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# CONCEPTUAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES IN ADMINISTRATION OF NIGERIA'S DIPLOMATIC SERVICES

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*ABSTRACT*

*Public administrators have for a long time faced some challenges in implementing public policies to bring about growth and development in Nigeria. This study utilizes bureaucratic and administrative theories as its theoretical framework. The paper identified political interferences, corruption, inadequate funding, favouritism and Nepotism as some of the challenges public administrators face in implementing political policies in Nigeria. Based on this, the paper recommends among others the creation of an independent body to oversee the activities of the administrators.*

**Keywords: diplomatic services, administrative Issues, conceptual issues, theoretical issues.**

## Introduction

The Nigerian diplomatic service was established by the Tafawa Balewa-led federal government in 1957, three years before Nigeria's independence, to prepare the nation for its foreign representation after independence. (Orjiako, 2010:96) It started as the External Affairs division of the Prime Minister's office, under the supervision of a British colonial official, Mr. E. K. Williams. (Fafowora, 2008). As Brownlie (1980:348) has rightly observed, all independent states have the legal capacity to establish diplomatic relations. This probably explains the fact that one of the first sovereign acts of most states that gained independence after the Second World War, including Nigeria, was membership of the United Nations and the establishment of diplomatic relations with other states. Consequently, it is no surprise that barely a week of her independence; Nigeria became the 99th member of the United Nations on 7 October, 1960. She quickly established a Permanent Mission to the UN in New York; raised the status of the Commissioner's office in London to that of a High Commission, just as the Nigerian Liaison office in Washington DC was elevated to the status of an Embassy. Opening of other

Embassies and High Commissions soon followed suit to the extent that by March 1961, Nigeria had established eleven diplomatic missions' abroad (Adeniji, 1990:164). The number rose to thirty-three in 1963; forty-six in 1970; ninety in 1982, ninety-seven in 1999 and two hundred and ninety in 2015. Recently, however, it was reduced to two hundred and nineteen by President Buhari in 2016 (Goldstar, 2003:243- 253; Opara,2016). Meanwhile, recruitment of the pioneer staff members of what later came to be known as Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs started between 1957 and 1958. The officers were recruited by the Federal Public Service Commission through the Federal, Eastern, Northern and Western Regional Public Services. According to Nwosu (1991:154), five of these officers came for the public service of the federation, two each came from the public service of the three Regions and one was a fresh graduate from the Oxford University. Regional Governments were also invited by the Federal Government to recommend officers from their various public services that might be willing to accept secondment into the Foreign Service and later transfer their services to the Federal Public Service (House of Representatives Sessional Paper No. 11 of 1956).

It is essential to note that the Prime Minister, Sir AbubakarTafawaBalewa, articulated the basis for the recruitment of these pioneer officers during a Foreign Policy debate in the House of Representatives in Lagos on 27 February, 1958, when he declared that:
After independence, Nigeria will largely be judged by the quality of the representation overseas, its diplomatic service. It is very easy to say that Nigeria should only be represented by the best; it is rather more difficult to define what the best is. In determining the qualifications for the new service, government has these considerations in mind: first, the candidate should be well educated; second, he must be or should be trained to be a civil servant divorced from politics, and third, he must acquire proficiency in languages. Our training policy was based on these principles (Jolaoso, 1991:13).

**Rationale for the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations**

One major rationale for Nigeria's establishment of diplomatic relations with other countries of the world was, and still is, the great importance the government attaches to maintaining friendly relations with other independent countries of the world. This is hinged on the belief that diplomacy facilitates communication and regular interaction between the leaders of states and other entities in world politics. As such, establishing diplomatic relations with other countries was seen as an important tool for minimizing friction in interstate relations; promoting the security of states; and establishing some form of international order (Kawonishe, 2003:1).

Another major reason that probably accounts for Nigeria's establishment of diplomatic missions, even right from independence, is the perceived need to use diplomatic exchanges as instruments of administrative and economic cooperation with other states. This probably explains why attention was given to establishing missions in contiguous states and in states within the African and West African sub-region in order to support positive and cooperative efforts for development.

Furthermore, the rapid expansion of Nigeria's overseas representation may also be regarded as a reflection of Nigeria's global, political and economic interests as defined by Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria's first Prime Minister (Idang, 1973:112). In fact, as Johns (1979:270) has rightly observed, the establishment of diplomatic missions in other countries

by states across the globe is an indication of the foreign policy orientation of a given state. It is indeed a reflection of the deliberate action or reaction of states and is a tangible measure of foreign policy behaviour of independent states.

**Conceptual and Theoretical Issues in the Administration of Nigeria's Diplomatic Services**

Nigeria's diplomatic service faces several conceptual issues that hinder its effectiveness. Here are some of the key challenges:

- **Political Interference:** Diplomatic postings are often influenced by political considerations rather than merit, undermining the professionalism and effectiveness of the service.
- **Lack of Professionalism:** Some diplomats lack the requisite skills and knowledge for effective representation of Nigeria's interests on the international stage. This is due to a lack of adequate training and capacity building.
- **Poor Remuneration and Working Conditions:** Low salaries and inadequate resources hamper the morale and performance of diplomats. This can lead to corruption and other unethical practices.
- **Inadequate Funding:** Insufficient budgetary allocations limit the ability of diplomatic missions to carry out their functions effectively. This can affect their ability to engage in diplomacy, promote trade, and protect Nigerian citizens abroad.
- **Weak Coordination and Communication:** There is often a lack of coordination and communication between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions, leading to inefficiencies and inconsistencies in policy implementation.
- **Lack of Clear Foreign Policy Objectives:** A lack of clear and consistent foreign policy objectives makes it difficult for diplomats to effectively represent Nigeria's interests on the international stage.

Today, Nigeria nation-state is overwhelmed by the sustained onslaught of Islamic State of West Africa Province, ISWAP in alliance with Jama'atuAhlisSunnaLiddaAwatiWal-Jihad in the North-East and armed banditry in the North-West where thousands of lives were lost and millions internally displaced occasioned with the recent insurgency of unknown gunmen in the South-East. These torrents of unpleasant incidents arguably raised serious doubts on the significance and potency of Nigerian Citizen Diplomacy as regards the security of its nationals.

**Conceptual Issues**

1. **National Interest and Foreign Policy:**
1. **Definition and Prioritization:** A lack of clear and consistent definition of Nigeria's national interest often leads to conflicting foreign policy objectives.
2. **Domestic vs. International Priorities:** Balancing domestic concerns with global challenges can be difficult, especially when short-term domestic needs overshadow long-term strategic goals.
2. **Role of Diplomacy in the 21st Century:**

- **Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Diplomacy:** The increasing importance of non-state actors and digital diplomacy challenges traditional diplomatic practices.
- **Public Diplomacy:** Effectively communicating Nigeria's message to global audiences requires innovative strategies and resources.

3. **Capacity Building and Professionalism:**

- **Skill Gaps:** A shortage of skilled diplomats in specific areas like economic diplomacy, cyber diplomacy, and climate diplomacy hinders Nigeria's ability to address emerging challenges.
- **Career Development:** A lack of clear career paths and opportunities for professional development can lead to stagnation and a decline in morale among diplomats.

**Theoretical Issues**

1. **Realism vs. Idealism:**

- **Balancing Power and Morality:** Nigeria often struggles to balance the pursuit of national interest with ethical considerations in its foreign policy.
- **State-Centric vs. Multi-Actor Approach:** The traditional state-centric approach may not adequately address the complex challenges of the 21st century, necessitating a more nuanced, multi-actor perspective.

2. **Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy:**

- **Political Interference:** Political considerations often influence diplomatic appointments and decision-making, compromising the professionalism of the service.
- **Bureaucratic Politics:** Inter-agency rivalry and bureaucratic turf wars can hinder effective coordination and implementation of foreign policy.

3. **International Norms and Institutions:**

- **Adherence to International Law:** Nigeria's commitment to international law and norms can be inconsistent, impacting its reputation and international standing.
- **Participation in International Organizations:** Effective participation in international organizations requires adequate resources and expertise.

Addressing these conceptual and theoretical issues requires a comprehensive reform of Nigeria's diplomatic service. This includes strengthening capacity building, promoting professional development, and aligning foreign policy with national interests. Additionally, a more nuanced understanding of international relations theory can help inform decision-making and improve Nigeria's global standing.

**Challenges of Nigeria's Diplomatic Mission**

Nigeria's diplomatic mission is challenged by among other things, problematic national interest. At the heart of diplomatic practice is the interest of a Nation. Diplomacy is therefore, mainly in relation to the defense and progression of the national interest of a State in a foreign land. As Akindele and Olusola pointed out, "[Nigeria's] Diplomatic mission is responsible for advancing and protecting the (Nigeria's) national interest in the host country" Adeniji, Olu. (1990). Every nation's diplomatic practice is or ought to be for the fulfillment of her national interest, but unfortunately, this vital 'National Interest' has often been disregarded with seemingly no defined place, clear and comprehensive goals for it in Nigeria's constitutions or in her diplomatic practices. Analysts and leaders alike differ on what makes up the national interest of Nigeria. Professor Osita Eze buttresses this assertion when he wrote, "It is difficult to identify Nigeria's conception of national interest since independence to date" (Eze, Osita, 2010). More significantly, Gaya Best observed that the 1999 Constitution only supplied an extensive framework with no precise and clear direction regarding Nigeria's national interest at all. And unfortunately, if clearly stating what the national interest of Nigeria has proved a difficult task so far, redefining it, in order to provide among other things, a detailed plan and the means to aid the quest of diplomacy in achieving its national objectives will even be more

difficult due to mainly, the deepening of globalization and the surfacing of new influential players. However we look at this, this is an enormous challenge facing Nigeria's diplomatic practice in the 21st Century. For Nigeria's diplomacy and diplomatic missions to be able to respond to global challenges in the 21st Century, Best called for a clear definition and operationalization of the national interest of Nigeria.

One critical and decisive factor that makes for effective performance of diplomatic missions everywhere and lack of which haunts Nigeria's diplomatic mission is the adequacy of financial resources available for role performance. Funds allocated to foreign affairs have always been inadequate enough to ensure the anticipated service delivery Fafowora, Oladapo. (2015). The foreign affairs ministry is allocated just about a percent of the State budget for recurrent expenditure. There is a wide disparity when compared to the defence and some other ministries who receive far more. The depreciating exchange rate adjustment of the naira has only worsened the matter. Consequently, there has been upsetting news about the country's missions abroad owing rents and Nigerian diplomats being owed salaries and allowances. There have been so many embarrassments like difficulty in the timely payment of telephone and electricity bills Enuka, Chuka and Ojukwu, Emmanuel (2016). Nigeria's Embassy office blocks in places like Khartoum, Teheran, and some others in Latin America were alleged to be submerged in leakages Mustapha, Abdul (2008). According to Faforawa "Our diplomatic missions continue to suffer needless and painful embarrassments arising from disconnection of utility services, ejection of staff from rented apartments, ejection of children from schools for failure to pay school fees and arrears of salaries of the diplomatic staff" Fafowora, Oladapo. (2015)). This situation is debilitating to the Nigerian foreign missions' total productivity. With this avalanche of embarrassments, Nigerian diplomats in diplomatic mission will certainly be unable to pursue their diplomatic tasks with vigour, attention and effectiveness required of them. There is no gainsaying that for Nigeria's diplomatic missions to live up to its diplomatic responsibilities, and for Nigeria to play a more active part in global affairs, bigger fiscal outlay for foreign policy and diplomatic programmes is a sine-qua-non, for as Akinyemi puts it, "…active foreign policy and paltry budgetary allocation are mutually exclusive."

1. The embarrassing situation stemming from inadequate financing of the foreign mission is further exacerbated by the shameful developments in some Nigerian embassies abroad where diplomats are compelled to embark on some sort of industrial actions having complained severally in vain over unpaid salaries. The most recent example of this form of problems faced by the country's embassies occurred on May 3, 2017 when the staff of the Nigerian Embassy in Washington D.C, United States, shut down activities at the Chancery in protest over unpaid salaries. The embarrassing event forced the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, to direct the payment of three out of the five months the staff was being owed (Fafowora, Oladapo,2015). The anger of the staff in Washington almost got replicated by other consular staff in Atlanta and New York, who had not been paid for six months. Aside insufficient budgetary provision as a causal explanation for these developments, the problems is often compounded by acts of corruption replete in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Reports have it that sometimes the Federal Government made the funds available for the running of the embassies, but corruption by officials of the Foreign Affairs Ministry impedes the flow of the funds to the embassies. This way, the Foreign Affairs Ministry is fast squeezing the life out of the country's diplomatic missions abroad through

diversion of and misuse of millions of dollars allocated to cover shortfalls in the embassies and consular offices.

Added to inadequate finance, paucity of training as a formidable challenge glares at the professional practices of Nigerian diplomats. This is mainly so, since diplomacy is a principled profession that warrants good training, sound academic background, and a concrete understanding of international affairs inter alia. It is evidently clear that a substantial number of Nigerian diplomats are seemingly not equipped with the vital training and orientation required to tackle the diplomatic challenges and realities of the present global age Enuka, Chuka and Ojukwu, Emmanuel (2016). This is against the basis articulated in 1958 for the recruitment of the first batch of Nigerian diplomats by the Nigerian Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, during a debate on foreign policy in the House of Representatives in Lagos: After independence, Nigeria will largely be judged by the quality of the representation overseas, its diplomatic service. It is very easy to say that Nigeria should only be represented by the best, it is rather more difficult to define what the best is. In determining the qualifications for the new service, government has these considerations in mind: first, the candidate should be well educated, second, he must be or should be trained Opera, G (2016) This submission above contains an indication that then, the government placed a huge importance on the recruitment, training and development of staff to ensure a high caliber staff profile and performance in the foreign service, but reminiscing on his years as erstwhile foreign affairs minister, Ibrahim Gambari noted with regret that for long time since his employment into the Foreign Service by the Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that no further training was undertaken by the employees Gambari Ibrahim. (1989). Though the Nigerian Foreign Service Academy was in the later years created, (in the early 1980s), it only attended to the training needs of staff freshly employed into the service. When once the recruited staff passed out, and deployed to their different areas of diplomatic service, hardly will further training, systematic programme for follow-up training and refresher courses for the officers be provided Chibundu, V.N. (2009) . Consequently, in informed circles, the competence level of Nigerian diplomats is fast reducing and accounts for the stress which Nigerian foreign policy has been put into 1, Abati, R (2011). It is appalling that more than eighty percent of Nigeria's Foreign Service officers are unable to fluently speak an additional international language besides English Fafowora, Oladapo (2008). In this era of complex negotiations and swift movement of individuals around the globe, it is imperative for Nigeria to step up and move away from a system of Foreign Service centered on generalists, to one more centered on specialists. Specialist disciplinary and language skills are vital. Decrying this un-supposed situation, Oyelakin, an ex-Ambassador, suggested that training should be given priority in the diplomatic profession Oyelakin, Oladejo (2014). The retired Diplomat actually recommended that the existing moribund Nigerian Foreign Service Academy should be upgraded to a degree and diploma awarding academy.

Writing in 2016, Abdulwahab notes that "…about 85 seasoned career diplomats have been unjustly rendered redundant and pushed aside in favour of non-career political ambassadors" Abdulwahab A (2016). One danger in this is the withering away of morale on the part of the professional diplomats who see 'outsiders' occupying posts to which they aspire. Such a weakening of morale resulting from having political appointees, rather than career diplomats to head diplomatic missions overseas, have injected bad blood and some sort of cold war into the practices of Nigeria's diplomatic missions. In his blame of the Nigerian politicians for the

failure of the Nigerian diplomatic mission to live up to its diplomatic responsibilities, Abdulwahab asks "…why can't Nigeria appoint non-career pilots to fly presidential planes? Or non-career medical doctors to manage our hospitals?" Abdulwahab A (2016) It remains indubitable that politicians have in no small measure contributed to the decimation of Nigeria's diplomatic service. Hardly can a difference be spotted between textbook diplomacy and functional diplomacy or between nominal and practicing ambassadors in Nigeria. For show of political favours, fine extraordinary diplomats who have been trained, tested and trusted in the strategic diplomatic business for over three decades in both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic environment, become supplanted with ordinary citizens who are either relations or political friends of those in power. In Nigeria, the foreign missions have thus become dumping grounds serving as quid pro quo for transacted political patronage Araoye, Ademola (2017). Appointments to all-important ambassadorial offices of the country and other foreign mission posts, simply expresses the leverage of the self-serving political actors to circumvent institutional protocols to safeguard the integrity of the recruitment process and the expected credibility of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Lacking the requisite experience and qualification needed for the offices, these political ambassadors arrive in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with intellectual deficiencies and mere notes of introduction as cousins and nieces of the big names in the political registrar of the sitting administration. It is scarcely a surprise that what we notice in many of Nigeria's foreign missions is "kabu-kabu" and "Area-boy" diplomacy. This is a diplomatic disaster, nothing else, nothing less. It has regrettably become fashionable for Nigerians who are desirous of becoming ambassadors to simply join politics instead of joining the diplomatic service. By becoming loyal sycophants to a political leader, they will end up not just as ambassadors, but ambassadors posted to plum and juicy missions. It cannot be denied however, that Nigeria's Foreign Service has had in the past, some non-careerists who performed creditably well. Some of them were patriotic and honest Nigerians who had done many great things for the country. They brought various experiences of academic excellence, maturity, intelligence into the Foreign Service. While those were very successful, many others did not, either because they were not ambassadorial materials or they were foreign bodies in the Foreign Service, who were probably more interested in the aura of elegance of the ambassadorial post, the exotic social life and the coveted title than in the real needs and demands of the job.

One more problem which reduces the morale of the Nigerian mission as a whole and that of the commercial attaché in particular, is the problem of status and rift between political representation and commercial representation. Because the occupant of the position of commercial attaché is usually on loan to the mission for a fixed number of years, and looks up to his home ministry for his career prospects, he feels therefore, from the outset, that he is not a member of the regular staff, and acts it out. This injects some sense of feelings of alienation, which is inimical to the expected team spirit required for an overall effective performance of the Nigerian overseas missions. From this, some level of bad blood has developed between the professional diplomats and the commercial attaché with a growing tendency for the professional diplomats to view the attaché as usurper of the investigative and reportorial functions which he normally guards with jealous tenacity. What appears more demoralizing to the commercial attaché is that, irrespective of his seniority or rank in the public service, he has to send his reports or dispatches to the Head of Mission through a Third or Second Secretary, an officer several years his junior. Closely related to this problem is the hard fact that mindless of the commercial attaché's rank in the public service, he/she is, in

terms of diplomatic protocol, very low down the diplomatic list. This low status, Olatunde argues, does not enhance opportunities for more and better contacts in the field (Ojo Olatunde, 1990). Related to this, is the jurisdictional problems inherent in the divided system of representation. For instance, the appointments of commercial attachés are made in consultation with the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Neither the Foreign Affairs Ministry nor the Ministry of Commerce is particularly satisfied with the arrangement (Akindele, R. A. and Olusola Segun, 1990). Each of the ministries wants to have the sole authority in appointments. The position of the Foreign Affairs Ministry on this reflects the traditional belief in the primacy of politics over economics in international relations. The Foreign Affairs Ministry will want an attaché to be sent to a mission of their choice, and the Commerce Ministry will want otherwise.

It is inevitable at this point to advance the argument that the application of quota to Nigerian diplomatic service has been producing unhelpful objectives. The principle of federal character adopted in the appointment of individuals in important positions in Nigeria's diplomatic service has evidently dented the principles of merit, talent and competence. Evidently, the constitutional demands for the reflection of federal character and fair regional representation in the selection and nomination of public officers, has equally affected the diplomatic mission drastically. This can be blamed on the manipulation of the recruitment process rather than the possibility of well-equipped candidates across the different states of the federation. The current recruitment arrangement which has seen the influx of a significant number of under-qualified personnel into the specialized unit of the Foreign Service, merely justifies the abuse of the federal character arrangement for conscription into the Foreign Service. As a result, people with confirmed ability for high standard performance, insightful thinking, ingenious solutions and sound practical approaches to policy formulation and implementation are overlooked in appointments and promotions. This way, averageness and incompetence are thoughtlessly rewarded, while misconduct and unethical conducts flourish beneath a culture of favouritism, impunity and severe laxity. Although intended to lubricate Nigerian federalism for effective functioning, it must be admitted that the federal character principle does have some negative consequences for the diplomatic service. Recruitments into the foreign affairs ministry and diplomatic appointments follow the pattern of equal number from each state. This has translated especially in the years of the previous republics, into the recruitment of far larger numbers than required and what could be absorbed into the system. The financial implication of this is enormous, especially with the current challenging financial situation of the country where oil revenue is falling steadily and the economy declining fast. This has necessitated suggestions to the present Buhari administration to cut down cost by closing some Nigeria's diplomatic missions abroad. The frightening predicament attributable to this proposed shutting down touted around is that "When we close mission, we damage relations that we have taken years to build" (Ashiru, Olugbenga, 2013). The federal character experience so far has shown that it is applied at the point of entry, and at the level of career progression into the ambassadorial rank. A situation in which a junior officer has gone on ambassadorial posting and back, while his seniors on higher salary scale still pray for their turn to come, simply because they come from top heavy state, is not helpful for the growth of Nigerian Foreign Service. There is therefore, imperative for a reconsideration of the federal character principle as it applies to Nigeria's diplomatic mission, to encourage productivity in the discharge of diplomatic assignments.

Another hurdle facing Nigeria's diplomatic missions is the oft misunderstanding between the diplomatic missions and the headquarters. Whereas the headquarters in Nigeria is mostly accountable for the articulation and making of policies, headquarters virtually count on their missions to follow through with their instructions. Nevertheless, officials at missions are more often than not accused of assuming and claiming superior knowledge of the difficulties on ground, particularly as it entails their country or organization of accreditation, which occasionally makes them reluctant of implementing the directives from the headquarters

11. Enikanolaye, the previous Charge d'Affairs, Nigeria's High Commission in India and permanent secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, brought to mind of when cases like basic human rights, refugees etc., were deemed not "so relevant" but more or less as mundane cases of Nigeria's international relations, as against decolonization and anti-apartheid; then he was derided and viewed as whiling away time with 'mundane' issues, and thus, dealing with irrelevancies. The diplomats' error was dealing with human rights questions as the then Third Secretary at the United Nations Department. The repercussion was that he was not seen as working in tune with Nigeria's policy making and thus irrelevant to the nation's policy.

Nigeria's diplomacy is not citizen-centered. This is a challenge that daunts Nigeria's diplomatic performance. Citizen diplomacy is a principle in accord with the constitutional outlay that applies to making the interest of the Nigerian citizens, both within Nigeria and elsewhere a priority. But contrary to this principle, Nigerians' rights, dignity and privileges, especially in the overseas, have remained unprotected and undefended, as the apparent criminalization of Nigerians abroad has assumed a worrisome dimension. The notion thereby imprinted in the mindsets of Nigerians, particularly those in the diaspora, is that the Nigerian state and its embassies abroad are not bothered about the predicaments faced by its citizens in the diasporaEze, Osita. (2009). The missions have not really adjusted their activities to accord due recognition to citizens. Inadequate attention is paid to many Nigerian nationals. Incidents involving Nigerians living in the diaspora, would have meliorated if the Nigerian state interfered through the diplomatic missions, were left unattended. Counseling and legal services are hardly available for the multitude of Nigerians who now travel abroad to make a meaningful living 1. Consequently, Nigerians abroad are seen as sheep without shepherds. It is doubtful if anyone will be convinced about Nigeria's relevance when her citizens are being given criminal treatment in major capitals of the world, while the country's embassies and high commissions, are toeing the line instead of pressing innocence as vigorously as possible until a court of competent jurisdiction decides otherwise. Nigeria's diplomatic operation is such that does not carry the people along. The average Nigerian is ignorant of how the country's diplomacy operates and how it is conducted. There appear to be no feeling of involvement of the citizens at home, despite being stated clearly in the constitution that supreme power belongs to the people who after all, empowers the government.

The diplomatic performance of every nation is but an amplification of their local realities. This lends credence to the main thesis of the linkage school that the domestic environment is not an island that is totally unconnected to the external environment of a state. "An erupting issue in the domestic environment can and should be impacted upon by the external environment and vice versa, either positively or negatively, depending on how the country does her permutations". A country where there is a dynamic policy thriving internally, will easily map out a similar spirited foreign policy overseas. Ashiru observes that "conversely, the Nigerian

Foreign Service can only project what the government at home represents as you cannot sow corn and reap tomato." Succinctly put therefore, the problems and weaknesses inherent in Nigeria's foreign service and diplomatic performance today, owes to the dysfunctional character of the Nigerian state, her weak and globally marginalized economic status, bad governance etc. A weak state begets weak diplomacy. "No nation that is weak at home, politically or economically can be strong abroad". Diplomatic success and effectiveness is a function of home strength. Nigeria is unarguably a weak state, with attendant indices that define her so. A number of issues that challenge the Nigerian state and society such as long absence of democracy, corruption, bad governance, terrorism etc, have taken diplomatic weight from Nigeria's voice at the international level. The loss of Nigeria in the African Development Bank's presidency in 1995 and 2005 and the exclusion of the country from the G20 and her backstage role in the Tony Blair Commission for Africa are clear indications of the failure of diplomacy and by extension, the country's Foreign.

**Conclusion**

These conceptual issues need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of Nigeria's diplomatic service and enhance the country's international standing.Nigeria's diplomatic service, while playing a crucial role in shaping the nation's international relations, faces a myriad of conceptual and theoretical challenges. These issues often stem from a complex interplay of domestic politics, international relations theory, and bureaucratic norms.

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