

## NIGERIA-RUSSIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA: CURRENT DYNAMICS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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**Abstract:** *Post-Soviet Russia pursues very difficult foreign policy objectives in its interactions with African countries and frequently uses alliances, partnerships, and formal and informal networks created during the Cold War. One can see a persistent continuity in Russia's efforts to position itself as the West's adversary. By the time of its collapse in 1991, the Soviet Union had largely lost its sway and prominence in Nigeria. The relationship between Russia and Nigeria has developed over time, reaching a pinnacle with the visits of Russian President Dmitri Medvedev to Nigeria in 2009 and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria to Russia in 2001. Under Vladimir Putin, Russia has given up advancing socialism in favor of pursuing base economic interests through its business elite, based on principles that seem to be in direct opposition to the norms of Western liberalism. Without a doubt, the post-Cold War bilateral relations between Nigeria and Russia have experienced both good and difficult times. Therefore, using traditional diplomatic theory as a guide to trace the history of the two countries' diplomatic ties, this paper evaluates the economic ties between Nigeria and Russia from a historical perspective. In conclusion, It is desirable that Nigeria and Russia take their bilateral relations to a new level of active cooperation in crucial and strategic economic sectors, even though there are still many gains to be made in terms of media and cultural exchanges as well as some trade-friendly policies on the part of the Russian government to allow for more Nigerian exports. As a result, the paper makes recommendations on how the two countries can strengthen their economic ties to promote closer collaboration in important and strategic areas.*

**Keywords:** *Economic relations, Post Cold War, Cooperation, Prospects, Challenges*

### Introduction

Early relations between Nigeria and its former Soviet Union after Nigeria gained independence in 1960 tended to draw attention to the challenges Nigeria faced in dealing with Moscow and other communist Eastern European states. Despite the establishment of

diplomatic ties, the tensions of the Cold War era at the time prevented relations with the USSR from fully developing. Nigeria had endorsed the Bandung nonalignment framework, but due to the position's largely phony nature, Nigeria was never able to forge impartial ties with the East and West. This is due to the fact that, with only a few exceptions, successive Nigerian leaders demonstrated a strong proclivity toward the Western world. As a result, the formal diplomatic exchange between Nigeria and the Soviet Union did not result in amicable and productive relations. Soviet Union would not be warmly welcomed in Nigeria due to a combination of the national leaders' ideological leanings toward the West, colonial legacies, and the country's political and economic systems. As a result, it can be said that relations between Nigeria and the Soviet Union are generally cold to lukewarm (Onafowokan, 2010). According to Matusevich (2019), the USSR established itself as a moral ally in the fight against racism during the Cold War and even provided support to anti-apartheid militias in Africa. It also supported the Organization of African Unity, carried out "extravagant" development initiatives like a steel mill in Nigeria, and joined forces with other African nations at the UN in the early 1970s. In order to compete with the West, Russia was strategically interested in gaining international support and economic cooperation. Matusevich (2019) contends that there are "continuities" in Russian policies toward Africa during the Cold War and today, and that these policies share some overarching goals, such as Moscow's pursuit of international support. Regarding specific political and economic interests during the Cold War, he doesn't say much. He went on to stress the significance of close ties between important Russian and African leaders, which helped Russia re-enter the region. Many prominent Russian leaders were formerly intelligence officers, some of whom had ties to Africa, in addition to the fact that many politicians and businesspeople from Africa received their education in the Soviet Union. Current Russian policies are different from those of the Cold War era in that they lack ideological goals, but they share other objectives. The 74 years of Soviet rule came to an end with the declaration of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, consigning the "cold war" to the annals of history. Along with the other fourteen union republics that made up the former Soviet Union, Russia also became a sovereign independent state. In order to replace centralization with decentralization, the closed economy with a market economy, the fusion of power with separation of power, the single party system with a multi-party system, and most importantly, the emergence of fundamental human rights along with freedom of the press and freedom of speech, Russia chose democracy and democratic culture. A new era in human history had begun (Agubamah, 2014).

The task of creating a new structure to go with its new political philosophy was important to post-Soviet Russia. Its nation faced many challenges during that time. The Soviet laws were not only out of date but also insufficient, so there were many difficulties, but the most important was the requirement for a new constitution. The first post-communist Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, was at odds with the Khasbulatov-led Duma, which was established under the Soviet system. Additionally, the nation abruptly descended into anarchy, complete with all associated social vices. Both the unemployment rate and the crime rate were increasing significantly. The gate that had kept corruption closed for more than 74 years opened, and the very few privileged individuals who were successful in acquiring state properties became known as *noviruski* (New Russians); the oligarchy evolved into a potent force to be reckoned with, controlling the nation's economy (Abiodun, 2017). More specifically, the dynamics of international relations and the

positions of all system actors have undergone some fundamental changes as a result. However, the Russian Federation's was unusual, particularly in light of the numerous difficulties associated with the switch from a socialist to a capitalist and liberal democratic system. This development's difficulties had a significant impact on Russia's relations with other nations, including Nigeria. In addition, Russia appeared to have turned inward as it attempted to reframe its identity and mission for the new era. In light of the aforementioned, this paper investigates the post-Cold War economic ties between Russia and Nigeria.

### *Research methods*

Secondary sources served as the source of the data for this paper. Books, online resources, journals, magazines, and newspapers are some of the secondary sources of information that were consulted. These sources' data were examined, and logical inferences were made.

### **Review of related literature**

Obasekola (2011) contends that Comrade Nikita Khrushchev's departure from the Russian leadership in 1964, which resulted in a more balanced and less ideological approach to foreign policy being adopted, was not unrelated to the new Russian stance on Nigeria and Africa in general. As the 1960s came to a close, the Soviet leadership began to show less interest in political revolution in African states and more interest in domestic politics. When Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu announced the Eastern Region of Nigeria would secede to form the independent Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967, and civil war broke out on July 6, 1967, the demands of the conflict compelled the Federal Government of Nigeria to court the USSR. This new Soviet pragmatic foreign policy allowed them to support the Federal Government of Nigeria. Since then, Nigeria and Soviet (Russia) have signed many joint documents. These agreements include the Air Communication Agreement (1967), the Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation Agreement (1968), the Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation and Exchanges (1970), the Protocol on the Equivalence of Scientific Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates Issued and Awarded by the Educational Institutions of the Parties (1973), and the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation in the Construction of a New Metallurgical Enterprise in Nigeria (1976). The Soviet Union's (Russia's) involvement in Nigeria's metallurgy, petroleum industry, geological surveys, public health services, and personnel training has varied as a result of these agreements. The USSR built two 920 km oil pipeline systems with a combined capacity of 18.7 million tons per year in Nigeria between 1977 and 1982 under the terms of a general contract.

After the old political order was overthrown, Russia was attempting to achieve balance; in contrast, Nigeria was living under a military dictatorship that had been in place since 1983. In a world where military rule was unpopular and unacceptable, it was attempting to establish legitimacy and recognition. Nigeria was unable to engage in meaningful international relations as a result during this time. Even so, the Nigerian military junta demonstrated a high level of disregard for human rights, as evidenced by the offensive Decree 4 of 1984, which censors all forms of freedom of expression. Aside from the economy's collapse, which led to inadequate physical and social infrastructures, several media outlets were banned, journalists and activists were imprisoned, and life generally

became unsafe and unsecure. This continued up until 1999, when a new democratically elected administration took office. In addition, it happened at the same time that Vladimir Putin became the second president of the Russian Federation to be chosen democratically (Abiodun, 2017). Vladimir Putin's election as president of Russia and the swearing-in of Obasanjo as Nigeria's democratically elected president led to the restoration of diplomatic ties between the two countries, which created a new window of opportunity for the two countries to take advantage of the potential of their cooperation in the political and economic spheres. Former president Obasanjo received an invitation to visit Russia from a representative of the Russian government who was present at the ceremony. In response to this invitation, Obasanjo made a state visit to Russia from March 5–7, 2001, which revived bilateral ties between Nigeria and Russia (Agubamah, 2014). The Declaration of Principles of Friendly Relations between the two countries was signed on March 6, 2001. As a result, the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Scientific and Technical Cooperation (ICESTC) was eventually founded, laying the groundwork for the development of relationships that would be mutually beneficial and deepening existing ones. This commission will hold regular meetings to discuss a variety of topics pertaining to the bilateral relationship between Nigeria and Russia (Waliyullahi, 2016).

Obasanjo pledged to ensure enhanced ties with Russia that would be long-lasting and mutually beneficial. This position was further strengthened in 2008 by direct communication between Musa Ya'adua, who succeeded Obasanjo as president, and Dmitry Medvedev, who served as Putin's replacement from 2008 to 2012, in Toyaka, Japan, during the G-8 summit. In response to that meeting, President Dmitry Medvedev paid a state visit to Nigeria in June 2009. That was the first visit by a Russian head of state in recorded history, which boosted the developing relationship between Nigeria and Russia. The following agreements, among others, were signed on June 24, 2009, as a result of the meeting of the heads of state of Nigeria and Russia in Abuja: Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy, Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Exploration of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes, Agreement of the Transfer of Persons Sentenced to Imprisonment, Memorandum of Association on Joint Venture between NNPC and GAZPROM, and Legal Cooperation between the Nigerian and Russian Ministries of Justice are just a few of the agreements that have been made (Abiodun, 2017).

In 2005, Codel International Limited of Nigeria and Asen of Russia signed a contract for the construction of a gas turbine electricity generation plant in Nigeria's Bayelsa state at the Nigerian Embassy in Moscow. The same Russian company had earlier built the Thermo Power Station in Kwara State. This demonstrates Nigeria's interest in and confidence in Russian technology even more. When signing the agreement in Moscow on behalf of his state government, Steve Azaiki, the secretary of the Bayelsa state government, reaffirmed this position in a statement. President Medvedev's visit, which resulted in the agreements being signed, gave rise to a number of new initiatives (Agubamah, 2014). The National Commission on Atomic Energy and the Russians are constructing an experimental research nuclear plant in Abuja. Additionally, it was agreed that the Russians would support Nigeria's peacekeeping and peace-support efforts with technical assistance. In order to strengthen Russia's defense capabilities, several security personnel from Nigeria have been sent there and are still being sent there for specialized training.

In August 2011, Nigeria launched the Nigeria SAT 2 and Nigeria SAT X spacecrafts into orbit aboard the Russian Dnerpr rocket from a launch pad in the southern Russian town of Yasny as part of a new level of scientific and technological cooperation between the two nations. Glades Sasore, a special adviser to Nigerian President Jonathan (2010-2015) on export promotion, visited Moscow to present high-quality agricultural products, timber, solid minerals, gemstones, and tanned leather made in Nigeria in an effort to promote business relationships that would benefit both Nigerian and Russian businesspeople. Sasore emphasized Nigeria's interest in Russian technology during her meeting with the Russian chambers of commerce and industry. She wanted to accelerate Nigeria's industrialization drive. The Russian Chambers of Commerce granted a concession in August 2016 allowing them to import cashews only from Nigeria (Waliyullahi, 2016).

Nigeria is increasingly emerging as one of Russia's most important African trading partners. According to data from the Central Bank of Nigeria, trade with Russia increased from \$300 million to roughly \$1.5 billion in 2010. The largest Russian businesses have started doing business in Nigeria. RUSSAL, a major producer of aluminum in Russia acquired a 77.5 percent stake in ALSCON, a producer of aluminum in Nigeria. The huge gas reserves of Nigeria will be explored and exploited with the help of a new joint venture company called NiGaZ Energy Company, which will also participate in a number of other crucial infrastructure development projects, such as the training of Nigerians, according to a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Gazprom, the national energy company of Russia. The joint venture is anticipated to receive investments from both companies totaling up to US\$2.5 billion. The world's largest oil company, Lukoil, is attempting to increase the size of its business in Nigeria. In order to discuss the bilateral agenda in the field of military-technical cooperation related to the 2012 agreement on joint project to design, develop, construct, operate, and commission a nuclear power plant scheduled to complete in 2025, Russian Army Chief of General Staff General Valery Gerasimov met with Nigerian Defense Minister Mansur Muhammad Dan-Ali in Moscow (Agubamah, 2014).

These are positive signs of the strong ties between Nigeria and Russia, which have sparked a slow but steady increase in bilateral trade and encouraged face-to-face interactions between Nigerian and Russian officials, institutions, agencies, and businesses, creating new possibilities for collaboration. RuNiTrade (Russia Nigeria e-commerce platform) was introduced in Lagos, Nigeria, in June 2016 as a result of collaboration between the Lagos Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Russian Trail Trans Logistics Group of Companies. By sharing information about business opportunities in both countries, the goal is to improve the two countries' bilateral trade relations and stimulate economic activity between them. This is done to encourage the flow of investments between the two countries. Under the direction of Shina Fawole, who later turned the reins over to Jerome Okolo, Soyuznik (an association of professionals with Soviet/Russian training who have worked or are still working in a variety of sectors in Nigeria and abroad) was established in August 2015 (Waliyullahi, 2016). This group is working to improve relations between Nigeria and Russia. This organization has serious concerns about the productive exploitation of the Soviet-era Ajaokuta steel rolling mills.

However, Kohnert (2022) asserts that contemporary Russian involvement in Africa, and Nigeria in particular, is primarily motivated by a desire to counter Western

influence, particularly in light of the fact that Moscow feels reprimanded by Western sanctions for its actions in the Ukraine, its violations of human rights, its nefarious online behavior, and its interference in foreign elections, among other things. According to the Russians, Africa can be a platform where it can find allies to forge a multipolar world and weaken Western dominance. Russia would gain new allies within multilateral organizations, particularly at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), by establishing new connections throughout Africa. For instance, when the UN voted in 2014 on a resolution condemning Russian hostilities in Crimea, 29 African nations either abstained or voted against the resolution, with Russia receiving a large portion of this support due to debt relief.

Large-scale projects received a significant portion of the Soviet Union's economic assistance. For instance, although Nigeria had no socialist leanings, the Soviets still wanted to keep friendly ties with it because it had Africa's largest population and second-largest army. Both an iron and steel complex and a significant pipeline were built in Nigeria thanks to Soviet funding. Early in the 1980s, the Soviet Union's total economic assistance to the world fell, from \$8.1 billion in 1975–1979 to just \$2.5 billion in 1980–1981 a decline of \$367 million annually on average. In the 1980s, a number of factors led the Soviet Union to cut back on its financial assistance. First, it was challenging for the Soviet Union to continue aiding developing nations due to its own economic problems (Onafowokan, 2010). Additionally, a more free press was made possible by Gorbachev's reforms, which got underway in the middle of the 1980s and criticized the Soviet Union's policy toward Africa. An EU Parliament Brief claims that the Soviet Union's interest in the area decreased in the 1980s as a result of economic hardship and improved relations with the West. As much as they invested in economic assistance, the Soviets also reaped the rewards. Their main objective in Sub-Saharan Africa was to advance socialism, which was a path that few nations pursued. Their expenses were minimal, though. Soviet development assistance made up less than 1% of both the USSR's GDP and the world's total development aid in 1979. The USSR's ability to finance significant infrastructure projects was acknowledged internationally, which was the only significant benefit (Kaplila, 2010).

Today, Russia uses development assistance as a component of its plan to create a multipolar world order and reclaim the position it once held in Sub-Saharan Africa during the Cold War. While claiming to support conventional causes like fighting poverty, Russia actually uses development aid to exert political influence and strengthen its position in Nigeria. Russia legitimizes its position as a great power capable of taking on a global leadership role by offering development assistance. The fact that Russia gives food security and health assistance programs top priority also reveals its political goals. Russia sources its contributions for food security from domestic producers, further solidifying its place as one of the world's top wheat suppliers. In order to maintain a long-term physical presence in the recipient nation, Russia funds medical projects that also include training components (Ukiyedeikimie, 2023).

Russia mostly uses international organizations to distribute its aid for development. In accordance with a 2011 Russian government report, the UN, World Bank, World Health Organization, and International Civil Defense Organization received the majority of the country's development aid. By giving aid, Russia establishes itself as a major power that can help developing nations. According to Waliyullahi (2016), approximately 60% of Russian aid is dispersed through international organizations and the remaining 40%

through bilateral agreements. Overall, Russia offers very little aid in the areas of development and humanitarian relief, but when it does, it makes a big deal out of it to boost its reputation as a major donor. Russians have maintained their limited use of development aid since the end of the Cold War. The Soviets gave Nigeria little aid and received little in return, which may have influenced Russia's current attitude toward development aid (Omotuyi, 2019). This trend is unlikely to be reversed by Russia, giving the US an opportunity to oppose it. For instance, the United States could reassign a portion of its development assistance budget to nations where Russia is attempting to gain a foothold.

#### Prospects of Nigeria-Russia Relations in the Post-Cold War

Nigeria depends on Russian technology to advance industrialization, and Russia needs Nigeria as a market for its industrial products and military hardware. The Russian ambassador to Nigeria, Poliakov, claimed that there are similarities between Nigeria and Russia, including the use of federalism, a nearly identical population size, and progress from autocratic to democratic rule, and a wealth of natural resources such as agricultural land, oil, and gas (Abiodun, 2017). The strategic alliance between Nigeria and Russia has many other justifications. Poliakov continued, "Both countries even have 'mission 2020,' though with different goals: Nigeria aims to become one of the world's twenty most developed nations, while Russia is determined to be one of the world's five largest economies. More compelling than politics, the economy, population size, or natural resources are the similarities that Russia and Nigeria share. According to Abiodun (2017), these similarities should strengthen relations between the two countries if they are thoroughly investigated. Particular attention was drawn to some of their traditions, mentality and way of live.

Ogun, the god of iron in Nigeria, and Oshogbo, the water god in Nigeria, are both worshipped in Russia. The custom of marriage in these two nations is particularly fascinating. For instance, the Yoruba people of Nigeria refer to marriage as "carrying the wife" (gbe iyawo). The Russians do carry their wives in their arms and occasionally walk a distance before they start what they refer to as "gulanie" (strolling), which they do in parks or other significant locations before going to the reception (Obiozor, 2002). In this context, "to carry" refers to taking full responsibility for her. In addition to all of these, the Russian and Nigerian people enjoy drawing attention to themselves wherever they go, which is always accompanied by "some excesses" in terms of their spending habits. The tsarist era in Russia was a time of unrestrained power where the throne was passed from father to son. Even today, pre-colonial Nigeria still practices something very similar to this. This is well expressed in Yoruba as 'ayeoba- aye- a -je- rorun', which explains absolutism. Leaders prefer to be in positions of power in both nations; from Stalin in 1923 to Gorbachev in 1991, a leader either passed away while in office or was forced from it (Obiozor, 2002). The first and only Russian president to resign voluntarily is still Boris Yeltsin. In contrast to Nigeria, no election had been free and fair since that country's independence up until 2015. Because they were all driven by leaders who were unwilling to cede control, they were all marked by violence and anarchy.

These characteristics reveal several similarities between the two nations. Despite this, Nigeria is not a developed country, whereas Russia is. Nigeria should follow in Russia's footsteps and follow the path that brought them to greatness. Agubamah pointed out that Russia has a lot to offer Nigeria in terms of technological assistance in a number of important areas. Additionally, Russia has a history of fostering the industrial success of

a number of nations through strategic alliance. These nations include, among others, Egypt, China, and India. Ojo Maduekwe, the foreign minister of Nigeria, traveled to Moscow in March 2009 to meet with President Medvedev and speak with his Russian counterpart, Lavrov. The execution of projects in infrastructure, the ferrous and nonferrous metals industry, electric power generation, and nuclear energy were among the areas where agreements were reached to activate the realization of the potential that both countries have in the trade and economic spheres. Nigeria's enormous gas reserves are being exploited through a joint venture between Russia and Nigeria. State-owned Gazprom of Russia and Nigeria's NNPC have agreed to invest \$2.5 billion (£1.53 billion) in a new joint venture to develop, extract, and transport gas from Nigeria's fields. The agreement, when fully honoured, will result in the exchange of ideas and the engagement of armies of unemployed Nigerian youths (Waliyullahi, 2016). It was reached during the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's four-day African tour. Sergei Lavrov, the foreign minister of Russia, paid a visit to Nigeria in November 2010 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries. It is important to pay due attention to the agreements made by the two nations in 2009 to rekindle their bilateral ties through a strategic partnership.

### **Problems of Nigeria-Russia Relations in the Post-Cold War**

Nigeria-Russian relations face a number of difficulties. For instance, the National Parliament must approve international agreements before they can be put into effect, and this creates their legal framework. With particular reference to the 2009 Abuja agreement, the parliament has not yet ratified the agreements with Russia. Making foreign policy requires a thorough understanding of other countries' cultures, histories, languages, mentalities, worldviews, capabilities, and potential. It makes it easier to perceive diplomatic policies correctly and accurately (Poliakov, 2009). There is tenuous indication that the two nations perceive one another sufficiently and adequately. The political will to fully implement their existing bilateral agreements is lacking, in part because of this. The following are some of the other issues with Nigeria-Russian relations:

Political leanings. The majority of Nigeria's political elites are strongly influenced by London and Washington, both of which have an interest in keeping Moscow out of African nations' internal affairs.

A trade deficit. Nigeria should be given the right conditions to increase its exports to Russia. Russian businesses can purchase tropical agricultural goods like cashew, coffee, and cocoa from Nigeria.

One of the main issues is the lack of information regarding business opportunities in Nigeria. Russians and other foreign investors do not have access to current, accurate information about the business opportunities in Nigeria (Poliakov, 2009).

ALSCON, the sole aluminum smelting facility in Nigeria that was transferred to the Russian aluminum giant United Company RUSAL PLC, was shut down in 2014, which resulted in the unemployment of over 98 percent of its workforce, the majority of whom were local hires (Abiodun, 2017). Furthermore, according to Waliyullahi (2016), there have been times when diplomatic ties between Nigeria and Russia have been strained. One of these instances occurred when some sailors who were part of the crew of the Greek-owned ship MT African Pride were charged with economic sabotage, illegal possession of Nigerian oil, and oil bunkering, all of which carry the death penalty. The sailors' trial was



delayed for an extended period, which led to complaints from the Russian government and strained diplomatic ties with Nigeria. Despite the fact that the sailors were ultimately found guilty by a Nigerian court and each received a six-month suspended sentence as part of a plea agreement, they were ultimately released because they had already spent nearly two years in the Nigerian Law Enforcement Agency's pre-trial detention. Six Russian employees of the Russian Aluminum Company (RUSALC) were kidnapped by militants in the tumultuous Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria in June 2007, which was a terrible turning point in the friendships. The men were eventually released safely by a team made up of Nigerian Army and Police in August 2007 after a protracted captivity. According to a report in the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* newspaper on November 24, 2011, Mr. Akinola Olufemi, a Nigerian student from the northern city of Arkhangelsk, was found dead after being brutally murdered with his ears severed in southern Moscow. The crime did not appear to be a robbery because the victim's papers and wallet were left at the scene. This incident put a strain on relations between Nigeria and Russia.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The conventional diplomatic theory was the theory employed in this work. The foundation of this theory is state-qua-state diplomacy. The interaction of states through their permanent ambassadors or other specially designated diplomats is referred to as traditional diplomacy. The foundation of conventional diplomacy is permanent bilateral representation (John, 1998). According to conventional diplomacy, states are the only players on the global stage. They argued that even when non-state actors interact with states on a global scale, they do so under their direction. Woodrow Wilson, Basil, and Hedley are the main proponents of this theory. Historical tradition has an influence on conventional diplomacy. Following the final end of the thirty year war in 1648, traditional diplomacy began to develop in Europe. A strategy to lessen the conflict that had dominated Europe for a significant portion of the 17th century was required by the newly formed state system. This approach was customary diplomacy. The state system and diplomacy both developed in a reciprocal fashion. Traditional diplomacy is based on the core principles of sovereignty, national interest, state representation, and national security. Both Nigeria and Russia want to achieve this in their interactions with one another. Traditional diplomacy is centered on the fundamental concerns of sovereignty, national interest, state representation, and national security. Traditional diplomacy must meet a few requirements in order to be effective. The requirement that there be multiple states is the first one. These states must be independent political entities with the capacity to act with absolute authority both inside and outside the unit (Hedley, 1997). A second prerequisite is the presence of shared beliefs and objectives that enable states to interact on a regular basis.

Additionally, Sharp (2009) argues that there is an increasing demand for diplomacy and the insights of diplomatic theory. He identifies a diplomatic tradition of international thought based on how people live in groups, the distinctions between intra- and inter-group relations, and the perspectives that those who handle inter-group relations develop about the kinds of international disputes that occur. Traditional diplomacy was more formal and protocols were extended to show goodwill gestures, and Russia-Nigeria diplomatic relations are centered on state relations, which is why the theory to the paper is justified. It

is a fact that the fundamental tenets of sovereignty, national interest, and national security lie at the heart of traditional diplomacy.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Nations establish diplomatic ties in order to further their own interests. The promotion of cultural heritage, scientific, economic, and technical/technological cooperation should be the main focus of Nigeria-Russian relations. For their bilateral conceptions to mature, an effort must be made to promote good knowledge as well as correct and accurate perception of one another. All problems relating to the privatization of ALSCON to Russian RUSAL, including the legal disputes, call for diplomatic solutions in a way that will enable the business to operate at its full potential. Russians and Nigerians get along well and are sympathetic to one another. Numerous joint ventures between private Russian and Nigerian businesses that operate independently of their governments exist. Olalusi O. Victor from Nigeria, who coached a group of international students from Russia, Italy, Greece, and Morocco, was profiled in *The Nation* newspaper back in June 2015 for winning the "Best Captain of the Year" honor at the university's yearly quiz competition. At the annual University Quiz Competition, his team, International United, took home the Silver medal. Russians generally view Nigerians as brilliant, diligent, intelligent, and pleasant people, though there are some exceptions. Nigerian students at the Russian National Research Medical University have consistently topped the graduation chat over the past five years, winning honors and adding their wealth of knowledge to the University's academic standing. They have always been among the best minds in Russia.

In conclusion, although there are still many gains to be made in the areas of media and cultural exchanges as well as trade-friendly policies on the part of the Russian government to allow for more Nigerian exports, relations between Nigeria and Russia have matured and it is desirable that they take their bilateral relationship to a new level of active cooperation in crucial and strategic economic sectors, both of which count. The biggest oil and gas company in the world is Gazprom, which is owned by Russia. In order to improve its capabilities, competence, and service delivery, Nigeria's NNPC (Nigeria National Petroleum Company) can benefit from the experience of this oil giant. Russia can also assist in resolving the issue of electricity supply, which is primarily brought on by a recurring lack of gas for thermal power plants and a shoddy transmission system, both of which highlight the need for a super transmission grid that can handle massive power. As a result, this paper suggested that:

The two nations' economic ties should be strengthened, with a greater emphasis than before placed on the growth of cooperation at the level of small and medium-sized businesses.

Along with improving inter-state relations, business circles and other groups need to start talking to one another. Large-scale businesses are not the only ones that can engage in this conversation. An effort should be made to include small and medium-sized businesses in the conversation as well, given Nigeria's advantage in these sectors.

In the near future, Nigeria is likely to continue to be the top travel destination for Russians. However, Nigerian and Russian businesspeople should seize this opportunity by expanding touristic activities, such as creating cultural tours or package deals in addition to the typical combination of sea, sand, and sun.

Nigerian authorities should focus on the Russian policy of imposing quota restrictions on major airline companies and maintaining a limited number of destinations. In order to advance bilateral relations, expanding the number of flights and destinations is actually already essential.

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