

# ISLAMIC DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO NIGERIANS

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## ABSTRACT

*Diplomatic relation, it is the activity whereby a State deals with other States, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and certain individuals, as Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is documented and having engaged as a diplomat during his propagation of Islam and leadership over the growing Muslim community. He established a method of communication with other tribal or national leaders through letters, assigned envoys, or by visiting them personally, such as at Ta'if, for instances written letters to Heraclius, the Negus (Najashi), Khorosan, Syria, Byzantines, Egypt and Rome. In Nigeria's diplomatic relations like those of every other elsewhere, is hoped to achieve for the benefit of Nigeria and Nigerians, the aspired goals and articulated interests of the Nigerian state. This expectation, by the judgment of many informed Nigerians, is yet to be fully realized and has failed to work out the transformation of Nigeria's status and Nigerians', what possibly could answer for this diplomatic relations failure? In response to the problems, this paper used descriptive method to examine the challenges that have faced Nigeria's diplomatic relations from the formative years of its Diplomatic Relation formulation and implementation to the present day, due to neglect, bad and irresponsible leadership and bring solutions through appoint a good and responsible ambassadors, citizenship education on diplomatic role, Ministry of foreign affairs should be strong enough to implement their activities and National economic should be build up to avoid rely upon other Nations and applied the diplomatic system of the Prophet (S.A.W) these and many more if properly applied could solve the challenges.*

**Keywords: Diplomatic, Islam, Relation, Prophet, Constitution**

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic religion encourages unity and brotherhood of a Nation and motivates a community to command what is good and forbidden what is wrong. Thus, international relation is authoritative actions taken by governments to maintain the desirable aspects of the international environment or to amend its undesirable aspects. Further, international relations serve as the action of a state towards the external environment and the conditions usually domestic under which these actions are formulated. As a necessarily calculated and goal-oriented activity of diplomatic relation is purposive.<sup>i</sup>

This purpose is altering or creating a condition outside the sovereign boundaries to gain national advantage, usually defined in terms of national interest. National image both at home and abroad is an ethical issue. It may appear intangible but the benefits and advantages flowing from a good image are inestimably unquantifiable. The perception of a country by members of the international community, how a country pursues its relations with others and particularly, the behaviour of its citizens at home and abroad can affect a country's image thus, image making it an essential feature of a nation's foreign policy<sup>ii</sup>

Diplomatic relations and politics among every country is practice, in order to live and survive as an independent state in the complex, sometimes dangerous world, must have a foreign policy, further, given the deepening interdependent character of the international system, it remains a truism that states relate internationally. In this relationship in which the international system provides the stage and theatre upon which states act, each state comes with defined set of goals and interests. It is a common knowledge among scholars and students of international relations that it is hardly possible to conjecture diplomatic relation outside of the milieu of national interest.<sup>iii</sup>

As an actor interacting with other state actors in the international environment, the Nigerian state, on the basis of its various domestic and international needs and gratifications, deliberately formulates a set of goals and objectives which she seeks to achieve in her relations with other countries. But despite its many strong points, there is still a feeling that Nigeria's diplomacy is punching below its rightful weights. It is to highlight and weigh the challenges, which in their various capacities have debilitated Nigeria's diplomatic relation performance that engages the concern of this paper and bring Islamic system of diplomatic as a way out.

## CONCEPTUAL DEFINATION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Diplomatic relation is the means by which States throughout the world conduct their affairs in ways to ensure peaceful relations. The main task of individual diplomatic services is to safeguard the interests of their respective countries abroad. This concerns as much the promotion of political, economic, cultural or scientific relations as it does international commitment to defend human rights or the peaceful settlement of disputes (Stephen, 2017)<sup>iv</sup>

Treaty of *Hudaybiyyah* was an event that took place during the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It was a pivotal treaty between the Prophet (S.A.W) representing the state of Madinah and the *Qurayshi* tribe of Makkah in January 628 (corresponding to *Dhu al-Qi'dah*, AH. 6). It helped to decrease tension between the two cities, affirmed peace for a period of 10

years, and authorized Muslims followers to return the following year in a peaceful pilgrimage, later known as the first pilgrimage. (Karen, 2007)<sup>v</sup>

Bern,<sup>vi</sup> 2008 in ABC diplomacy viewed, that diplomatic relation has existed since the time when States, empires or other centers of power dealt with each other on an official basis.

Erzirim 2016, viewed diplomatic relation is the category of actions a government takes which deals with defense, security, international political relations and international economic relations.<sup>vii</sup>

Ja'izz (2015)<sup>viii</sup> opened diplomatic relation as term created and entered into treaties between the al-Ansar (the people of al-Madinah) and al-Muhajurun (the immigrants from Makkah) and other residents of al-Madinah such as the Jews. the diplomatic mission started with the invitation of the kings of Roman and Persian, as well as the kings, the princes and the tribal leaders of the Arabs, to embrace Islam, in an Advanced civilized manner, which indicates the depth of the Islamic renaissance and its ability to implement the principles and values of civilization.

According to Stephan, (2017) stated that Man is a social being, which means friendships and relations have been in existence between humans since the beginning of human creation, arguably the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle once said "man by nature is a political animal"<sup>ix</sup>

As Qur'an stated regard the representative the Prophet Adam (A.S) which is as follows:

Remember, when your Lord said to the angels: I have to place a successive authority (Khalifah) on the earth," they said: "Will You place one there who would create disorder and shed blood, while we intone Your litanies and sanctify Your name?" And Allah said: "Indeed, I know that which you do not know. (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:30)

From the above verse we can realized that representative exist since in the ancient time of man creations.

Hence, national interest is the context within which a nation formulates its Diplomatic relation (Morgenthau 2006). To realize and actualize their goals and interests, states consciously device some set of policies and plans otherwise called foreign policy, which guide their actions as they deal and interact with their fellows in the international arena. Diplomatic relation are usually conceived and formulated on the basis of the interests of a state defined in terms of those needs she desires to satisfy in her relations with other states (Enuka, 2016)<sup>x</sup>

## **HISTORY OF NIGERIAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

As such, Nigerian diplomatic relations didn't just start at independence, it dates back to during the times of the Hausa emirates, the Igbo kingdoms, the Benin kingdom and the Oyo empires. However, diplomatic relations were established with the coming of colonial officers with such establishments like the consular authority in 1847 and the famous amalgamation of 1914. As a result, Nigeria as a colonial state was brought into the diplomatic world not as an independent state (Stephen, 2017)<sup>xi</sup>

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION**

Hence, Nigeria is a country in West Africa, bordering Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west. Its coast in the south is located on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean (Wikipedia, 2019)<sup>xii</sup>

The 1979 Constitution<sup>xiii</sup>, which ushered in the presidential system of government in Nigeria, contains some statements on the country's diplomacy relation. Which is considers the clearest of the statements on this important issue provides:

The State shall promote African unity, as well as total political, economic, social, and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international cooperation conducive to the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestations

Under the Constitution, the Executive is clearly the locus of foreign policy making. It is the President who appoints his cabinet ministers. He also appoints most of the members of those councils which advise him regarding foreign affairs. One of such councils is the National Defense Council. According to the Constitution, that council shall have power to advise the President on matters relating to the defense of the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Nigeria.<sup>xiv</sup>

A major area of international affairs not yet commented upon is the making and enforcing of international agreements. The Constitution is silent regarding which organ of state has the power to bind the nation internationally.<sup>xv</sup> However, a specific provision on how treaties entered into may be implemented is adequately and clearly provided. The Constitution provides as follows:

- (1) No treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law except to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly.
- (2) The National Assembly may make laws for the Federation or any part thereof with respect to matters not included in the Exclusive Legislative List for the. Purpose of implementing a treaty.
- (3) A bill for an Act of the National Assembly passed pursuant to the provisions of subsection (2) of this section shall not be presented to the President for assent, and shall not be enacted unless it is ratified by a majority of all the Houses of Assembly in the Federation.<sup>xvi</sup>

### **OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF NIGERIA'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

1. The protection of the sovereign and territorial integrity of the Nigerian State;
2. The promotion of the economic and social well-being of Nigeria;
3. The enhancement of Nigeria's image and status in the world at large;
4. The promotion of unity as well as the total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Nigeria and Africa;
5. The promotion of the rights of black people and others under colonial rule;
6. The promotion of international cooperation conducive to the consolidation of world peace and security, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states;
7. Redressing the imbalance in the international power structures which hastened to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of developing countries;
8. Respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all nations.
9. The promotion of world peace based on the principles of freedom, mutual respect and equality of the world (Akindele & Ate, 2000).<sup>xvii</sup>

### **CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

- Lack of Specialization and Professionalism of ambassadors
- Legislative and Executive Relation is poor

- Reciprocity in which Nigeria become dump area.
- Lack of Public opinion and citizen involvement in diplomatic relation
- Articulation of National Interest
- Challenges of Afrocentrism
- Economy

## ISLAMIC DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

As we known, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is the last messenger sent by Allah (S.W.T) with the Qur'an as the mother of all injunctions that contained perfected message. In this regard Prophet (S.A.W) never showed himself as the rigid and narrow-minded diplomat, but he always accepted negotiation and disliked armed combat as solution. For instance, in the case of Charter of Madinah, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) attempted to negotiate with all these people of Madinah and the Jews, and later the negotiation had been documented which is known as "Constitution of Madinah". It is a document of great historical significance, the provisions of the Treaty itself really showed the credibility of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as diplomat (Sa'ed, 2018) <sup>xviii</sup>

Another remarkable diplomatic practice of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) can be clearly notice in the Treaty of *Hudaibiyah*. In this Treaty he really exhibited to Muslims the real art of negotiation as a peace-oriented diplomat Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) preserved peace and offered negotiation even when his attention to enter Makkah was deterred by the *Quraisyh*. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during the negotiation upheld the principle of tolerance, persuasion and patience. Prophets diplomacy really enabled him to handle this extremely complicated and fragile negotiation. Even the terms of the Treaty were unfavorable to the Muslims thus, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) still did not react aggressively. <sup>xix</sup>

As Qur'an stated in regard the diplomatic and peaceful coexistence as follows:

Allah (SWT) wishes to make clear (what is lawful and want is unlawful) to you and to show you the ways of those before you, and accept your repentance and Allah (S) is all-Knower and All -wiser. Q4; 26)

In another verse Allah (SWT) Says;

Freedom from (all) obligations (is declared) from Allah (S) and His Messenger (S.A.W) to those of the *Mushrikun* (Polytheists) pagan, idolaters, disbelieving in the Oneness of Allah (S) with whom you made a treaty (Q9:1)

He (SWT) also says;

And if anyone of the *Mushrikun* (Polytheists) Idolaters, disbelieve ring in the oneness of Allah (S) seek your protections then grant him protections, so that he may hear the word of Allah(S) the Qur'an and then escort him

to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not” (Q9:6)

And Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) illustrated the diplomatic system in Islam which as follows:

Aisha (R) reported: whenever the Messenger (S) would invoke peace while sitting in prayer: he did not sit but long enough to say: “O Allah, you are peace and from you is peace, blessed are you . O Majestic and Generous.” (Sahih, Muslim 592)

Abu Hurairah (R) reported that, the Prophet (SAW) said:

You will not enter paradise until you believe and you will not believe until you love each other. Shallows I show you something that, if you did you would love each other? Spread peace between yourselves (Sahih Muslim, 54)

Abdullahi Ibn Umar (R) reported that:

A man asked the Messenger (SAW) which act in Islam is best? Then Prophet (S.A.W) said “To feed the hungry, and to greet with peace and those you know and those you do not know. (Sahih Bukhari, 28)

Indeed, the Prophets political foresight and diplomacy later led to the clear victory of Islam in the following years. Initially, diplomatic procedures were adopted in Islamic history as a means of spreading the word of Islam. The Prophet (S.A.W) dispatched emissaries to the kings and princes ruling at the time, inviting them to embrace Islam, a practice that the Rightly-guided caliphs emulated following on the path of the Prophet (Yassir, 2009)<sup>xx</sup>

The advent of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula is considered as a major paradigm shift at all levels, especially at the political level as it is related to the external relations of the Islamic state. Although, the Arabic diplomacy in the pre-Islamic era was also associated with foreign relations more commercial interests, however, the diplomatic practices in Islam went beyond such boundaries of the pre-Islamic era, and flied to all directions. There are religious texts in the holy Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) that cares and encourages diplomatic relation.<sup>xxi</sup>

The texts represent the greatest respect for the human dignities, and it provides him with everything that will preserve him the dignity, such as personal immunity, privileges, virtue and many examples that we shall see in dealing of the holy Prophet (S.A.W), which He (S.A.W) established and affirmed the fundamentals, and which was continued after him by the rightly guided Caliphs<sup>xxii</sup>.

## ORIGIN OF ISLAMIC DIPLOMATIC RELATION

The origin of the principle of diplomatic relation in Islam is the maxim which is actually word of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that says (*do no harm*). Therefore, immunity that was established by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is that an envoy should not be killed. Instead, envoy must be allowed to return safely, whether the other party accept or reject the message that he brought.

Since the beginning of his prophet hood to the end of his life, the Prophet (SAW) met with many delegates. The envoys that came to meet the Prophet (S.A.W) were

called *Wafd* meaning the delegate body. Some of the historians have reported that the Prophet sent over three hundred (300) letters to the tribe, chiefs, state leaders and religious authorities. (Arshid and Sayed 2018)<sup>xxiii</sup>

Furthermore, the Prophet's (SAW) behavior consistent with Quranic teachings is highly appreciable as he receives the envoys and representatives of foreign states as his guests. The ambassadors were received and stayed in *Dar-ul-Zeyfan* (guesthouse) that was protected and safe, which is considered as an example of the impunity of diplomatic and consular accommodation. It was customary to give presents to the envoys.<sup>xxiv</sup>

As stated in the Qur'an thus:

Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah (SAW) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the meeting with) Allah (S) and the Last Day and remembers Allah (SWT) much" Al-Ahzab :21

History records examples of the Prophet's presents to envoys. Freedom was given to the envoys to perform their religious right. The seventh to ninth year of *Hijrah* (Post Hudaibiyah and Fall of Makkah) can be regarded as the "Age of Deputation". Some of the deputation received by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) like *Banu Ashja*, *Banu Juhaina*, *Banu Muzainah*, *Banu Saad bin Bakar*, *Banu Tamim* and also some deputation from Southern Arabia like the envoys of Oman, Yemen and Bahrain. Even Prophet (SAW) also gave a great welcome and a kind treatment to the deputation from Christian state like Christian *Najran* and Princess of *Banu Kindah* from *Hadrilmaut*. (Yassir, 2009)<sup>xxv</sup>

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in managing the political affairs of the state devised his own tool of diplomacy which is largely practice in today's political affairs such as negotiation, sending a diplomat abroad, signing a treaty and arbitration. As far as practice of diplomacy under rightly guided Caliphs is concerned just like in the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the era of his foremost successors, also recorded some diplomatic relations with foreign States. This era witnessed tremendous exchange of envoys between the Muslims and non-Muslim states. Further regarding the origin of the diplomacy in Islam it originated in the time of the Prophet (SAW) The Prophet (SAW) had sent his emissaries in different places such as Al-Abbas was sent to Makkah, Anas Ibn Abi Murthid al-Ghanawi to Awas (near ) and Munzir Ibn Amir-al-Said to Majid. Moreover, regarding the permanent diplomacy in Islam (Hussain, 2015)<sup>xxvi</sup>

## **DIPLOMATIC SYSTEM DURING THE SECOND CALIPH**

The period of Caliph Umar's caliphate undoubtedly is the "Golden Age" of Islam in every respect. He was a man of extraordinary genius who not only molded the destiny of the nation but made the history of his own. He fully followed the footsteps of the Holy Prophet. He was an exemplary administrator who originated an efficient system of administration. He implemented *Shari'ah* (Divine Islamic Law) as the code of a newly formed International Islamic State. He safeguarded the internal safety by introducing the police force. He gave stipends to the poor and founded new cities for the growth of Islamic culture and civilization. He improved agriculture & economics and founded the educational system. Shortly, he was the founder of a great modern state (Naeem, 2019)<sup>xxvii</sup>

## **METHODOLOGY USED BY THE PROPHET (SAW) IN PROMOTING DIPLOMATIC RELATION**

- ✓ Sent letters to other heads of state during the Madinan phase of his life. Personalities, amongst others, included the Negus (Najashi) of Axum (Abyssinia), Heraclius (Emperor of the Byzantine Empire), the Muqawqis of Egypt and Khesra, Sassanid King of Persia (Iran).
- ✓ Negotiation with world leaders on common mission and interfaith dialogue
- ✓ Representation to others countries for diplomatic relations development
- ✓ Treaties and Arbitration which was happened at *Hudaybiyyah* and Byzantine Empire.
- ✓ Protection of envoy rights even if the message is rejected.
- ✓ Solidarity and mutual help with other countries.

## CONCLUSION

Diplomatic relations in Islam did not flourish in a day or two but it took a definite shape over the years since the days of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and emergence of Islam was neither a marginal event, nor one important happening, but it represented a turning point in the struggle between spiritual belief and materialistic philosophy. As a religion, Islam brings in the concept of equality of man. As a matter of fact, Islam is a complete code of life encompassing all spheres of human activities social, economic, legal, cultural and political. Islam is for all mankind irrespective of caste, creed and color. It's Islam that provides the idea of a universal state based on the equality of man. And the whole land is belonging to Allah (SWT) as the Sovereign Lord.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations are made.

- Citizenship education on the Diplomatic relations role should be encourage in our school curriculum.
- Ambassadors nominees should be carefully selected based on specialization and professionalism
- National economic should be build up to avoid rely upon others countries.
- Prophetic approach system of diplomatic should be apply in rectify the problem.
- Negotiation, solidarity and arbitration should be enhanced for all and sundry.

## ENDNOTE

Aluko, O (1981) Essay in Nigerian Foreign Policy, p.13<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.16

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.21

<sup>4</sup> Stephen, O.I (2018) An Analysis of Nigeria Foreign Policy, p.25

<sup>5</sup> Karen, A. (2007) Muhammad (S.A.W) : A Prophet for Our time. P.1

<sup>6</sup> Been, R. (2008) ABC Diplomacy, p.17

<sup>7</sup> Erzirim, C (2016) challenges of Nigeria Government and Politics, p.47

<sup>8</sup> Hussaini, J.A (2015) Origin and Development of Diplomatic immunities in Islam, p.27

<sup>9</sup> Op.cit., Stephen, (2018) p.43

<sup>10</sup> Morgenthau, E.A (2006) Theoretical Analysis of Russian Foreign Policy, pp.92-97

<sup>11</sup> Op.cit., Stephen, (2018) p.47

<sup>12</sup> Wikipedia, 2019

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, par. 1

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, par. 2

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, par. 4



- <sup>16</sup>Ibid, par. 7  
<sup>17</sup>Akindele, A (2000) Fifty years of Nigeria Foreign Policy, p.47  
<sup>18</sup>Sa'ed, N (2018) Islam and Diplomatic Relation, p.47  
<sup>19</sup>Ibid, p.48  
<sup>20</sup>Yassir, A (2009) Diplomacy and Statesmanship of holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) pp.15-20  
<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p. 25  
<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p. 35  
<sup>23</sup>Arshid, S. (2018) Nature and Scope of Foreign Policy, p.7  
<sup>24</sup>Ibid, p.10  
<sup>25</sup>Op cit., Yassir, (2009) p.15  
<sup>26</sup>Op cit., Hussain, (2015), p.11  
<sup>27</sup>Naeem, A (2019) Technical Aspects of Official letters from caliph Umar ibn al-Khatab. P. 1

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 Ibid, par. 1<sup>xiii</sup>  
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