily Trust, 2010).

An Analysis of US-Nigerian Relations

Historically, the relationship between the US and Nigeria commenced on proper footing after the latter's sovereign status from Britain in 1960. At that time, there was the conscious belief in the similarity of the two countries leadership role in their respective continents (Amoa, 2011). As a result, Nigeria was offered a long-term development aid of \$25 million by Kennedy Administration (Sanderson, 1974).

The relations between the two countries was mutually beneficial and seen as such for more than a decade, through slight disruption was noticed during the fall of the Balewa Administration, followed shortly by a 30 months civil war. During the war, the US took a relatively neutral position and all her efforts were restricted to humanitarian concerns of giving relief supplies to civilian victims of the war (David, 2009). This was also a period when the US involvement in the continent was dictated by Cold War considerations. It was clear that the question of Communist infiltration into Nigeria was a remote possibility which kept the US involvement in the war to its barest minimum. This consequently resulted in some changes in US-Nigerian relations and the Gowon Regime started scouting for other friends in the communist bloc, as opposed to the earlier over reliance on the West, arrow-headed by the US (Art, 2003).

Thus, there arose uneasiness in the friendship that existed between the two countries. On the part of the US, this was occasioned by the coming of the military to power in Nigeria; a situation considered as an anomaly by the former (Gebe, 2010). Due to their abhorrence of military rule, the US upheld that soldier in politics could only be tolerated but never loved or trusted as they were highly authoritarian, sometimes irrational, and openly acted in defiance of democratic norms. This became the cause of strain and mistrust that was eventually entrenched in the relations between the countries. (Obiozor, 1992).

On her part, Nigeria's military regimes have continuously claimed to be nationalist and hence expressed disgust at the attempts of the

US to influence political events of the country so as to guarantee the protection of the latter's national interest, as well as investments in Nigeria (Idonor, 2007). The realities of economic interdependence are the only moderating consideration that has underpinned the relations over time, in such a manner that the two nations were always quick to arrive at compromises, whenever any issue openly threatened their relations (Lee, 2006).

Since leadership in Nigeria has been dominated by the military since independence, what obtains is that the US had to relate with her from the perspective of a minor in the scheme of inter-state relations (Joseph, 1991). Here, oil from Nigeria became vital to the American economic interests, while her population size and strategic location constitute one of the most profitable markets and investment opportunities on the continent. This is partly responsible for the tolerant mood that the US has bestowed on Nigeria all along. Obviously, the demands of the US economic (national) interest would not allow her to openly denounce and disregard Nigeria and the latter's various military governments, irrespective of how under-democratic such regimes were (Lake, Whiteman, Lyman and Stephen, 2005).

The relations between Nigeria and the United States came under great strain during General Abacha's regime which started in 1993. The spate of international condemnation of the regime made General Abacha go on the defensive claiming that it was in protection of Nigeria's national interest. The embattled General had equally argued that the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election was committed by his predecessor and that the Interim National Government he overthrew in November of the same year had proven weak and incapable of arresting the drift towards chaos and insecurity in the country (Atoyebi, 2003).

In spite of the facts that these claims lacked merits on account of the General's prominence in the regimes that came before his, it would have been expected that he would try to arrive at a workable compromise with other principle states in the international system. Instead, he chose to further antagonize them, especially the US by perpetrating acts of tyranny as in the incarceration of the acclaimed winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, the brutal hanging of the nine Ogoni minority rights activists, the jailing of alleged coup plotter and the repressive attacks launched against human rights groups and pro-democracy associations in

the country (Maduagwu, 2006). The later acts greatly exacerbated the growing strains in Nigeria–US relations to the extent that the US had to impose unilateral sanctions on her while simultaneously canvassing her allies on the Europeans continent to do same. The departure from her traditional friends in the international community led to severe reverberations in the entire spectrum of Nigeria's socio-economic and political life (Imobighe, 2001).

On the economic front, the country experienced severe hardship, as international financial institutions such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the London and Paris Clubs either suspended negotiated loans for development assistance or bluntly refused to review Nigeria's debt burdens so as to grant her relief (Caratono and Gardiner, 2003) also, certain categories of military technology earlier received from the US were suspended (Cesarz, Morrison and Cooke, 2003). The US had a big say in both financial institutions named above and in the policy directions of the other European allies that Nigeria related with. Besides, the diplomatic isolation imposed on Nigeria robbed her of serious political leverage in the international community. One of such related developments was the suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations along with its attendant privileges; another was the loss of popularity in the United Nations (UN) where Nigeria had been making a strong bid for membership of the Security Council (Douglas,

Kennedy and Okonta, 2003).

In response to these developments, the Nigerian government sought to ride the storm by sheer bravado and propaganda, claiming that the US was leading her allies with the intention to re-colonize the country (O' Brien, 2003). She claimed that the US action of de-certifying Nigeria as a major out post for the narcotics trade, the ban on direct flights from Nigeria to US, the stringent immigration procedures instituted against Nigerians and the attempt to get the UN pass a resolution against the country on account of alleged human rights abuses, were all blackmail tactics intended by the US to isolate Nigeria in the international community. The Nigerian government also became very vocal in telling any interested observer that what was happening in the country was within the domain of her internal affairs and as such, did not warrant undue external interference (Obi, 2004). The foregoing presaged the emergence of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria; a dispensation where conscious efforts were made to launder the country's image abroad. Thus, official contacts were made to normalize relations with the US. Trade movements between the two countries since the turn of the millennium, indicated in tables 1 and 2 reflect a growing diplomatic relationship. This means that the US remains a principal trading partner with Nigeria. As such, both countries would not tolerate any form of disruption in their economic ties.

**Non – Oil Imports by Country of Origin
(Naira Million)
Table 1**

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Share of Total			
					2002	2003	2004	2005
Industrial Countries	866,631.46	926,527.14	987,567.77	1,192,782.54	63.5	54.0	55.3	57.0
United States of America	408,925.01	200,610.59	258,589.95	418,520.54	30.0	11.7	14.5	20.0
Japan	35,314.63	68,136.74	64,368.17	355,742.46	2.6	4.0	3.6	17.0
France	74,038.29	84,189.11	167,676.05	104,630.13	5.4	4.9	9.4	5.0
Germany	99,515.39	117,577.28	111,718.41	73,241.09	7.3	6.9	6.3	3.5
Italy	52,807.84	91,221.47	111,554.80	62,778.08	3.9	5.3	6.2	3.0
Netherlands	80,112.68	137,324.77	132,828.87	94,167.12	5.9	8.0	7.4	4.5
United Kingdom	115,917.62	227,467.18	140,831.52	83,704.11	8.5	13.3	7.9	4.0
Africa	49,065.55	113,682.05	113,163.76	138,111.78	3.6	6.6	6.3	6.6
Cote d'Ivoire	6,098.54	10,836.24	16,447.18	20,926.03	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.0
Ghana	4,989.72	7,880.90	10,011.33	10,463.01	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5
Niger	--	--	--	--	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Africa	37,977.29	94,964.90	86,705.25	106,722.74	2.8	5.5	4.9	5.1
Asia (excluding Japan)	343,712.04	476,728.22	453,940.10	573,373.14	25.2	27.8	25.4	27.4

China, P.R.	93,733.23	178,719.14	187,307.16	251,112.32	6.9	10.4	10.5	12.0
Hong Kong	19,502.73	25,483.69	13,634.92	20,926.03	1.4	1.5	0.8	1.0
India	76,786.21	121,365.93	94,928.84	125,556.16	5.6	7.1	5.3	6.0
Indonesia	30,482.59	33,338.38	18,194.80	41,852.05	2.2	1.9	1.0	2.0
Korea	33,126.18	68,760.89	71,867.04	73,241.09	2.4	4.0	4.0	3.5
Singapore	44,245.42	8,990.88	12,981.13	8,370.41	3.2	0.5	0.7	0.4
Thailand	45,844.68	40,069.29	55,026.21	52,315.07	3.4	2.3	3.1	2.5
Others	104,447.71	198,671.76	232,263.26	188,334.24	7.7	11.6	13.0	9.0
Russia	34,512.21	73,095.39	79,375.53	62,778.08	2.5	4.3	4.4	3.0
Turkey	10,118.04	11,427.31	21,095.30	14,648.22	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.7
Ukraine	5,266.92	31,917.66	40,402.86	27,203.84	0.4	1.9	2.3	1.3
Brazil	54,550.54	82,231.39	91,389.57	83,704.11	4.0	4.8	5.1	4.0
Total	1,363,865.76	1,715,609.17	1,786,934.89	2,092,602.70	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1/ Revised

2/ Provisional

Sources: Compiled from monthly returns on Crude Oil Exports by NNPC and Crude Oil Mining and Prospecting Co (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2005).

Direction of Oil Exports
Table 2

Region/Country	Quantity (Thousand Barrels)					Value (N' Million)				
	2001	2002	2003	2004 1/	2005 2/	2001	2002	2003	2004 1/	2005 2/
North America	321,797.8	240,642.7	329,233.1	408,856.1	427,318.5	758,995.0	600,373.9	1,236,018.5	2,086,689.1	3,167,959.8
Canada	12,782.7	10,473.0	25,059.8	27,150.8	39,737.4	30,149.4	26,128.8	94,080.4	138,570.2	299,772.4
U.S.A.	309,015.1	230,169.7	304,173.3	381,705.3	387,581.0	728,845.6	574,245.0	1,141,938.0	1,948,118.9	2,868,187.4
South America	56,421.7	48,484.1	64,939.8	103,625.9	52,287.7	133,076.7	120,961.7	243,799.1	528,878.1	394,449.7
Argentina	2,413.7	1,315.0	1,265.0	399.0	0.0	5,693.0	3,280.7	4,749.3	2,036.6	0.0
Brazil	44,448.1	38,492.3	55,015.1	88,458.9	29,247.0	104,835.7	96,033.5	206,539.6	451,469.7	220,634.4
Uruguay	1,230.4	0.0	948.1	3,899.3	14,695.1	2,902.0	0.0	3,559.5	19,900.8	110,857.0
Chile	5,472.9	5,783.5	2,945.8	9,024.5	3,856.4	12,908.5	14,429.2	11,059.3	46,058.6	29,092.4
Peru	919.6	996.7	3,856.3	996.9	1,948.0	2,169.1	2,486.6	14,477.4	5,088.0	14,695.7
Venezuela	950.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	958.9	2,241.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7,234.0
Mexico	0.0	948.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,366.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Zealand	986.8	947.9	909.4	847.3	1,582.2	2,327.4	2,364.9	3,414.1	4,324.2	11,936.1
Virgin Island										
Europe	203,561.0	151,716.4	174,609.6	114,130.2	146,760.0	480,120.5	378,513.8	655,525.3	582,489.1	1,107,132.6
Germany	10,559.1	14,019.8	17,126.0	1,435.4	6,682.9	24,904.8	34,977.6	64,295.0	7,326.0	50,414.6
France	51,266.7	41,189.5	43,215.1	25,967.4	31,083.3	120,918.0	102,762.7	162,239.6	132,530.6	234,487.4
Italy	35,532.5	27,031.9	22,845.7	20,478.6	22,911.7	83,807.2	67,441.2	85,768.2	104,517.1	172,841.8
Netherlands	14,982.7	8,403.0	18,832.2	6,812.7	20,831.9	35,338.2	20,964.4	70,700.5	34,770.4	157,152.2
Portugal	20,272.3	20,828.6	20,504.1	16,343.2	15,839.1	47,814.5	51,964.9	76,977.3	83,411.1	119,487.5
Spain	64,925.2	40,243.7	50,179.8	41,243.6	42,278.7	153,133.0	100,403.0	188,386.7	210,496.0	318,943.6
Sweden	5,073.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,307.0	11,966.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	24,947.3
United Kingdom	949.0	0.0	955.5	1,849.2	3,825.4	2,238.2	0.0	3,587.2	9,437.8	28,858.2
Switzerland	0.0	0.0	951.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,570.8	0.0	0.0
Asia & far East	144,023.8	170,509.0	153,187.6	176,284.3	144,755.5	339,695.7	425,398.9	575,102.3	899,706.7	1,092,011.0
Japan	6,394.1	23,975.5	31,030.9	31,166.4	15,409.9	15,081.2	59,816.0	116,497.4	159,064.8	116,249.5
Singapore	1,103.3	879.2	0.0	300.8	0.0	2,602.3	2,193.5	0.0	1,535.2	0.0
India	81,062.8	86,026.9	79,469.4	92,422.2	94,453.1	191,195.4	214,626.6	298,346.8	471,697.6	712,537.9
Indonesia	34,409.3	43,064.6	26,546.1	25,747.1	16,241.6	81,158.1	107,440.9	99,660.2	131,406.2	122,523.9
Korea	1,944.7	1,899.3	3,155.2	10,672.7	9,382.0	4,586.8	4,738.5	11,845.3	54,470.8	70,776.3
Taiwan	10,506.5	7,555.1	8,640.6	7,222.6	0.0	24,780.7	18,849.0	32,438.9	36,861.9	0.0
China	7,614.7	2,848.9	3,447.2	8,752.5	9,269.0	17,960.0	7,107.7	12,941.7	44,670.2	69,923.4
Thailand	988.4	4,259.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,331.2	10,626.7	0.0	0.0	0.0

Australia	0.0	0.0	898.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,372.0	0.0	0.0
Africa	54,289.4	51,974.4	69,046.1	68,390.2	52,533.5	128,047.5	129,669.7	259,215.4	349,044.5	396,303.6
Ghana	13,119.7	14,957.7	15,533.6	14,914.6	13,082.5	30,944.3	37,317.6	58,542.1	76,120.3	98,692.3
Ivory Coast	14,971.2	11,350.9	12,535.8	24,032.2	26,578.4	35,311.1	28,319.2	47,062.5	122,653.7	200,502.9
Senegal	8,992.7	4,942.5	8,687.0	8,184.2	6,815.0	21,210.3	12,331.0	32,613.0	41,770.0	51,411.3
Cameroon	5,774.6	4,733.7	10,121.7	10,595.0	0.0	13,620.1	11,810.1	37,999.3	54,074.1	0.0
South Africa	9,777.2	15,989.5	22,108.0	9,618.3	6,057.6	23,060.5	39,891.8	82,998.5	49,089.3	45,697.2
Others	1,654.0	0.0	0.0	1,045.7	0.0	3,901.1	0.0	0.0	5,337.1	0.0
Grand Total	780,093.7	663,326.5	791,016.3	871,286.6	823,655.3	1,839,935.4	1,654,918.0	2,969,660.6	4,446,807.6	6,157,856.7

1/ Revised

2/ Provisional

Sources: Compiled from monthly returns on Crude Oil Exports by NNPC and Crude Oil Mining and Prospecting Co (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2005).

Beyond the Controversy over the Terror List

The diplomatic row between Nigeria and the United States of America over the listing of Nigeria among the 14 terrorist countries generated a lot of ripples. The failed bombing attempt prompted US President Barack Obama to call for a sweeping review of the country's security procedures. Consequently, US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) imposed new security rules on passengers flying to the US. By this token, every individual flying into the US from anywhere in the world, traveling from or through nations that are classified as state sponsors of terrorism or other countries of interests, will be required to go through enhanced screening. (Ijediogo, 2010). The directive also calls for an increased use of enhanced screening technologies and mandated threat-based and random screening for passengers on US bound international flights.

While Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria are considered "State sponsors of terrorism" by the US Department of State, other nine countries including Nigeria are classified as "countries of interest" where terrorism and instability are problems. The implications of this measure are that Western countries would begin to exercise extra-caution in dealing with Nigerians traveling through or to them and foreign investors would be dissuaded as they would not want their reputation smeared in indulging with a country under a terror watch-list. Although opinions differ, some observers point to the incessant sectarian fundamentalist actions and activities that have become perennial in some parts of the country as the extant reason for the country's enlisting. Nigeria, no doubts has some past experiences of deadly religious uprising, such as the 1980s Matatsime sectarian attacks, Boko Haram insurgencies which started in 2009, 2010 Kala Kato crisis, and a near-permanent ethno-

sectarian clashes, amongst others. These religious strives may have attracted the attention of the US and prompted the decision to tag Nigeria a terrorist sponsoring state, especially when hundreds of people are killed on flimsy and baseless religious protests.

Indeed, there has been no concrete evidence; other than suspicion that al-Qaeda exists in Nigeria. Nevertheless it is always a strong argument that religious riots in which people are killed, sometimes slaughtered, amounts to terrorism. America regards Nigeria almost as a terrorist inclined state on account of this. The belief in Washington is that terrorism practiced locally has the potential someday to be practiced internationally. Since the 1983 when Matatsime struck, and leashed terror on a high scale on innocent citizens, sectarian strife has grown unfettered in Nigeria. The regularity of such strife, which usually starts on a flimsy or foolish excuse, has grown in magnitude.

After the 1987 incident that started in Kafanchan and spread to Kaduna, Zaria, Funtua, Malumfami, and Katsina, Nigerians expected the Federal Government to wade in to check the menace. As expected, the Babangida regime, tried to deal with the root cause, perhaps, as no other government since then had responded. Apart from setting up the Justice Donli Commission, it set up the Karibe White Tribunal that tried suspects and sent some to jail as the existing law permitted (Imhanlahimhin, 2000). That singular act dealt, a lasting blow, at least for some time, to religious fanaticism in the country. The only other incident, though on a much lower keel, during the period under review, involved some skirmishes in Kano and Katsina. Again, suspects were tried openly and sanctioned (Dike, 2003). Unfortunately, 10 years into civilian administration, no efforts have been made to seriously address religious crisis in the country.

As such, the incidents have grown in frequency and intensity and gravitates the nation towards a failing state. More so, it is alleged that the US government is unhappy with the way and manner the Nigerian government had handled past religious riots. This is particularly so, given the dimension of recent clashes, for which nobody is known to have been held culpable or punished, even when some names were mentioned as their sponsors.

The Way Forward

The US – Nigerian relations is a growing one. Given the efforts put in by both countries to allow subtle diplomacy to prevail on the issues surrounding the 'Terrorist label', it is obvious the two nations are more interested in collaborative approach to meeting global challenges than otherwise. Equally important is the fact that both America and Nigeria are beginning to work together in order to strengthen greater cooperation in intelligent sharing and application of intelligence data. According to BBC News (2011), US Homeland Security Secretary, Janet Napolitano promised American assistance to Nigeria in investigating the twin bomb blasts in Jos and Abuja in December 2009.

No doubt, Nigeria needs good governance. A government that would pilot the country through a straight course and address security lapses that give room for nursing internal religious fanaticism. Also, the Nigerian leadership should muster enough courage to deal decisively with the menace of religious crises in the country. To this effect, all previous attempts to address the issue should be overhauled and culprits brought to book. This would serve as deterrence to any would-be perpetrator of the dastardly act. Besides, a national legislation should be put in place to classify sectarian violence as a crime against the state (treason) and effectively implemented.

Today, global security is threatened by international terrorism. To mitigate its effects, nation-states should re-examine their foreign policy objectives. The pursuit of national interest, though still important, should be dovetailed into the quest for global peace. The high spate of terrorist activities all over the world should compel world leaders to examine state policies. A political solution is urgently needed to address the problem. Thus, the US government should look inwards to find a solution to its security problem. A starting point is to find out how America found itself in its precarious position. The US and indeed the international community

should know that the brand of terrorism championed by al-Qaeda has become a global phenomenon. In 2005, the European Strategies Intelligence and Security Centre released a statement by Claude Monique which predicted the future of global terrorism thus:

we are confronted with a new situation where diffuse and informal networks of young people who were born [trained] in Europe, who know it well and who have scores to settle, could serve as relay to more structured international organizations, or even try to head its own 'Jihad' to take revenge for the real or supposed humiliations felt by these young people (The Guardian, 2010:14).

It is a welcome development for countries (not only the US) to tighten their airport securities, there is however, the need for them to cooperative to ensure a safer world.

CONCLUSION

The impacts of the attempted suicide attack of an American Airline on the 25th of December, 2009 by a young Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdumuttallab on US – Nigerian relations formed the basis of this analysis. Sequel to the incident, the Obama Administration came up with a strong policy statement which included Nigeria on US terrorist watch list. As expected, there was a collective response to the content of the list by both the Nigerian government and citizen's alike calling for an immediate delisting of the country.

This paper looked at the evolutionary trend in US – Nigerian relations with a special emphasized on the nature of cooperative diplomacy that existed prior to the sad event. It also tried to examine the extant reasons responsible for the enlisting of Nigeria by the US. In this regard, state fragility, accentuated by sectarian fanaticism, prevalent in the country was examined. While calling on the Nigerian state to put its acts together to stamp out sectarian violence, the paper implores the US to re-examine her foreign policy thrust so as to arraign herself appropriately to the global efforts to combat terrorism.

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