

# Nigerian-Turkey Relations: An Examination Of Challenges And Prospects For Viable Strategic Economic Partnership

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## Abstract

*This work seeks to examine critical aspects of the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the Republic of Turkey, a Middle Eastern country. Nigeria has had diplomatic ties with Turkey since it gained independence from Britain in 1960. However, economic relations between the two countries predates the official time; Turkey opened its embassy in 1962 in Lagos. Nigeria's Bornu Empire of North-Eastern Nigeria had pre-colonial relations with the Ottoman Empire. In modern times, relations between the two countries focus on trade cooperation, migration issues, humanitarian aids, and other commercial transactions in exports and imports of goods and services. While Nigeria exports mainly crude oil to Turkey, other areas of cooperation are beginning to emerge, especially as security problems continue to permeate in the Republic of Nigeria with insurgency from the North Eastern and rapidly expanding to other parts of the country. With scarcity literature on the relations of the two countries and absence of a detailed, in depth analyses on the challenges and prospects on the subject matter, this work interrogates the most salient of the recent developments in the relations and the impact it has had on the two countries. Given the mass kidnappings, bombings, and other acts of terrorism of Islamist insurgents, Nigeria is looking towards Turkey for military arsenals and equipment, security, and defence mechanisms in fighting terrorism. This study which centres on the foreign policy of the two countries adopted a historical method of inquiry to investigate the dynamics of Nigerian-Turkey relations. At the same time, the data collected were interpreted qualitatively. The research findings discovered that the political and economic relations of the two nation-states had experienced both positive and negative results in terms of the impact of their diplomatic relation over the years. While the study concludes that the prospect of bilateral relations between Nigeria and Turkey is enduring and beneficial to both parties, better cooperation levels are achievable. The study ultimately recommends reactive peacebuilding and readjustments of their strategies on key policies to realise their national interests without much disagreement as experienced at some points in their bilateral relations. The work is divided into five major sections as follows: (1) Introduction, (2) Framework of Analysis, (3) Historical Antecedents/Overview of the Bilateral Relations of Nigeria and Turkey, (4)*

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*Assessment of the Viability of the Relations of the two nations, (5) Prospects and Concluding Remarks.*

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## 1. Introduction

Foreign policy can be seen as a type of policy that transcends the boundary of a given state. A policy can be viewed as a course of action or a reasoned choice(s) emerging from the consideration of competing options.<sup>1</sup> Foreign policy is also that type of action a state embarks upon in its interaction with other member-states in the international environment, in the process of striving to attain its objectives and goals. In this case study, Nigeria and Turkey are the two nation-states being considered here in this research. While Nigeria is a country in the West African sub-region of the African continent, Turkey is an essential country of the Middle East region, which ultimately falls into the Asian continent. Although situated in the Middle East, Turkey stands at a strategic position where it links three major continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The foreign policy structure of any country is the product of domestic and international factors. But it is the domestic factors that principally motorize a state's foreign policy. These domestic factors are the constituents of its natural power. They include economic resources, scientific and technological advances, sociocultural resources, human resources, ideology and political culture, class formation and relations, military power and sporting prowess.<sup>2</sup> In formulating its foreign policy, a state prioritizes its core, minor or peripheral national interests. Also, it compartmentalizes the achievements into short, medium and long-term goals.

Nigerian foreign policy objectives are outlined in Section 19 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These include the promotion and protection of the national interests, promotion of African integration and support for African unity, promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations, respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication, and promotion of just economic order.<sup>3</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nigeria started as a small unit in the Office of the Prime Minister in September 1957, responsible for foreign and commonwealth relations. At independence in 1960, the Division within the Office of the Prime Minister was renamed the Ministry of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. On attainment of a Republican status in 1963, it was re-designated Ministry of External

Affairs, and in 1989, it became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While Nigeria's foreign policy objectives as enunciated at independence has remained fairly consistent, successive military or civilian administrations have shifted their emphasis and focus to suit prevailing circumstances. This has ranged from Africa being the centrepiece of Nigeria's foreign policy to economic diplomacy, citizen diplomacy and now back to economic diplomacy with an emphasis on the promotion of trade and foreign investments as a potent instrument for job and wealth creation within the context of the Transformation Agenda.

Nigeria's foreign policy objectives, as specified in Chapter II, Section 19 of the 1999 Constitution, are as follows:

- (a) Promotion and protection of Nigeria's national interests.
- (b) Promotion of African integration and support for African unity.
- (c) Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations.
- (d) Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as seeking settlement of an internal dispute by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication, and
- (e) Promotion of a just world economic order.

The core values of Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs are guided by patriotism, integrity, effectiveness, competence, service, discipline and loyalty. In addition to the constitutional framework of Nigeria's foreign policy, Aluko developed a template of Nigeria's national interest in a hierarchy of importance as; self-preservation of the country, defence and maintenance of the country's independence, economic and social well-being of the people, defence, preservation and promotion of the ways of life, especially their democratic values; enhancement of the country's standing and status in the world, especially in Africa; and promotion of world peace.<sup>4</sup>

Diplomacy also plays a vital role in Nigeria's foreign policy implementation. Diplomacy encompasses the art, skills and processes through which the rough edges surrounding foreign policy goals of states are trimmed to avert tensions, hostilities and outright wars. Diplomacy often deploys peaceful means through the instrumentality of consultation, negotiation, bargaining, compromises, and others to create a balance in the contending interests of the state. In its over 60 years of existence, Nigeria had never gone to war with any country, even when it was close to confrontations with Ghana, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Libya, and Chad.<sup>5</sup>

Turkey is located in South-Western Asia. The Black Sea borders Turkey to the North, the Mediterranean Sea to the South West, Bulgaria and Greece to the North West, Georgia Armenia and Azerbaijan and Iran to the East and Iraq and Syria to the South. The central portion of the Turkish state is located on the Anatolia Peninsula, also known as Asia Minor, the westernmost part of Asia. Turkey shares a maritime border with Cyprus, Egypt, Northern Cyprus, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. It is situated where Asia meets Europe, creating a link between them. With an area of 783,562km<sup>2</sup>, the country is more than twice the size of Germany or slightly smaller than the US States of Texas and Louisiana. Turkey has a population of 83million people (in 2020), the largest city is Istanbul, the second-largest, and the national capital is Ankara, while spoken languages are Turkish (official), Kurdish and Arabic.<sup>6</sup>

Nigeria is a country on the coast of West Africa, bordered by the Bight of Benin and the Gulf of Guinea in the South. Nigeria is bordered by Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. It shares maritime borders with Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Sao Tome and Principe. With an area of 923,768km<sup>2</sup>, the country is almost four times the size of the UK or slightly more than twice the size of the US state of California. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has 224, 267, 963 million people based on Worldometre elaboration of the latest United Nations data, making it Africa's most populous country and equivalent to 2.78% of the total world population. As at 2021, the Gross domestic product of Nigeria is 440.8 billion USD. The capital city is Abuja, located in the nation's centre, while Lagos is the primary port and largest city.<sup>7</sup> Nigeria was colonized by Great Britain from about 1861 to 1960 when it secured its independence. English is the official language, while Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are the major ethnic languages spoken with several others.

On the other hand, Turkey was not colonized by any European power but was a Mandate territory occupied by the Allies after the First World War in 1918. Since Turkey lost out in World War 1, it had to accept significant territorial losses as part of the peace settlement. It must be stated that Turkey, under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk, led Turkey out of its occupation from 1920 and resisted having its country occupied by foreigners. According to the World Bank, as at 2021, Turkey's population stands at 84.78 million. Turkey has a GDP per capital of \$28,400 as of 2020, while in Nigeria, the GDP per capital is \$4,900 as of 2020, and this clearly shows the economic level and index of the two countries.<sup>8</sup> It is equally important to note that the two countries had experienced military rule at certain periods in their history.

Turkey's foreign policy may be gleaned from the work of Professor Ahmet Davutoglu, author of the book *Turkish Strategy* (Turkish Grand Strategy), which, according to Novi Standard (2010), constitutes the ideological depth constant of the Turkish foreign policy. "The guiding posture of Turkey's foreign policy must sustain good relations with Africa, have a say in Asia, and remain a powerhouse in the Middle East", he asserts. Furthermore, he posited that Turkey could not be compared with national states formed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; its standing in the international system should only be compared with former empires like France, Germany, British Empire, China, Russia and Japan.<sup>9</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Turkey states that Turkey's foreign policy aims to protect her interests in a volatile regional and global environment, while also shopping conditions for sustainable peace and development in our neighborhood and beyond. In the pursuit of this primary goal, Turkey contributes to Peace, Prosperity and Stability around the world. Guided by our enduring objective to achieve Peace at home, Peace in the world" as set out by the founder of our Republic Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, we implement an Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy that in Presidents words, reflects the enterprising spirit and humanitarian values of our nation.<sup>10</sup>

Kali Robinson throws more light on the foreign policy of Turkey and argues that Turkey's geography and membership of (NATO) North Atlantic Treaty Organization have long given the country an influential voice in foreign policy; but the assertive policies of president Erdogan have complicated its role. Robinson asserts that reemphasized that following Turkey's foundation as a republic in 1923, it has forged close economic and military ties with the West as part of its vision of becoming a modern, secular nation. He asserts that in the two decades since the rise of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has sought to rebrand Turkey as a free agent and a world power in its own right.<sup>11</sup>

Turkey in recent years drew the ire of its neighbours and allies as Turkey launched military interventions in Libya and Syria, press territorial claims in the Mediterranean and court China and Russia. These moves and Erdogan's authoritarian domestic policies strained relations with fellow members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and cast further doubts on Turkey's prospects for joining the European Union (EU) Erdogan has maintained his hold on power in the face of these tensions and multiple domestic challenges securing an election victory in 2023 which has extended his rule another five years.<sup>12</sup>

In his book, 'Strategic Depth', Davutoglu elaborated that Turkey should not be satisfied with a regional power role in the Middle East, Africa,

and the Balkans. He asserted that Turkey was a state with strategic depth due to its geographical position and Ottoman Empire history, which denotes its appetite for expansion and massive investment in Africa's economic pot, Nigeria. Turkey is the largest country in the Middle East. It is of significant strategic importance because of its location. It shares border with Bulgaria; Greece to the west; Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran to the east; Georgia to the northeast; Syria to the south; and Iraq to the southeast. and controls the straits between the Black and Mediterranean Seas. As a member of NATO, Turkey is also a vital link in Western Europe's defense system. Turkey, like its neighbors, went through a period of rapid modernization under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938). Before this period, most of Turkey's population had been rural, traditionally Muslim and conservative. Following the death of Ataturk, Turkish leaders pushed programs of modernization and secularization, a domestic policy that continued after World War II. Modernization made the average Turk literate and politically aware. Urbanization proceeded at a rapid rate, and individual expectations rose. The economy, however, could not keep the pace expected. Although Turkey had some rare minerals and a modest industrial base, the country lacked the oil that propelled many of its neighbor's economies in the 1970s. As the oil price increased, Turkey's economy suffered, and many Turks migrated to countries in Europe and the United States of America.

Political and social turmoil developed with chronic unemployment and inflation caused by Turkey's lagging economy. Groups opposed to the government at times turned to violence. Since World War II, the military intervened in the government three times to maintain order in 1980. The most recent is the aborted 2016 military coup, which is a major diplomatic issue featured in this work. Each time, however, the military restored civilian rule and supervised elections. All these problematics which clearly manifests in both countries necessitated adequate assessment for areas of convergence.

## **2. Theoretical Framework of Analysis**

The Liberal theory has been adopted to elucidate this work as it is the principal link for cooperation between friendly nation-states. According to international law, the theory contends that people and the countries that represent them can find mutual interests and cooperate to achieve these interests at least in part by working through international organizations and according to international law. Liberals reject the contention that politics is inherently and exclusively a power struggle. Liberals do not dismiss power as a factor. Still, they add moral ideology, emotions (such as friendship and mutual

identity), habits of cooperation and even altruism as factors that influence the behaviour of national leaders and the course of world politics. The guiding principle of the Liberal theory is that international politics can be a zero-sum game. That is, it is possible to have a win-win situation in which gains of one or more countries do not have to come at the expense of others.<sup>13</sup>

As Falk has further noted, Liberals are also prone to think that all humans have a common bond that they can draw on to identify themselves beyond the narrow boundaries of their country or group and to identify and forge ties with people worldwide. Like realism, liberalism is not a new approach to world politics. Indeed, modern liberalism is resurrected idealism, although that label fell into disuse. Instead, it was a reflection of the times. Realism gained strength among scholars during the alarming period between the outbreak of World War II and the depths of the cold war in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s, however, the cold war began to thaw, the international landscape looked very different, and liberalism resurged.

There are two significant schools of thought in liberalism- Classic liberalism and neo-liberalism. Classic Liberalism traces the intellectual lineage to political philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), who argued in the social contract (1762) that humans had joined together in civil societies because they found it easier to improve their existence through cooperation than competitive self-reliance. The more contemporary liberals apply this notion to the global community. They argue that people and countries can better their existence by building a cooperative and peaceful global society. Neo-liberalism developed in the 1970s and 1980s contended and agreed with Neo-realists that competition among sovereign states in an anarchically world system causes conflict. However, Neo-liberalists argue that the system is not nearly as anarchical as the Neo-realists claim. According to Neo-liberalists, the system is marked by complex interdependence. This means that countries are tied together through trade and many other economic, social and other exchanges that increase cooperation and limit conflict. Unlike realists, liberals do not believe that acquiring, preserving and applying power must be or even always is the essence of international relations. Instead, liberals argue that foreign policy should be and sometimes is formulated according to the standards of cooperation and altruism.<sup>14</sup>

As Ofoegbu has equally argued, while diplomacy is the primary instrument of foreign relations, various economic instruments are its supporting tools. These financial instruments can be through currency, control, loan, credits, blockade, boycotts, embargoes, sanctions, rewards and foreign aids. Assistance to poor states seems to offer a

valuable instrument for ensuring their cooperation.<sup>15</sup> The choice of this theoretical framework – Liberalism as an act of diplomacy was recently reiterated by the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on 30th October 2021 when he commissioned the Turkish Cultural Centre, Abuja. The President who met with Nigeria's President then, Mohammadu Buhari noted; we hope that the relations between the two nations will be further developed based on a win-win scenario and mutual respect<sup>16</sup>. It is also important to emphasize that this work has utilized elements of historical methodology, given that an examination of challenges and prospects for strategic partnership between the two countries must take events of the past into consideration. This brings into focus the seeming problematic dialogue between the two related intertwining disciplines of intellectual importance-History and International Relations. Although much speculation has been expressed over the issues by various scholars and partisan schools of thought, yet it is clearly evident that analyses of Diplomatic Studies will continue to inculcate aspects of historical studies.

### **3. Historical Antecedents/Overview of the Formal Foreign Relations between Nigeria and Turkey**

The formal relations of the two nation-states can only be formally assessed from the period that such states are particularly independent. Thus in official terms, an assessment of the foreign relations between Nigeria and Turkey can only be gauged from 1st October 1960, when Nigeria asserted its independence from the British government. All of the period that Nigeria was under colonial rule, it was difficult to assess the extent of the relations it had with the Middle East; even though there is no doubting the fact that Nigerian traders had substantial trading relations with not only North Africa but with other Islamic nations in the Middle East. Such unofficial transactions could be linked with the trans-Saharan trade, which goes back to the fourth or fifth century AD. There were four major trading routes in the trans-Saharan trade. However, two of these routes were directly linked to pre-colonial Nigerian states in the Hausa states of Kano, Katsina, Zaria to Tunisia through Ghadames, Ghat and Agades. The route from Tripoli through Murzuk in Fezzan, Bilma led directly to the Kanem-Borno Empire. All these states became Islamic states through the trade routes as they embraced Islam. It is important to note that as far back as 1085, the king of Kanem was converted to Islam and later the same Islamic conversion was extended to Bornu Empire. One of the strongest kings of the Bornu Empire was Idris Alooma who reigned between 1580-1617, inspired by the Islamic revival in the Ottoman Empire; Alooma set out to make the people in his state better Muslims. During the reign of Idris Alooma, Nigeria's most



critical pre-colonial relations could be linked to Turkey, then under the Ottoman empire.

It has been confirmed that the introduction of firearms into Central Sudan was attributed to the effort of Idris Alooma during his reign. As John Lavers has noted, he (Idris) was undoubtedly interested in using guns and recruited foreign experts for training his men from the early years of his reign.<sup>17</sup> Evidence provided by Ibn Fartuwa has been substantiated and supplemented in recent years by materials discovered in Istanbul revealing that Idris Alooma employed Turkish soldiers to train his men, especially after his pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>18</sup> Mai Idris Alooma seemed to have recognized the need for these firearms and training its users. The result of this was the establishment of a corps of shooters who proved to be especially valuable in the prosecution of sieges and open battles through the crops of shooters, spearmen and bows men. Turkish adventurers were not the only foreign elements to visit Kanem Bornu Empire. Numerous North African scholars were also attracted to the fame and government of the Mai Alooma.

When in 1575, the Turks occupied Fezzan, and Sultan Muntasir fled to Hausaland, Idris Alooma quickly renewed the friendly relations between Bornu and Tripoli (Libya) despite the close ties between the Awlad Muhammad and the Saifawa dynasty to which Alooma belonged. Further evidence clearly shows that the pre-colonial Nigerian Bornu Empire had diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Turks. For example, Krause asserts that the Ottoman Turks later occupied a frontier fortress of Goran, a defense claimed by the Bornu Empire, resulting in an embassy under a certain al-Hajj Yussuf. Later, the Sultan Murad III, also of Tripoli, ordered his officers in Tunis to provide Mai Idris Alooma with any aid he might require to prosecute a jihad. Apart from the provision of horses and military wares to the precolonial states, other articles of trade included gold, salt, copper, diamond, enslaved people, kolanuts, ostrich feathers, hides and skins. The significant articles of commerce from North Africa were guns, gun powder and other war ammunition.

Through these Turkish rulers, the (Mamluks ruled in Egypt) education (eastern) and ideas penetrated Western Sudan and Bornu Empire (Central Sudan) one of Nigeria's ancient acclaimed empire. When all these relationships are carefully translated into today's diplomatic terms, it would be realized that much of the everyday transactions between President Tayyip Erdogan and President Muhammadu Buhari as well as previous Nigerian leaders may be comparable to the antecedents of distant past relations extended from the Ottoman Empire to pre-independent Nigeria. It has also been asserted that the

reign of Sultan Abdulmadit II in the Ottoman era is said to have had a cordial relationship with the Amir or Mai of Kanem-Bornu Empire, which is situated in today's North-Eastern Nigeria. All these evidences point clearly to the form of informal relations of the two countries before the independence of Nigeria. Even during the colonial period, the Islamic empires of Northern Nigeria still had their contacts to North Africa's Cairo, Tunisia, Egypt and even as far as Baghdad and beyond through trade contacts that survived the trans-Saharan era. Apart from the fact that pilgrimages continued to Mecca, the Muslim world had their exchanges which, aside religious exchanges, eventually transformed into cultural contacts and trading transactions of particular interests in the relations between Bornu Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Trade in enslaved people, which were in great demand throughout Asia Minor (Middle East) formed a continuous pattern of commercial relation until the abolishment of the obnoxious trade in humans. Thus at the annexation of the Sokoto Caliphate and its strings of emirates in Northern Nigeria, the British hardly tampered with the economic patterns apart from the imposition of the taxation expected of the emirates. However, the level of diplomatic transactions during the colonial era was limited and cannot be compared to what is obtainable in contemporary international relations.

With the independence of Nigeria on the 1st October 1960, Nigeria entered another political phase which officially established it as a member of the international comity of nations and subsequently relished its membership with the United Nations Organization. Thus, with the emergence of the independence of Nigeria, the Republic of Turkey opened its embassy in Lagos, then the capital of Nigeria, in August 1962. The embassy operated until 1991 when Nigeria's capital was moved to Abuja, which was more central to the nation. While retaining the consulate in Lagos, the Turkish embassy moved to Abuja in 2001. Nigeria's embassy in Turkey is equally situated in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey.

Nigeria-Turkey relations centred on economic and political ties as both countries were members of the Organization of Islamic States. While Turkey's muslim population is almost 99%, Nigeria's Northern Nigeria hosts the most Islamic population. At the same time, the Southern and Central states of Nigeria have mixed cultures of Christianity, Islamic and traditional populations. Given the nature of diplomacy between the countries, economic or political interests as both factors are complementary. Apart from being members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Nigeria and Turkey belong to the Group of Developing Eight (D-8) and maintain collaboration and obligations with

each other to maintain their corporation in international organisations.

### **3.1. Joint Membership of the Developing 8 (D-8)**

Perhaps, it is important to emphasize the essence and expected gains and membership of the D8 to this study. The Developing Organization for Economic Cooperation comprises Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. Besides being countries with sizeable Muslim populations, one of the common denominators for membership is the share size of their respective people, the combined force of which depicts the economic potentials of the organization. President Goodluck Jonathan was elected Chairman of the group in July 2010 in Abuja. In addition, the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the D-8 Commission and the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of its Council Ministers, which took place in Abuja from 12 – 14 July 2011 and subsequently through the years till 2023, underscored the vitality of an effective synergy between the public and private sectors a necessity during development. At the same time, the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission of the Council of Ministers was presided over by Prof. Viola Onwuliri, a Nigerian drawing the pool of resources of the member-nations in various capacities. These include the vital resources which member countries exchange at negotiated prices and industrial productive forces and cooperation.

### **3.2. Joint Membership of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**

In addition to the above highlighted organization, the D8, Nigeria is an active member of the OIC which is also another diplomatic forum for member states. Nigeria supported the organization's mediation role in Somalia, Sudan (Darfur), Guinea Bissau, and Mali. Furthermore, members participated in the Annual Coordinating Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of member states in New York on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2011; at which issues of international peace and security, disarmament and combating international terrorism, the role of OIC in mediation and conflict resolutions as well as humanitarian matters were discussed. In addition, Nigeria led a delegation to the 27<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Session of the Standing Committee of the Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of the organization, which took place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Furthermore, Nigeria has sought to refocus the OIC towards conflict resolution and prevention in Afghanistan, Arab/ Israel, Armenia/Azerbaijan, Northern Cyprus, and Pakistan/India at the extra-African level.

This refocusing has also manifested itself in the economic institutions of the OIC, such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). Nigeria's

subscribed share in the bank has reached 7.7%, thereby making it the most significant African shareholder after Libya and Egypt. At the same time, the IDB has shown considerable interest in supporting Nigeria's transformation agenda. The OIC also designated Nigeria as one of its centres of excellence under its Cotonu Action Plan for such activities as farm inputs, microfinance and agro-food processing. The IDB is also financing the Trans-Saharan Road Project connecting Tunis to Lagos. In 2011, as a non-permanent member of the security council of the United Nations, both Nigeria and Turkey were involved in finding solutions to the many conflicts that engulfed different regions of the world, particularly Africa. Some of the developments that engaged the security council include the situation in Chad, the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Mali, and Sudan developments in the Middle East such as the Israel/Palestinian questions, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, and Yemen, all of which constitute a recurrent theme in the agenda of the council.

Nigeria and Turkey also were involved in the conflicts situation in Libya in various dimensions. Nigeria in the Security Council supported resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011) primarily on the need to protect the civilian population that was bearing the brunt of the heavy-handed approach of the then government in power to quell the rebellion forcefully. President Goodluck Jonathan's state visit to Turkey in 2011 and subsequently that of Nigeria's Minister of Trade and Investment, Richard Adebayo marked a turning point in Nigeria-Turkey relations. Remarkably, the visit ended with the signing of the following agreements:

- (i) Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA).
- (ii) Tourism Agreement
- (iii) Agreement on Higher Education
- (iv) Defense Cooperation Agreement, and
- (v) MOU on cooperation between the two Foreign Ministries.

Within the MOU on Cooperation between the Foreign Ministries, Nigeria introduced the 36+1 program which emphasized the need to enhance economic relations from each of Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) 36+1. In addition to training young Nigerian diplomats, the scheme was expected to help deepen friendships from both countries. Accordingly, two Nigerian diplomats were sent to study the Turkish language in Turkey. Within the period, Nigeria and Turkey also invoked existing mutual arrangements to support each other's candidatures during elections to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and similar international organizations. Furthermore, to demonstrate Nigeria's active leadership role within

the D-8, the country has deployed an Ambassador/ Permanent Representative to the organization's headquarters in Istanbul.

Nigeria continued to support Turkey's consistent efforts to maintain the strategic partnership with Africa. In December 2011, the Nigerian Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Olugbenga Ashiru, led a Nigerian delegation to Istanbul to participate in the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the 'Partnership Ministerial Review Meeting'. The minister used the opportunity to hold consultations on bilateral relations with top officials of the Turkish government, including the Foreign Minister, Ahmed Davutoglu. During the visit, the two countries signed an agreement to abolish visas for diplomatic and official passports holders – a significant initiative expected to facilitate official contacts between the two countries.

In the same vein, then Vice President of Nigeria, His Excellency, Arch. Namadi Sambo led Nigeria's delegation to the June 2012 Istanbul Conference on Somalia. In the aftermath of the state visit by President Goodluck Jonathan, trade between Nigeria and Turkey increased by 60% on the Nigerian side and 47% on the Turkish side.<sup>19</sup> In the realm of economic diplomacy, Nigeria's exports include crude oil, gas, sesame seeds and cassava and other numerous articles of trade highlighted later in his work, while Turkey's export to Nigeria is primarily technical equipment's and other products significant. It is equally important to note that the Republic of Turkey acquired 260 hectares of land from the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, to construct its mass housing scheme and a Turkish Industrial Zone in Nigeria. In addition, a total of 60million dollars would be expended on the take-off of a Bus Assembly Line in Nigeria. Other areas where steady progress was visualized for the two countries' relations on the part of Turkey were the establishment of a Turkish University in Nigeria, other layers of school, and a model agricultural project.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, further assessment of the Nigerian-Turkey relations cannot but recognize the efficiency and dedication of the leadership of the two countries at different period. Of particular importance is the determination of Turkish leader, President Tayyip Erdogan, whose vision through the ruling party, Justice and Development Party (AKP) increasingly called upon the Ottoman heritage in justifying the country's foreign policy. The expansion of Turkey's military footprint to former Ottoman lands such as Iraq, Libya, Syria and the Caucasus has been described as the rebirth of a sleeping giant and, most importantly, tallies with Nigeria's defense policies, especially during its tenure at the United Nations Security Council. The Turkish President, Erdogan, has been described as "the leader of the country" and a

modern-day version of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Sultan of Turkey which he revered, Abdulhamid II, who during his reign resisted calls for constitutional reform, held the line against the West and forestalled the decline of the empire. In likewise manner, Nigeria is also a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, an active organization that does not take sides with the West or the East during the Cold War. Although the cold war era reduced enormously, developments of the period has positioned the country's foreign policy to the patronage of the two blocs as to the deviation of its best interest.

It seems Erdogan's real skill in diplomacy has been the exploitation of the gap in the international system to play Russia and the United States and other countries of the Western Europe against each other. In Syria, Turkey's preserve has been a menace to the United States-backed Kurdish forces, but Washington has also understood it as a source of leverage against Russian encroachment. In Libya, Erdogan spotted an opening and moved in quickly. In 2019, the Libyan militia leader, General Khalifs Haffer, led an army that advanced on the Libya government with Russia and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Turkey helped turn back the Haffer's offensive with minimal military investment. The effect of these actions of Turkey on Nigeria's diplomatic stance has been the constant checks and balance which Nigeria upholds to restrain the neo-colonial imposition of the Western countries on not only Nigeria but Africa as a whole.

It is important to assert that with these official forums that have brought the two countries together, commercial contacts between the countries started expanding from 1962 when the Turkish embassy was opened. From 1962 to 1967, the country's trade relations continued to be cordial until the outburst of the military coup d'état in Nigeria in 1966. Until the Nigerian Civil War, Nigeria and Turkey had strong ties. Both were pro-Western on most issues except that Nigeria often supported the Arab World against Israel, Turkey's closest ally in the Middle East. The Middle East issues were still managed under the auspices of the United Nations, even though Israel's independence of 1948 had led to a series of conflicts in the Middle East. Nigeria's relationship with the Middle East during the 1960s was characterized by extreme caution due to two main reasons. One, the Arab-Israeli conflict had repercussions for both the Muslim and Christian populace of Nigeria on its domestic political landscape security. Second, Nigeria had a duty to be neutral as a member of the UN Security Council at the time.

However, Turkey was a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and played a strategic role with the European

countries as their dependable ally in the Middle East. At the beginning of the Nigerian Civil War, Great Britain and the United States played a neutral role, especially in extending to the federation the purchase of arms and military equipment to pursue the war mainly on the grounds of humanitarian considerations for the Biafran rebellion government. Although both governments of Britain and the United States were later to change their positions, they had impacted their initial reluctance on many countries, of which Turkey was one.

Thus, it can be asserted that Turkey also took a position of neutrality in the Nigerian Civil War and refused to sell arms to the Federation of Nigeria. It was to the USSR that Nigeria headed to purchase its wartime ammunition needs, which was justified because Nigeria was no longer under the tutelage of Great Britain or the West. With the position of neutrality, it could be argued that Turkey's role did not alter much of the growing diplomatic relations of the two nation-states except that Nigeria felt a little disappointed at the stance of Turkey, who was equally a member of the OIC with Nigeria. After the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, Nigeria joined the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which drew it closer to the Arab states of the Middle East. This period also launched Nigeria into international recognition because of its position in crude oil production globally. Thus, rather than assuming a part of backsliding in the two countries relations, their economic relations improved as Turkey needed Nigeria's petroleum resources and other European and Western countries, such as the United States, after the Nigerian Civil War. Therefore, by the end of the 1980s, commercial contacts between private business firms in Turkey and Nigeria continued to appreciation volume rather than decline. Nigeria and Turkey also maintained cooperation stances in international organizations at the various United Nations groups.

During the military rule in Nigeria from 1991 to the democratic dispensation which started in 1999, bilateral commercial and economic relations continued to soar, especially in the areas of construction, manufacturing and energy sectors which were the specialties of the Turkish government as against the cooperation of the two countries in the petroleum and gas sectors of Nigeria. Thus, the countries' bilateral trade volume increased more than three-fold since 2004, reaching 1.144 9million USD in 2015, including Turkish import of oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). As of 2014, Nigeria had emerged as Turkey's largest trade partner in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>21</sup>

As both countries' leaders realized their potentialities for cooperation at the world stage, high-level interstate visits were generated to satisfy apparent cordiality to strengthen the relations which were most felt at

the cultural levels, education and migration of both businessmen, artisans and workers and Nigerian students who wanted to benefit from the opportunities made available in Turkey as a strategic country that could usher them into other European nations because of its strategic position. The two countries cooperated during the Gulf crisis that began with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the summer of 1990. Both countries kept a low profile by being active supporters of the United Nations Policy and declined to send troops to engage in the Persian Gulf as certain countries had done.

Over the years, many Turkish companies have continued to build their networks in Nigeria's capital cities, especially in the Northern part of the country where they are viewed as a Muslim brotherhood country patronage, with over 18 Muslim dominated states out of Nigeria's 36 states, several of these states have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) deals and partnership generating volumes in trade and business relations between the two countries.

There have also been high-level state visits between both countries, which have helped strengthen the diplomatic relations. One of such occasions was the first Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit held between 18 and 21 August 2008 in Istanbul. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Nigeria then, H. E. Ojo Maduekwe, paid a visit to Turkey and was received by the President of Turkey, H. E. Mr Abdullahi Gul. The Turkish Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister, Cemil Cecil, reciprocated the visit to Nigeria in November 2010. This was closely followed by that of the former Minister of State, Turkey, Zafar Caglayaat, to Nigeria in December 2010. February 2011 was the turn of President Goodluck Jonathan, who paid an official visit to Turkey, leading to the signing of four significant agreements and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Finally, in December 2015, Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister then, Alhaji Aminu Bashir Wali, visited Turkey to deepen the relations between the two countries. The implication of these visits to the foreign policies of the two countries has been the development of strategic opportunities between the two countries, particularly in political, military, economic, commercial, cultural and educational fields.<sup>22</sup>

To foster a balance to these state visits, the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, paid an official visit to Nigeria in March 2016. With the emergence of the AKP Justice and Development Party in 2002, it became his delight to build the nation to eminence by establishing the once-great empire back to international reckoning with other world powers. Thus, in his 2016 visit to Nigeria, he arrived with a powerful delegation of his ministers, the Turkish Foreign Minister, the Minister of Energy and National Resources, Minister of



Economy, Minister of Environment and Urban Planning and Minister of Defense. They had an interstate meeting with their Nigerian counterparts. The outcome of the deliberations manifested into the Turkey-Nigerian Business Forum organized to foster technical, military and economic cooperation between the two nation-states. Subsequently, Turkey and Nigeria signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Trade and Economic agreement. According to Nigeria's Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Okechukwu Enelamah, the deal was intended to raise the current trade volume of both countries, which stood at \$2.3billion through investment drives. Assertively, the minister remarked at the occasion,

The relationship between Turkey and Nigeria is an opportunity we won't waste. Our trade volume stands at \$2.3billion. We have already advanced our discussions with them at the diplomatic level. Currently, the government facilitates discussions with up to 150 Turkish businessmen and key representatives of the private sector in Nigeria to explore more investments.<sup>23</sup>

Another critical area of cooperation between the two countries has been that of migration. International migration between the two countries leading to movement of peoples and goods has increased since the year 2000. The statistics have been startling as there has been a consistent rise in arrivals of Nigerian nationals to Turkey. Record rose from 4,238 in 2000 to 22,869million in 2013.<sup>24</sup> The difference between arrivals and departure from the airports revealed that more Nigerians migrated and even settled in Turkey than their Turkish counterparts. This is not to say that no Turkish nationals were living or transacting businesses in Nigeria. It only showed that more Nigerians immigrated to Turkey steadily. There has been a rising tendency of Turkish citizens of about 1,000 in 2000 progressing to 2,783 and more as the years appreciate. In addition, it must be stated that many Nigerian students are also studying in various universities in Turkey. This is different from those engaging in business transactions between the two countries.

Given the level of interstate diplomatic relations between Nigeria and Turkey during the Goodluck Jonathan era from 2012, much progress was made and continued during President Muhammadu Buhari years as from 2015 to 2023. The level of cooperation since the Buhari government experienced a lot of development, particularly as Nigeria faced many security issues ranging from insurgency, border disputes and attacks, armed banditry, and displacement of Nigeria's citizenry, primarily through the Boko Haram terrorist groups.

Perhaps, one of the most critical challenges in Nigeria –Turkey relation was recorded in 10 of July 2016. There was a hitch in the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and Turkey when there was an attempted coup d'état in Turkey wherein suspicion of its perpetrators were linked to Turkey's Gullen Movement. The Gullen Movement it had a lot of investment in Turkey equally a lot of money investments in Nigeria and other African countries. The investments by the Gullen Movement added value to Nigeria's economic and educational sectors for many years. At the peak of the coup d'état, Turkey pressurized Nigeria to close down the Gullen Schools and other investments or erase the name of Turkey from all such connections to the movement. This diplomatic row became difficult for implementation as Nigeria did not want to get into internal political wrangling in Turkey. The investments of the Gullen Movement were carried out when the group was in harmony with Nigeria. If then the movement were suspected of having a hand in the failed coup d'état back home, it was not the responsibility of Nigeria as a state to derecognise such institutions built by the Gullen Movement as expected by Turkish government. However, the case resulted in such a situation that Nigeria-Turkish relations reached their lowest ebb. Thus, it resulted in a diplomatic row whereby Turkey deported several Nigerians believed to be in touch with the movement. The action by Turkey was regarded as a breach of trust and retaliation of what transpired in the process of handling the Gullen investments in Nigeria. With understanding and careful reassessment by both countries, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the amendment was subsequently made to renew the once vibrant relationship between the two countries. With the resolution of the failed coup d'état in Turkey, the government of Erdogan bounced back to take control of its manifestations of leadership in Middle East-African relations and maintain a balance between the West and the East relations.

To rekindle the misunderstanding between the two countries, in 2021, President Recep Erdogan and his first lady paid an official visit to Nigeria where eight (8) bilateral agreements were signed between his government and that of President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria. Buhari, in his speech, praised the government of Recept Erdogan for opening his country's border to accommodate millions of Nigerians. In addition, the Turkish President and his first lady commissioned the Turkish Cultural Centre, Abuja and the opening of the newly renovated Government Secondary School in Wuse, Abuja, undertaken by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA).

Erdogan further stressed that Turkey was determined to improve relations with Nigeria to higher levels in all fields. He noted that the trade volume between Turkey and Nigeria reached \$2billion in 2020,

making Nigeria the outstanding and most significant trading partner of Turkey in sub-Saharan Africa. He advocated for improvements in the level of trade, expanding to \$5billion. Accordingly, he urged that the relations between the two countries will be further developed based on a win-win scenario and mutual benefits and respect. President Erdogan also commiserated with Nigeria on the insurgent attack in Guronyo Local Government Area of Sokoto State, which claimed many lives. He pledged that his country would further cooperate with Nigeria on counter-terrorism and the field of military defence and security issues in Nigeria. President Erdogan asserted that Turkey was ready to share our ever-expanding capabilities with Nigeria especially in the field of the defence industry and security which the entire globe has praised. Another important area of Nigeria's Relations/ cooperation with Turkey is in the role of curbing illegal migration of many Nigerians, especially the youths and women who transit illegally to Europe through Libya and the Mediterranean Sea for greener pastures. This is clearly reflected in the mediation role played by Turkey in arresting the situation of Nigerian and other illegal migrants held captive in the Libyan camps.<sup>25</sup>

Recently, Nigeria's Minister for Trade and Investment, Richard Adeniyi Adebayo, and his delegation visited Turkey to commemorate the 3rd Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit held in November 2021 in Turkey. Adebayo underlined that the current economic relations of the two countries have a great potential to improve and that Turkey imports petroleum, liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and agricultural products from Nigeria. In contrast, Nigeria imports Turkey's textiles, carpets, agricultural machinery, and medical supplies. Adebayo also noted that trade volume between the two countries was 726million USD in 2019, with room for improvements as the years progressed. With the opening of the Turkish Cultural Centre in Abuja and several educational facilities being handled by the Turkish embassy in Nigeria, and the resolve by the Turkish President to continue to assist Nigeria in the fight against insurgency and terrorism, it is clear that the two nation-states diplomatic relations is billed for continuity and relevancy in the international system. Furthermore, with the solid economic tie on Nigeria's petroleum industry, a strong focus and relevance are certainly expected in the years ahead between the two nation-states.

#### **4. Assessment of the Viability of Nigeria-Turkish Relations**

It is pertinent to review the assessment of the relations between these two countries by resolving to our framework for analysis which centred on the Liberalist Theory. According to Neo-liberalists, the

international system is marked by complex interdependence. The reality of this stance is that no relations between two nation-states can be completely smooth without elements of dark shades and incongruence. Instead, there should be the maintenance of permanent interests against those odd times. Supposedly the research trails by the categorization of Ray Ofoegbu of International Relations into four major groups as follows, International Politics, International Economic Relations, Cultural Relations comprising of issues like cultural and educational links across nations including sports, tournaments, educational and cultural exchanges and lastly, Private International embracing contacts between individuals at a private capacity but which crosses natural boundaries in terms of commercial and business communications. With these benchmarks, it is with certainty that it could be assumed that all these forms of relations are fully manifested in the relations between Turkey and Nigeria.

At the political level, Nigeria's membership of specific organizations of the United Nations and participation/cooperation in such fields of endeavour demonstrates that both countries share a lot in common, especially on terrorism, defense matters, and the agreement on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as Nigeria manifests correlation to certain Western agreements and given its humble beginning as a colony of Britain.

Culturally, Islamic religion and membership of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) have demonstrated the cooperation of the two countries, which has encouraged collaboration and the level of economic relations which can be gained mutually by the two countries. At the level of financial concerns, the work has clearly shown the areas of cooperation, particularly with Nigeria's oil production and Turkey's expertise in defense and mechanical industries. More importantly, the study has shown the rate of development reflected with the volume of trade between the two countries rising to 726million USD in 2019. Between 2012 to 2021, no less than 56 articles of trade were recorded as Nigeria's export to Turkey (Please see Table 1) Table 2 shows Turkey's major exports to Nigeria in 2022, appreciating close to \$800 million or more than that subsequently as the table neglects a partial period of reckoning. Figure 1 clearly portrays the functioning on the pattern of economic trade flow from Nigeria to Turkey with 2014 showing the highest rate, which is attributed to the increase in oil exports to the Middle East nations including Turkey. Subsequent years continued to show constant patronage between the two countries despite challenges. A critical look and the graph Figure 2 also reveals the trade balance between the two countries, though not on equal terms, yet both countries has

not recorded deadlocks in commercial relations and continue to manage the balance in their necessities. Judging by the two countries' foreign policy thrusts and achievements, it may be argued that the countries have managed to have a balanced trade term, even though it seems Turkey may have had the upper hand in the area of oil purchases from Nigeria which is still to the credit of Nigeria as the producer of the crude oil.

Diplomatically, Turkey's new foreign policy is best understood not as a drift towards Russia or China but as expressive of a desire to keep a foot in each camp and manage excellent power rivalry which can be compared to Nigeria's membership of the Non-Aligned movement. Therefore, it is essential to note that Africa is a significant focus of the Erdogan administration. To this extent, Nigeria was the final stop of President Tayyip Erdogan four-day African tour in 2021, the leader's second visit since 2016. Further, Turkey, with its growing recognition in the world as a military power with successes in Iraq, Libya and lately Azerbaijan, has equally extended military tentacles for the exploitation of the Nigerian government in the area of Naval Warships from their shipyards, strengthening Nigeria's Defence Industries Corporation (DICON) in Kaduna, Nigeria. Turkey has also manifested active cooperation with Nigeria's educational sector by establishing various schools, including a university (Nile) in Nigeria. In addition, the role played by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) has been very formidable as Nigeria was chosen as the Regional Coordination Centre for its technical support in Africa.

These bilateral thrusts in Nigeria-Turkish relations suggest a mutually beneficially relationship that underscores returns and vibrancy in their foreign policy. Further, the expansion of trade indicates that the outcome of the economic interplay continued to meet the shared aspirations of the two. Perhaps the area where the relations have recorded the most of its pertinent requirements is in the war against terrorism, a menace Nigeria has had to face to stand its worth in the country of nations. Since the inception of the Boko Haram insurgency, Nigeria has made Turkey, a strategic partner in the war against terrorism. Nigeria has been buying Turkish weapons for a long time, but the volume increased with the internal and border conflicts and rebellious uprisings. One such piece of military equipment is the Ofokor's Cobra Armored personal carriers, one of the essential weapons purchased from Turkey by Nigeria. The continuous battle against the Boko Haram insurgency has become a core national interest. Previous administrations dating back to the Yar'Adua, Jonathan and continued during President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure.

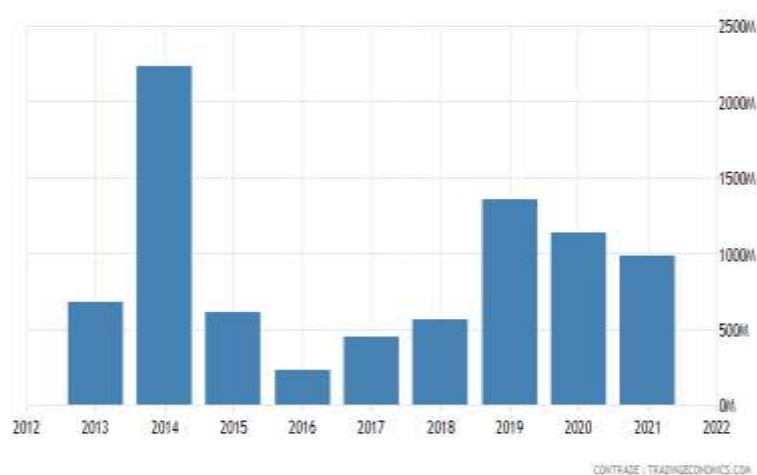
**Table 1** Volume of Nigeria's Exports to Turkey (2013-2021)

S/N	Nigeria Exports to Turkey	Value	Year
1.	Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products	\$948.89M	2021
2.	Oil seed, oleagic fruits, grain, seed, fruits	\$28.70M	2021
3.	Cocoa and cocoa preparations	\$3.84M	2021
4.	Edible fruits, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons	\$953.37K	2021
5.	Miscellaneous chemical products	\$811.34K	2021
6.	Plastics	\$795.39K	2021
7.	Pearls, precious stones, metals, coins	\$375.93K	2021
8.	Coffee, tea, mate and spices	\$323.55K	2021
9.	Live trees, plants, bulbs, roots, cut flowers	\$246.69K	2021
10.	Miscellaneous manufactured articles	\$161.02K	2021
11.	Rubbers	\$126.08K	2021
12.	Machinery, nuclear reactors, boilers	\$105.78K	2021
13.	Knitted or crocheted fabric	\$91.99K	2021
14.	Residues, wastes of food industry, animal fodder	\$77.94K	2021
15.	Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	\$61.96K	2021
16.	Wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal	\$59.94K	2021
17.	Manmade staple fibers	\$40.36K	2021
18.	Ores slag and ash	\$34.69K	2021
19.	Inorganic chemicals, precious metal compound, isotope	\$30.7K	2021
20.	Raw hides and skins (other than furskins) and leather	\$18.48K	2021
21.	Miscellaneous edible preparations	\$14.66K	2021
22.	Base metals not specified elsewhere, cermets.	\$14.32K	2021
23.	Electrical, electronic equipment	\$12.37K	2021
24.	Meat and edible meat offal	\$172.14K	2020
25.	Albuminoids, modified starches, glues, enzymes	\$23.29K	2020
26.	Fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatics invertebrates	\$13.9K	2020
27.	Cotton	\$401.45K	2019
28.	Sugars and sugar confectionery	\$116.11K	2019
29.	Cereal, flour, starch, milk preparations and products	\$99.91K	2019
30.	Animal, vegetable fats and oils, cleavage products	\$80.95K	2019
31.	Milling products, malt, starches, inlin, wheat gluten	\$20.30K	2019
32.	Soaps, lubricants, waxes, candles, modelling pastes	\$9.87K	2019
33.	Tobacco and manufactures tobacco substitutes	\$9.60K	2019
34.	Lead	\$466.66K	2018
35.	Aluminum	\$275.47K	2018
36.	Salt, Sulphur, earth, stone, plaster, lime and cement	\$19.98K	2017
37.	Ships, boats, and other floating structures	\$28.42M	2015
38.	Explosives, pyrotechnics, matches, pyrophorics	\$201.65K	2015
39.	Printed books, newspapers, pictures	\$24.12K	2015
40.	Vehicles other than railway, tramway	\$11.19K	2015
41.	Beverages, spirits and vinegar	\$436	2015
42.	Other made textile articles, sets, worn clothing	\$404	2015
43.	Aircraft, spacecraft	\$349	2015
44.	Products of animal origin	\$234	2015
45.	Vegetable, fruit, nut food preparations	\$169	2015
46.	Pulp of wood, fibrous cellulosic material, waste	\$0	2015

47.	Optical, photo, technical, medical apparatus	\$0	2015
48.	Miscellaneous articles of base metal	\$0	2015
49.	Lac, gums, resins	\$86.70K	2014
50.	Bird skin, feathers, artificial flowers, human hair	\$40.19K	2014
51.	Ceramic products	\$14.72K	2014
52.	Manmade filaments	\$1	2014
53.	Dairy products, eggs, honey, edible products	\$1.79M	2013
54.	Iron and steel	\$3.18K	2013
55.	Furniture, lighting signs, prefabricated buildings	\$2.67K	2013
56.	Articles of iron or steel	\$1	2013

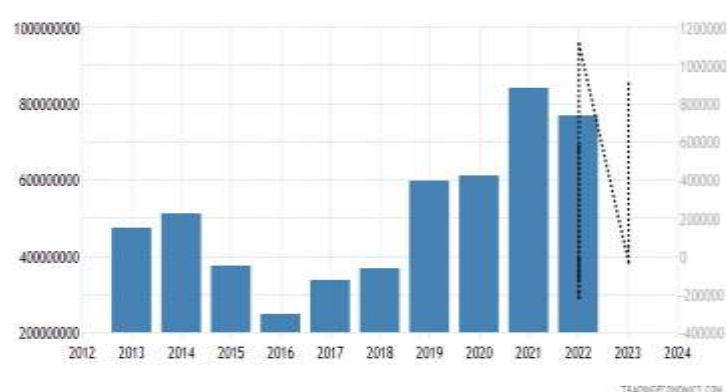
Source: Comtrade Tradingeconomics.com

**Fig 1** Chart of Volume of Nigeria's Exports to Turkey



Source: Comtrade Tradingeconomics.com

**Fig 2** Volume of Turkey's Exports to Nigeria (2013-2022)



Source: Comtrade Tradingeconomics.com

**Table 2** Turkey's key Export products to Nigeria in 2022

S/N	Turkey Exports to Nigeria	Value	Year
1.	Electrical, electronic equipment	\$103.77M	2022
2.	Articles of iron or steel	\$76.49M	2022

3.	Machinery, nuclear reactors, boilers	\$71.83M	2022
4.	Salt, Sulphur, earth, stone, plaster, lime and cement	\$61.12M	2022
5.	Furniture, lighting signs, prefabricated buildings	\$50.52M	2022
6.	Mineral fuels, oils, distillation products	\$45.08M	2022
7.	Plastics	\$44.99M	2022
8.	Manmade staple fibers	\$30.56M	2022
9.	Sugars and sugar confectionery	\$27.23M	2022

Thus, the two instances controversy which erupted leading to sour relationship recorded in this work were during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970, when Turkey took a position of neutrality and refused to sell arms to Nigeria. Turkey justified this foreign policy stance based on humanitarian feelings for the Nigerian citizens that were to be killed during the war period. It has also been shown that both Britain and the United States manifested such feelings at the beginning of the war. The second instance was the Gullen investments in Nigeria which Nigeria declined to grant the request on the grounds that there were no clear evidences to support the allegations from Nigeria. The Turkish government wanted Nigeria to denounce/sack as a result of suspicion that it sponsored a coup detat in Turkey. Turkey also demanded a justification to prove that it did not support the coup plotters in Turkey. This has been demonstrated as an action that could translate into muddling into Turkey's internal affairs, which Nigeria shielded away from the pursuance expected by Turkey of Nigeria. Apart from these two notable events, most other calculations have yielded positive or mixed results for the two countries, as this work has shown in detail from the onset.

An attempt is hereby made to highlight the remote causes of the allegations made to Nigeria at the instance of the coup in Turkey. Turkey witnessed the bloodiest coup attempt in its political history on 16th July 2016, when a section of the Turkish military launched a coordinated operation on several major cities to topple the government and unseat President Recep, Tayyip Erdogan.<sup>26</sup> As a result, the capital Ankara and Istanbul experienced several explosions and bombs on strategic installations and government buildings, including the National Parliament. At the same time, the Joint Chief of Staff, Hulusi Akar, was kidnapped by his soldiers and military detail. For several hours, it seemed Turkey would face the 4<sup>th</sup> devastating military coup in its 95-year political history. But the coup eventually failed as news of the coup attempt spread through social media, leading to thousands of ordinary citizens who trooped out to the streets in protest at the critical areas of the coup, which eventually upturned the grounds already gained by the coupists. The Turkish government blamed the failed coup attempt on Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish preacher and businessman who has lived in self-imposed exile in the United



States since 1999. It has been argued that Gullen was once a strong ally of Erdogan. During the Justice and Development Party (AKP) struggle to end the military's influence in Turkish politics in the late 2000s, his organisation had played an essential role in stabilising the polity. Reacting to the accusation, Gulen denied vehemently and even alleged that Erdogan orchestrated the coup himself "to build a dictatorship" – a claim President Recep, Turkish spy agencies and even the Turkish opposition have vehemently denied. Days after the coup attempt, on 22nd July 2016, the Turkish government declared a state of Emergency while thousands of military officials, pilots, police officers, civil servants, academics were sacked from their jobs for alleged links to the 'terrorist preacher'.

In the allegations leading to the diplomatic row between Nigeria and Turkey, it was held that Nigeria may have through her dealing with Gullen had a hand or knowledge of the coup. It was further held by Turkey that those schools and business concerns established by Gullen in Nigeria may be directly under diplomatic missions; hence, they fall under the rule of extra-territoriality and therefore do not fall under Nigerian law and control and therefore must be shut down as demanded by the Turkish Government. The issue led to many reactions from Nigerian diplomatic experts which are hereby posited. Reflecting on these allegations by Turkey, Ona Ekhomu, President of the Association of Industrial Safety Operators of Nigeria (AISSOW) at the time, argued that the Turkish government does not have the authority to request the schools' closure without proof. Even if there were proofs, especially in terms of the proprietors of the schools, the accused must still have the right to self-defense, meaning that, legally, they are still presumed innocent until the contrary is proved in the law court.

More importantly, it was noted that it is not the responsibility of Nigeria's security agencies to mount the threats to the national security of Turkey in Nigeria, especially in the absence of a preliminary key intelligence question (KIQ) and that the request for closure of the institutions owned by Gullen in Nigeria is nothing more than an implacable with-hunting. Ambassador Omotayo Ogunsulire posited that there is no proof of any involvement of the schools in the attempted coup and that the schools were duly registered under Nigerian law. More importantly, he argued that it is a case of *quid quid planta tur, solo cedit; that is, whatever is attached to the land belongs to it*. The schools are Nigerians, therefore. Former Director-General of NIIA, Prof. George Obiozor further, argued that the establishment of schools is an essential instrument in the promotion of diplomatic entente in international relations. He recalled the modest efforts

made by Ataturk during his reign in ensuring the entrenchment of democratic values as a model to be emulated from Turkish schools in Nigeria and then posited that the schools should not be closed down at the time.

Dr Istifanus Zabadi, Provost of the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies at the National Defence College, in his own view, argued that since the Turkish literature has claimed that Turkish influence or empire once extended to Bornu Empire in Nigeria, there is the need to be suspicious of whatever are Turkish activities and intentions in Nigeria. He advised that there should be more emphasis in articulating the implication of soft power in Nigeria's international relations. Victor Ariole, a Professor of University of Lagos argued that if a country is threatened; such a country should be entitled to the right of legitimate self-defence. In this regard, such threats cannot be said to exist at the level of Nigerian-Turkish relations. Gulen is a businessman, and Nigeria is under a civil dispensation. The Turkish schools and hospitals are investments, properly registered and pay their taxes. Buttressing further, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Khadija Ibrahim, noted that Turkey's request was a diplomatic issue and would be handled diplomatically. Without a doubt, on Wednesday, 2nd March 2016, Nigeria and Turkey signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Trade and Economic Partnership bringing an end to the automatic row on Gulen and Nigeria's supposed involvement in the coup in Turkey. Subsequently after the row, the relations between the two countries were straightened up. Okechukwu Enelamah Nigeria's Former Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment during President Buhari's tenure in 2016, accordingly observed that 'the relationship between Turkey and Nigeria is an opportunity we won't waste. Our trade volume stands at \$2.3billion. We have already amended our discussions with them at the diplomatic level. Currently, the government facilitates discussions with up to 150 Turkish businessmen and key representatives of the private sector in Nigeria to explore more investment areas. More significantly, we are open for business, and we must find multiple ways of collaborating with Turkey. Every obstacle in this partnership must be addressed to improve investments that would diversify our economy in key areas of Agriculture, solid minerals and defense industries. President Muhammadu Buhari added, "looking at the population of Nigeria and Turkey, we are talking about 260million people, and this is a significant market. Our total trade volume is currently at \$1.145billion; our export is \$314million to Turkey. As you can see, the result is in favor of Nigeria."<sup>27</sup>

From the perspective of Turkey, Mr Omer Cihad Varen, the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey President, we looked toward strategic partnership and cooperation in the health sector, Aviation and Air transport. Nigeria's 170million populace and Turkey's 80million are an advantage to us. Nigeria is strategic in Africa. We must keep improving the relationships of both countries and preparing the ground for the business and chamber of both countries to deepen such relationships. The case portended for Nigeria's security measures is that surveillance and in-depth investigation should be made to the allegations made and not just taking any position without adequately ascertaining the real dangers and threats. Hakan Cakil, Turkish Ambassador to Nigeria, called on the Federal Government to close 17 Turkish schools in Nigeria over the alleged link with a movement involved in the failed coup attempt in Turkey. Cakil made the call when Shehu Sani, Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, paid him a courtesy visit. According to the Ambassador, investigations by the Turkish government have linked the Fethullah Gulen Terrorist Organization (FETO) to the failed coup attempt, which claimed over 300 lives. He sent a letter to Mr. Geoffrey Onyeana (Foreign Minister) and Mr Abba Kyari (Chief of Staff to the President) about the subject. He requested their support for the closure of Gulen's schools in Nigeria.

## 5. Prospects and Concluding Remarks

This work has made a rigorous attempt to assess the foreign policy of Nigeria and Turkey since diplomatic relations was established by the two nations. However, to justify the prospects of the foreign policy of the two countries, recourse should be made to the sources of a vibrant foreign policy which are considerations bordering on geography, technological developments, population, economic strength, military strength, the history and characteristics of leadership in the countries alluded to in this context. In the light of these benchmarks, one can safely assert that the two countries (Turkey and Nigeria), whose geographical positions are strategic to their sub-regions, in the Middle East and West Africa respectively and given the attainments of their leadership, it may be difficult to alter their progress to greater heights. Natural disasters such as earthquakes and terrorist attack that occurred in Turkey may have devastating impact but may not alter the entire course of the relations. Therefore, the relations mechanism should be earmarked to follow the above-stated sources of foreign policy factors for due enhancements.

New vistas of cooperation between the two countries should trail collaboration in the mining fields, both in the solid and petroleum sectors, for technological advantages derived from each other. Nigeria, being rich in various solid and oil resources, may utilize the technical expertise of the Turkish engineers and attainments to enhance productivity in such fields. Furthermore, both countries should be seen expanding on global issues such as the environment, energy, sports, and most importantly, health development with concentration on HIV/AIDS and the new pandemic of COVID-19 with its variants that have remained unresolvable societal problems. Collaboration in trade is already vibrant but could be enhanced rekindled and given more attention for new governmental and private individual cooperation between the two countries. Furthermore, it is expected that further input in their collaboration regarding membership of the 'Developing 8' (D8) would strengthen the relations of the two countries.

With the visionary leadership of the two countries, the prospects of Nigeria-Turkey relations is high and productive, given the circumstances that abound as they are equal members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Since, in the words of Mogethau, foreign policy is fundamentally concerned with the pursuit and defence of national interests, both countries should aspire to greater heights with the knowledge of supporting and enhancing each other's foreign policy, which only can bring them into eminence in the international comity of nations on the long run. With the analysis and all the issues highlighted in this work, it can be safely assumed that the

two countries have had a fair share of each other's foreign policy thrusts and with high future propensities and results-oriented prospects.

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