

## *Original Paper*

# National Interest and state Foreign Policy Behavior: A Doctrinal Discourse of Nigeria and the USA

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### **Abstract**

*National interest and foreign policy are interrelated concepts frequently used in discussions of international relations and international politics. Nation-states do not act irrationally or are naturally benevolent; policymakers employed the concept of national interest to justify their actions or inactions either external or internal. The focus of this paper is on the efficacy of national interest in shaping the foreign policy behaviour of Nigeria and the United State. This research work further to analyse the doctrinal base of Nigeria and US foreign policy. Data for this article was through a secondary source thus, the analysis was qualitative content analysis. It is argued in this paper that what constitutes the national interest of a state varies from one state to another, and is not static. However, the paper maintains that some national interests are constant even though regime changes. The paper to this end argued that there is no state foreign policy in the world that is devoid of national interests instead, they form the basis in which a country interacts with others in economic ties, diplomatic intercourse, military cooperation, cultural convergence and a lot more.*

### **Keywords**

*National Interest, Foreign Policy, Nigeria, USA*

### **1. Introduction**

Before the evolution of the modern state system, dynasties and kingdoms aspire for one interest or the other. This could be a desire to capture more slaves, expand their domain and have a wider range of influence or advance an act in which the effect could be felt or build a vast body of the army, or build a strong defence to fortify their surroundings from any form of aggression or aggressor.

This practice hitherto found pre-eminence and institutionalized in the modern state system built under the principle of sovereignty of state with government, people, and define territory. The resultant effect was that states were thrown into the valley of conflict of interest called national interest, each trying to dominate and outshine the other to the extent that, the contemporary terrain of international politics in terms of nature and structure is highly determined by the various national interest of states.

Today, the concept of “national interest” is often associated with political realists who wish to differentiate their policies from “idealistic” policies that seek either to inject morality into international relations or promote solutions that rely on multilateral institutions which might weaken the independence of the state (Enock, n.d.). National interest, according to Rosenau (1969) in Saliu (2013) is the means of understanding “how and why nations do what they do when they engage in international relations”.

Sovereign states relate, not necessarily to promote the generic human welfare in the international arena but to protect and enhance their national interests. Even diplomatic tools of altruism like financial grants, food aids, technical aids, investment, technology transfers etc are all manipulated by diplomats to attain the national interest of nations (Morgenthau, 1978 in Ani, 2013).

National interest is a crucial/prerequisite for the survival, consolidation and development of a nation-state in a highly competitive international system. These interests, though variant in scope, magnitude and circumstances, is hankered by nation-states to be attained individually or collectively through the conduct of foreign policy (Umara, 2014). Thus, it is on this backdrop that this paper focuses on the role of national interest in shaping Nigeria and US foreign policy behaviour.

## **2. Conceptual Clarification**

### *2.1 The Concept of National Interest*

Nation-states like man are motivated by and large by their interest. These interests are configured under the guise of “National interest” being a maxim used by various states in the conduct of their international relations. Though, the concept of national interest has been seen by different scholars as a controversial concept. This owes largely to how statesmen form and pursue the concept. According to Morgenthau (1951) “statesmen think and act in terms of interest define as power”, the ability and capability of the state. In his words, “statesmen follow...but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: the national interest” (Morgenthau, 1951). National interest, therefore, is the reason for state action and in-action on the international milieu and the guiding principles for policy formulation. Affirmatively, Rosenau (1968) in Hassan and Fatai (2013) maintain that “the key to any explanation of goal-seeking behaviour”. National interest is associated with goal-seeking thus, determining a set of state behaviour. Frankel (1988) for instance, identified three types of national interest: aspirational, operational and polemic, depending on whether or not the nation’s capability matches the specific interest it seeks to defend. National interest is about a nation’s interest, priority, resources and capability.

## 2.2 *The Concept of Foreign Policy*

Nation-states, by their nature, do not exist in isolation; they relate with other states to meet their basic needs. Some of these needs include; power, resources, security, and balance of power as well as belonging to an international organisation. The emergence of the Concert of Europe in 1815 and the subsequent incremental but robust development of the international organisation and its proliferation since 1945 has demonstrated the conduct of international relations under the framework of foreign policy.

Foreign policy according to Hassan et al. (2013) refers to calculated steps taken by a state which are intended to maximise the opportunities that are available outside its geographical boundaries, while at the same time, minimising the perils that abound. Foreign policies are not made in a vacuum but are deliberate and conscious actions or decisions of a state. Therefore, Akinboye and Ottoh (2007) conceived foreign policy as “a type of policy that transcends the boundary of a given state. On the whole, Chibundu (2003) noted that foreign policy is “a country’s response to the world outside or beyond its frontiers or boundaries. It is apt to note that, the response may be friendly or aggressive, casual or intense, simple or complex but it is always obvious. Foreign policy is a set of coordinated behaviour put in place by a state to achieve an aim in the conduct of their international relations.

## 2.3 *Theoretical Framework*

The theory is instrumental in scientific research, it forms the basis for explaining the phenomenon. This study adopts realist theory as the analytical tool. Thus, Waltz (1979) posit that realism means the state’s interest provides the spring of action, the necessities of this action arise from the unregulated competition of states. Waltz maintains that calculation was based on these necessities that can discover the policies that best serve a state’s interest. He further explains that success is the ultimate test policy, and success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state.

Morgenthau (1978) defines realism as governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature. The main signpost that helps realism find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. From Morgenthau’s view of realism, one can rightly attribute that power and interest are variable in content. And universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in pursuit of power and safeguarding state interest.

The realist views the international arena as a competitive ground for power over available resources. The realist traditions believed that nations act only out of self-interest (national interest) and also claimed that leaders of nations use their powers to advance the interest of their nations with little or no regard for morality or friendship.

According to the realist school of thought, states are the primary and major actors in the international arena. It is apt to note that states are always driven by their selfish interest which is an inherent nature of man. In conformity to the foregoing, Waltz (1979) argued that realism means the state’s interest provides the spring of action, the necessities of this action arise from the unregulated competition of states. Waltz maintains that calculation was based on these necessities that can discover the policies that

best serve a state's interest. States in the international arena are moved by their interest; this implies that the behaviour of states, action and in-action is motivated by interest. At the heart of every state is the principal goal of survival. Thus, domestic interests are given the goal of survival each state will act as best it can to maximize the likelihood of continuing to exist.

Nigeria and the US are states and actors in the international system with an interest to pursue. This interest has shaped their behaviour in terms of responses and reactions towards other states in the international arena. Their actions and in-actions were calculated set of interest to be achieved which is projected in the ambit of foreign policy in the conduct of their international relations.

#### *2.4 Methodology*

This study adopts a qualitative design and data were sourced mainly from secondary sources that are already in existence. The secondary data were collected via the documentary method and qualitative content analysis was used in analyzing the data collected.

### **3. Doctrinal Discuss of National Interest**

#### *3.1 Realist Doctrine*

Realists believed that international politics is about power acquisition and use of power hence, the interest of the state is always the desire to acquire power. Maintaining this position, Ani (2013) contain that realists believe that politics is a tool to advance the national interest, increase state power, and maintain and demonstrate sovereign power. Similarly, Okoro (2002) wrote that "realists believe in the struggle for and the use of military force to advance the national interest of nation-states". Thus, Morgenthau (1986) argued that "the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation... get in the way of successful political action, itself inspired by the moral principle of national survival. The realists perceive national interest in terms of national security. Morgenthau (1951) in Saliu (2013) note that "statesmen think and act in terms interest defined as power", or he reasoned, the use of the criterion of power will enable nations "follow...but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: the national interest". This means-"self-preservation", self-defence and even "survival" without fear of threat from within and without.

#### *3.2 Decision-Making Doctrine*

The decision-making theorists of the behavioural paradigm debunk the standpoint of the realist doctrine of national interest. The realist sees national interest in the light of defence and security while the decision-making doctrine emphasized the decision of the leader. National interest in their view, is basically and ultimately "what the nation's decision-maker decides it is" (Rosenau, 1980). This radical view is possibly informed by the dynamics in human society. Regime and leaders change over time no matter how long the administration may turn out. Thus, national interest for decision-making theorists is the game of a leader or leaders of states. In this wise, Nwanolue (2015) advised that analysts can discern what makes up national interest by studying the behaviour of the national policy-makers. Armed with this understanding, Holsti (1977) (in Yusuf, 2011) maintain the position that national

interests may be regarded as “those purposes which a nation, through its leadership, appears to pursue persistently through time”. The element of continuity is spotted in this definition indicating the possibility of maintaining a particular course of action even in the demise of the leader and seems to be robust. Deducing from above, Yusuf (2011) holds the view that “it is regime’s interest or the selfish interest of a leader”. Just as Johari (2012) (Umara, 2014) enthusiastically, profess national interest as the “will of a ruler” or “Dynasty Interests” and also shared by Watson, (1972) in Umara (2014) that “governments of nations define, protect and promote national interest”.

### 3.3 Marxian Doctrine

The Marxian doctrine is an embodiment of a paradigm shift from the preceding scholars of the realist and the decision-maker theorist. Marxian postulation is that of a dominant class in the society who initiates, plans and executes policies. No wonder Karl Marx sees the state as the agent of exploitation and the government as the executive class of the bourgeoisie who rule the state in the interest of the dominant class. They advised that “whenever and wherever the phrase “national interest” is employed, it should be captured as dealing with the class interest of the state” (Asobie, 2002). National interest in the foregoing is the will and desire of the dominant Class. Thus, the class interest of the state is in the interest of the dominant class in society. By implication, the foregoing definition calls to mind the question of what policy, who makes the policy, and to whose interest? It is also indicative that in every society, either obvious or not there exists a dominant class that champions the course of determining national interest.

## 4. National Interest and Foreign Policy Behavior of Nation-States

### 4.1 The Case of Nigeria

Nigeria, since political independence in 1960, has persistently retained as part of its cardinal foreign policy the critical questions of independence, national self-determination, national security, territorial integrity, economic prosperity and the advancement of freedom and justice for the black race in Africa and the Diaspora. These were and still are the main constituent of what come to be known as Nigeria’s national interest (Alkali, 2003). Cumulatively, these have come to be core values set to be pursued by the Nigerian state. However, these core values, as good as they stand, have experience change and continuity at different times.

In the first official statement at the Federal House of Representatives, Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa stated that “We will aim to assist any country to find a solution to its problems and foster the growth of a common understanding among all nations of this continent” (Idang, 1973 in Alkali, 2003). Similarly, the Prime Minister acknowledged that:

“We Nigeria appreciate the advantages which the size of our country and its population give us.....but.....we feel honest that it is only on that basis of equity that peace can be maintained on the continent (Idang, 1973, p. 5).

This policy position represents a conservative and a liberal view within which Nigeria’s national

interest in the African continent and the world stands pursued. The position taken by the Nigerian state is that of being content with its available resources and do not have a capitalist tendency of expansionism and marginalization of others in the African continent.

Thus, it was within this framework that Nigeria entered the world stage. When Nigeria took its seat at the United Nations, Nigeria joined the Non-Align Movement in 1961 at the Belgrade Conference and was automatically absorbed into the Common Wealth Group. Nigeria declared in no ambiguous term its determination to establish and maintain close relations with the United States of America and Britain. However, in the United Nations, Nigeria under Balewa voted in favour of the proposal sponsored by the Soviet Union which proclaimed the “necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations”. And the government refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Up till 1963, it was the British Embassy in MOSCOW that catered for Nigeria’s interest there while only a restricted number of Soviet officials were allowed in Lagos (Alkali, 2003). The position of Nigeria in voting in favour of the proposal by the Soviet Union was in the interest of Nigeria to fight and end colonialism in the African continent which Nigeria consider as her optimal priority, on the other hand, the refusal of the Nigerian state to establish and open her embassy in MOSCOW was in the interest to maintain and keep close relations with Britain and the United States. Nigeria has regard for Britain and the United States in the high esteem in the conduct of her international relations. The action of Nigeria in this context affirms the saying that in politics, ‘no permanent friend, no permanent enemy, but permanent interest’.

In accord with the foregoing, Momoh (2009) in Nwachukwu (2015) posits that during the colonial era, it was forbidden for Nigerians to have anything to do with the communist world to which China belonged. Thus, on the occasion of Nigerian independence, China’s delegation delivered a congratulatory message from Zhou Enlai. The Chinese leaders acclaimed “the great victory won by the Nigerian people in their struggle against colonialism”. Thus, to reverse the pattern of the colonial limited kind of relations, Tafawa Balewa, in a policy statement in parliament maintains that “We shall, of course, endeavour to remain in friendly terms with every nation which promises and respects our sovereignty” (Momoh, 2009).

Hence, Nigeria maintain a close relationship with China to an extent of voting against the anti-China American procedural motion on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1960 in the United Nations Organisation (Owoeye, 1986, in Nwachukwu, 2015). It is also worthy of note that, despite Nigeria’s relationship with China during Tafawa Balewa’s administration, Nigeria did not open diplomatic relations with China or any country of the Eastern bloc owe to Nigeria’s pro-west and anti-communist stand. However, with the ascendancy of China into the Security Council of the United Nations in 1971, Nigeria and many other African countries responded to this development by recognising China as a major World power and, accordingly, entered into diplomatic relations with China with the view that China would be a vanguard of the proletarian nations against the bourgeois or imperialist nations. China thus, opened its embassy in Lagos on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1971 while Nigeria reciprocated in October of that same year (Nwachukwu,

2015).

Nigeria's foreign policy on decolonisation, national liberation Pan Africanism and the Cold War politics were, therefore guided by Balewa's domestic concern for peace, unity and political stability. Thus, Nigeria opposed Nkrumah's call for an African political union not only because Nigeria fear Ghana would usurp her leadership role, but also because of the government's apprehension about the Soviet Union's relations with Ghana and the Casablanca group. Similarly, the Balewa government's pro-kasavubu stance during the Congo crisis was motivated by the desire to be anti-Ghana, anti-Casablanca and Anti-Russia (Akinyemi, 1974 in Alkali, 2003).

In the Mid 1970, Nigeria believed in the philosophy of continental jurisdiction by stating that non-African nations should stop exercising influence or interfering in the African continent (Briggs, 2005). Therefore, in a foreign policy speech on February 19, 1977, Brigadier Joseph N. Garba, the then Nigeria's External Affairs Minister posits that "Our foreign policy is a combination of our permanent national interests and what I would call the higher interest of Africa" (Garba, 1977 in James, 2005). Construing from above, the obvious position of Nigeria's foreign policy has Africa as its core interest.

To justify the assertion, West Africa (1978) in James (2005) buttress that Nigerian soldiers and police first acquired a higher reputation during the participation of the African military contingent in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in the Congo from 1960 to 1964. Nigeria sent a battalion of her troops, thus, the relation of Nigeria with any country in Africa in terms of financial aid, military support and economic treaty all fall within the ambit of Nigerian interest in Africa to Tanzania to cope with the army mutiny in that country in 1964. Similarly, Liberia witnessed Nigeria's most intensive peace initiative under the Babangida administration. President Babangida proposed the setting up of a standing Media Committee, and it was eventually cease-fire and the establishment of an ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Since its inception, no country has borne the brunt more than Nigeria, both financial and otherwise (Briggs, 2005).

The African centre-pace of Nigerian foreign policy manifested in the spirit of "African bigbrotherism". Nigeria in the might to show her ego of big brother provided twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) in aid and a promise of financial and material support to the tune of one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) to Angola in 1975; construction of roads linking Idi Iroko-Nigeria to opoto-Novo in the Republic of Benin at the cost of one million eight hundred thousand naira (1.8m) in 2003, Nigeria granted Ghana the sum of four billion naira for the execution of West African gas pipeline and two billion naira to Sao Tome for joint oil venture. Nigeria spent an estimated four billion dollars for its intervention in Liberia and nearly four hundred million dollars per annum for Sierra Leone both under the ECOMOG mission (Adebayo, 2008 Ibrahim, 2014).

Mahmoud (2005) holds that a country's foreign policy is guided by its national interest. On coming into the office, President Obasanjo's topmost priority was to deal with the pariah status of the nation in the international community. Thus in his inaugural address:

"We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will

continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and OAU and other international bodies” Obasanjo in Mahmoud, 2005, p. 8).

To re-establish links that were broken under the regime of Abacha, and to make new friends, Obasanjo embark on unprecedented diplomatic shuttles around the globe expectantly, the US was one of his first visits to heads of states during which Clinton happily re-established military ties with Nigeria. Nigeria had the opportunity during some of these trips to address the UN, ECOWAS, the Group of 8 (G8), Group 77 (G77), the Common Wealth, African Union (AU) and EU (Nwankwo, 2013). Obasanjo administration conceived as a priority removing Nigeria from the pariah status which was attained during the last phase of military rule, remaining a key player in regional or continental politics. All of these form the interest held in the Obasanjo administration which explains the Nigerian behaviour within and outside the African continent.

However, it is worthy of note, that despite the desire of the Nigerian state to be re-integrated into the community of states and to re-establish relationships in particular with the United States, Nigeria opposed the AFRICOM project initiated by the United States. AFRICOM to Nigeria is the means through which the USA seeks to have more access to intelligence information about the continent with which to play her subversive activities which, given the current state of Africa, could prove fatal for the countries (Hassan, 2010). In the wash of Yar’Adua (2007) in Hassan (2010) he posits that:

“I did not accept AFRICOM in my discussion with Bush. I asked for assistance and told Bush that we have our plan to establish bases for African countries. We asked for training on weapons and training to establish our bases to be managed by our people (Yar’Adua, 2017).

Thus, AFRICOM in Africa and West Africa in a particular way conceived as challenging Nigeria’s hegemony and if the USA has any regard for Nigeria and her position in Africa, she should have been carried along in formulating AFRICOM. Nigeria considers the formation of AFRICOM as a threat to its hegemonic position in the West African region.

On the internal scene, the federal Government in Lab sanctioned officials of the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) and MTN Nigeria for criminal breach of over 5.1 million unregistered refusals to MTN Nigeria to remove over 5.1 million unregistered telephone subscribers from its network as directed by the NCC, thus, fine of N1.04trillion was imposed on the telecoms firm (Bassey, 2015). In a similar event, in 1992, the American Ambassador to Nigeria was asked to leave the country following his unguarded criticism of the Government, handling of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). And on the eve of the General Election in June 1993, the Director of the United States information service (USIS) in Lagos was asked to leave the country following his public remarks over the handling of the political transition programme. To facilitate the decolonization process in southern Rhodesia, Nigeria nationalized shell-BP, the giant British oil to force Britain to take a decisive decision. The issue of the nationalization of shell BP by Nigeria was described as a calculated diplomatic offensive against Britain (Alkali, 2003).

The declaration of Nigeria’s national interest by the then Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa later come to



be recon as Nigeria's foreign policy assuming the decision-making doctrine and on the other hand Marxian doctrine. National interest in the view of decision-making doctrine is basically and ultimately "what the nation's decision-maker decides it is" (Rosenau, 1980). Thus, in the words of Tagawa Belewa "*We will aim to assist any country to find a solution to its problems and foster the growth of a common understanding among all nations of this continent*" (Idang, 1973 in Alkali, 2003, p. 10). On the contrary, national interest determinant in the Nigerian State also takes the looks of Marxian doctrine. The Marxian postulation is that of a dominant class in the society who initiates, plan, and execute policies. In their view, "whenever and wherever the phrase "national interest" is employed, it should be captured as dealing with the class interest of the state" (Asobie, 2002). National interest in the foregoing is the will and desire of the dominant Class. To this end, the declaration by Tafawa Belewa "*We will aim to assist any country to find a solution to its problems and foster the growth of a common understanding among all nations of this continent*" and Obasanjo in Mahmoud (2005, p. 7) "*we shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly relations with all nations and will continue to play a constructive role in the United Nations and OAU and other international bodies*" out rightly connotes Marxian doctrine of national interest.

#### **The Case of the USA,**

Allison et al. (2011) point out US's vital interest as preventing the use of mass destruction, securing nuclear weapons of mass destruction, securing nuclear weapons and materials, and preventing the proliferation of intermediate and long-range delivery, a system for nuclear weapons. Also, maintaining a balance of power in Europe and Asia that promotes peace and stability with a continuing US leadership role; preventing large scale or sustained terrorist attacks on the American Homeland ensuring energy security. and assuring the stability of the international economy, similarly, the commission on America National interest identify eight vital US national interest to include (1) prevent, deter, and reduce the three nuclear, biological and chemical weapons attack on the United State; (2) Prevent the emergence of a hostile hegemony in Europe or Asia; (3) Prevent the emergence of a hostile major power on US border or in control of the seas; (4) Prevent the catastrophic collapse of the major global system (trade, financial markets, supplies of energy, and environmental); and (5) ensure the survival of U.S. allies; (6) Maintain a lead in key military-related and other strategic technologies, (7) Prevent massive, uncontrolled immigration across US borders (8) Suppress, contain and combat terrorism, transnational crime, and drugs.

Interest is the perennial standard by which political action must be judged and directed. The obvious presence of the United State in international politics was during the Second World War and the cold war. The end of the Second World War created antagonism between the two superpowers, the opening of the second front to divide the German army. The Soviet Union was pressurizing the opening of the second front from June 1941 but US President General Dwight Eisenhower opened the second front in June 1944 (Peu, 2009). The obvious question one could ask here is why the opening in 1944? Soviet Union insisted that goods and assets worth 20 billion dollars should be ceased from Germany of which 50 per

cent should be given to the Soviet Union and the rest to be shared between the USA and the UK as war indemnity. But an element of suspicion was harboured by the USA and the UK. Thus, the US insisted that the right to fix the level of reparation would be in their zone of occupation and by spring 1946, they suspended further reparation payment to the Soviet Union from their zone of occupation in West Germany. The US was threatened soviet commission which may have a significant impact on Germany and affected the national security of the United States (Pen, 2009). On the foregoing, Kennan the then USA Diplomat in the American embassy in Moscow opines that:

“We have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that us there can be no permanent modus operandi that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted our traditional way of life be destroyed the international authority of our state be broken if Soviet power is to be secure”

Kennan’s postulation depicts the threat which Soviet communism posed to the United States and liberal democracy and capitalism. Thus, Truman declared in March 1947, “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support the free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure”. The policy emerged to be identified as the Truman Doctrine (Peu, 2009). Therefore, the policy of containment came to being aimed at preventing the expansion of the Soviet influence by encircling the Soviet Union and intimidating it with the threat of a military attack in Keeping with the US interest of containing communism around the world.

The United States’ self-proclaimed role as promoter and defender of democracy and human rights, the United States had been directly implicated in several subversive activities around the world. In Nigeria, one of these has the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed in February 1976. As T.A Imobighe put it “it is now an open secret that C.I.A even had a hand in the assassination of Nigeria’s General Murtala Mohammed to avenge the humiliation they suffered in the hands of the Nigeria leader during the Angolan crisis” (Imobighe, 1981 in Alkali, 2003). The humiliation being referred to here is obviously in connection with the refusal by General Murtala Mohammed to subvert the MPLA, the leading Angolan liberation movement, which was poised to take over power in Angola (Alkali, 2003).

The United State reacted to the annulment of the June 1993 Presidential Election by imposing selective sanctions and the threat to impose more wide-ranging sanctions against the federal government, this revealed the extent to which the United States is ready to go and the methods to adopt to advance its imperial interests. Some of the sanctions imposed on Nigeria by the United States include the expulsion of the Nigerian Military Institutions, specifically the National War College, refusal of W.S visas for military personnel, banning of air travel from Nigeria to any of the American Cities and warning to American citizens to avoid Nigeria. It was only in 2002, that formal Air links between Nigeria and USA were restored, and seven years after flights from Nigeria to the US were suspended (Alkali, 2003). There were deliberate steps taken by the American Administration orchestrated to promote and defend democracy and to undermine the security and defence capabilities of Nigeria.

The US once humiliated Kwame Nkrumali’s request for emergency food aid because of what the

United States considered the anti-American tone of his book: Neo-colonialism: the highest stage of imperialism. Secondly, during the Vietnam War, the same US blocked a shipment of wheat to India at a most critical moment of need. According to the US, Mrs Indra Gandhi, India's Prime Minister had sent a birthday greeting to Ho-Chi-Minh of Vietnam! And in 1979, President Jimmy Carter's administration stopped wheat sales to the Soviet Union over its invasion of Afghanistan (Wilmot, 1979 in Alkali, 2003). The lesson on the going is simple. Contrary to the perception of the idealist about man, that man by nature is good and peaceful, in reality, the interest and behaviour of man through the state prove the state as a man would always be motivated by their interest at any time be it War or peaceful moment.

The USA used the finding of the marshal plan for the reconstruction of Europe as leverage to establish and control these vital post-war international financial institutions using the ideology of free trade and liberalization. According to Kirsanor (1975) in Alkali (2003), the USA in 1945 granted a loan of \$3,750 million to Britain but demanded first, a pledge that Britain would ratify the agreements setting up the IBRD, the IMF and the establishment of an international trade organization. Thus in keeping with the USA's interest in the Banking system, when President Salvador Allende was popularly elected to power in Chile in 1970, the World Bank under pressure from the US suspended further loans to that country because of what the perceived to be Allende's socialist tendencies. But immediately Allende was overthrown and assassinated in 1973 by the American CIA, and the World Bank accepted military dictator General Pinochet and resumed leading Chile (Offion, 1980; Cheryl, 1982 in Alkali, 2003). However, in recent times, the revelation has been that the USA needs to search out Africa for its future energy needs. It is obvious, that the Middle East is being considered an unreliable source of hydrocarbon to the USA. The cost of mining oil in that part of the world is increasing in addition to its worsening security situation.

Thus, the USA came up with a new initiative—AFRICOM means the Command which the USA has carved out principally of the European Command to address African issues of strategic concern to her. AFRICOM, therefore, is the reaction of the USA to the gradual emergence of Africa as a leading source of oil in the world. Beyond the interest in oil, it is believed by the USA that the existence of Muslim countries in Africa with not too good a record of relationship with the USA, the former may harbour a kind of sympathy for the Al-Qaeda group, which may translate to creating heaven for them in Africa (Hassan, 2010).

The 2003 invasion of Iraq has become the largest, longest, and most costly use of armed force by the United States since the Vietnam War. The Bush administration has been forthright about its goal of global hegemony—a power so complete that challenging it becomes nearly inconceivable. Bush's (2002) West Point speech declared, "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge." Given this strategic objective, overthrowing Saddam Hussein's government can be understood as an effort to enhance U.S. reputational and symbolic power beyond challenge—particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks that might have made the U.S. appear vulnerable. Bush publicly declared that regime change in Iraq was a U.S. priority, Bush made war

inevitable due to the national security interest in protecting that reputation (Daniel, 2005). The invasion was a rational means for the U.S. to achieve its primary goal of demonstrating its power to allies and competitors alike, and of avoiding the re-occurrence of post-9/11. As well, it was intended to prevent Iraq's actual or potential use of WMD and oil resources to threaten the U.S. or its allies and to prevent Iraq's potential collaboration with anti-U.S. terrorist groups. Thus, the U.S. national interest Mayer, (2004) and Klare (2004) in guaranteeing its oil supply at a time of diminishing domestic reserves and increased worldwide demand could also be achieved by military control of Iraq's petroleum reserves, which, in a Baathist controlled Iraq, would have been exploited instead by America's competitors.

It is worthy of note that the United States' interest in the Middle East has heightened. This is on the belief that Assad and his allies represent a guarantee of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation, which is a threat to America and the fear of the rise of regional hegemony in Iran. Consequent to this threat the United States' interest in Syria remains in the deposition of Al-Assad and the institution of a more amenable administration in Syria (Ugwueze, 2013).

Moreover, the USA and its quest for future energy need to search out Africa for its future energy needs. This owes so much to evidence and report, indicating that the Middle East is being considered an unreliable source of hydrocarbon to the USA. The cost of mining oil in that part of the world is increasing in addition to its worsening security situation (Hassan, 2010). This salient awareness led to the formation of AFRICOM, the reaction of the USA to the gradual emergence of Africa as a leading source of oil in the world. AFRICOM, Command which the USA has carved out principally of the European Command to address African issues of strategic concern to her (Hassan, 2010). To justify the place of AFRICOM in Africa, the USA, opine that given the existence of Muslim countries in Africa with not too good a record of relationship with the USA, Muslim countries may be a kind of sanctuary for harbouring terrorist groups which may translate to creating a haven for them in Africa (Hassan, 2010). The establishment of AFRICOM in Africa does not and cannot be translated into a security guarantee for Africa. It is worthy of note that, the national interest of the USA is threatening, the interest of oil supply in the African continent. By setting up AFRICOM, it means the presence of the USA in Africa even though physically absent.

On the other hand, North Korean missile capability and tests posed a great threat to the USA and its European allies. Trump expressed that *"The North Korean regime is causing tremendous problems and is something that has to be dealt with, and probably dealt with rapidly"* (CNN, 2017). Affirming Donald Trump's feelings on the North Korean nuclear test, US National Security Adviser HR McMaster also confirmed that:

*"What we have to do is prepare all options because the President has made clear to us that he will not accept a nuclear power in North Korea and a threat that can target the United States and target the American population"* (CNN, 2017).

On the foregoing, it is obvious the regime has made significant progress towards developing a weapon that could attack the US, thereby jeopardizing the interest of the USA as the hegemonic power. Also,

North Korea possessing the nuclear capability goes a long way to limit the USA's use of nuclear power to threaten North Korea.

The national interest of the US hangs on the realist, decision making and the Marxian doctrine respectively. It is the core value of the US to maintain optimal security around the international arena. The security of the US tops the ultimate goal of every regime in the United State and it is believed that securing the US is tantamount to projecting the power of the United State in international politics. Thus, realists like Morgenthau (1986) argued that "the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation... get in the way of successful political action, itself inspired by the moral principle of national survival. Therefore, "statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power" Morgenthau (1951 in Saliu, 2013).

Collaborating the forgoing, Bush (2002) declared, "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge." Given this strategic objective, overthrowing Saddam Hussein's government can be understood as an effort to enhance U.S. reputational and symbolic power beyond challenge—particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks that might have made the U.S. appear vulnerable. Similarly, Bush's position showcases the decision-making doctrine of national interest. Bush publicly declared that regime change in Iraq was a U.S. priority, Bush made war inevitable due to the national security interest in protecting that reputation.

In more recent times, Trump express the realist doctrine that "*The North Korean regime is causing tremendous problems and is something that has to be dealt with, and probably dealt with rapidly*" (CNN, 2017). Affirming Donald Trump's feeling on the North Korean nuclear test, US National Security Adviser HR McMaster also confirmed that "*What we have to do is prepare all options because the President has made clear to us that he will not accept a nuclear power in North Korea and a threat that can target the United States and target the American population,*" (CNN, 2017). However, this declaration of national interest by US National Security Adviser HR McMaster depicts the ideology of the Marxian doctrine of being the decision of the highly placed individuals in the society or the dominant class in the society.

## 5. Conclusion

National interest is a crucial prerequisite for survival and a prime factor for states' behaviour. These interests, though variant in scope, magnitude and circumstances, is hankered by nation-states to be attained individually or collectively through foreign policies. There is no foreign policy in the world that is devoid of its national interests but they form the basis in which countries interact with others in economic ties, diplomatic intercourse, military cooperation, and cultural convergence. The foreign policy behaviour of the Nigerian and the United States were highly shaped by their national interest. The national interest of Nigeria and the US is encapsulated in the realist, decision making and the Marxian doctrine.

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