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## The United States Foreign Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa: Insights from Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia, and the Omission of Nigeria

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### Abstract

In December 2022, the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit was held in Washington DC, which had 49 heads of African states in attendance. As a follow-up, the United States Vice President, Kamala Harris, on March 27, 2023, was on state visits to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia. However, she did not stop in Nigeria. What does skipping Nigeria tell us about the U.S. foreign policy currently? This paper seeks to analyze Kamala Harris's trips to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia as well as what the United States' decision to skip Nigeria tells us about its current African foreign policy. The balance of power theory underpins this study. Secondary data sources were used. The study found out that Nigeria was excluded from the United States visit to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia due to insecurity and terrorism, questionable democracy, and human rights issues which are aligned to and constitute the US core national interests, economically, politically, and strategically. The state visit was aimed at restoring the U.S. damaged African relations. The study recommended that Nigeria must tackle the problems of bad governance and questionable democracy, terrorism, youth unemployment, and human rights issues for the development of stronger ties with the United States of America.

**Keywords:** US Foreign Policy, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia

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## Introduction

National interest is at the heart of the strategic goals, which a country wants to achieve while it interacts with others globally. This is captured in the foreign policy (Folarin, 2024). More so, the global economic, political, military, technological, and socio-cultural development of a country depends on the attainment of the national interest (Mungai, 2021). This is usually achieved through state visits, summitry, or other diplomatic overtures (Day & Wedderburn, 2022). Notably, Maduagwu & Oleh (2023), argue that the United States and Nigeria have been strategic allies in sub-Saharan Africa since Nigeria's independence, despite being a British colony until 1960 (Maduagwu & Oleh, 2023). Similarly, they posited that their influence was primarily influenced by economic and geopolitical interests, which they viewed as a deliberate strategy.

The 1960s marked the peak of the Cold War, with Western nations, led by the US, deeply concerned about Soviet global expansionism (Jacobson, 2023). Since the beginning of US relations with Nigeria, the US has prioritized using this relationship to prevent communist expansion in Africa (Adebajo, 2018; McNeil, 2021). On October 1, 1960, President Dwight Eisenhower sent Governor Nelson Rockefeller to represent the US at Nigeria's independence festivities, highlighting its strategic importance in Africa (McNeil, 2021). Nigeria, despite not being under Soviet influence, received US overtures during the Cold War and was invited to a bilateral summit by President Kennedy in 1961 (Hook & Spanier, 2018). Nigeria's Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa led a delegation to Washington, where he was given an audience by President Kennedy in the White House Oval Office (Wyss, 2023). Though there are only permanent interests in international relations; there are no enduring friendships, the groundwork for a more extended and expansive partnership between the two strategic partners of the continent was established.

Specifically, United States Vice President, Kamala Harris, on March 27, 2023, arrived at Accra, Ghana for state visits. Subsequently, she visited Tanzania and Zambia. However, she did not stop in Nigeria. What does skipping Nigeria tell us about foreign policy at this time? Nevertheless, studies have interrogated US foreign policy towards Sub Saharan Africa from various theoretical perspectives like the idealist (Shai, 2016; Shai et al., 2017), Constructivists (Bischoff et al., 2015; Mohammed, 2021; Raineri, & Baldaro, 2023), Marxists (Taylor, 2010; Bischoff et al., 2015, Amuhaya et al., 2021), realism (Raineri & Baldaro, 2023; Woldearegay, 2024). But few have examined it from the balance of power theoretical lens in the year 2023-2024 (Chin & Bartos, 2024). This highlights the need for further research. This essay explores Kamala Harris's state visits to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia, and the US's decision to skip Nigeria, analyzing the context, purposes, issues, theory

and subject matter, and why Nigeria was omitted. The paper structure includes the conclusion, recommendation, and references.

## Conceptual Clarification

### *Foreign Policy*

Foreign policy is a contentious topic involving academics, policy analysts, practitioners, and statesmen, with differing interpretations and viewpoints, and no universally valid definitions exist. However, academics have provided some definitions. Keith R. Legg and James Morrison argued that the definition of "foreign policy" is "a set of explicit objectives about the world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives." It implies the perception of a need to exert pressure on other nations or international organizations' behavior (Legg & Morrison (1971). More specifically, if an influencing state believes such behaviour contributes to its own goals, it ensures that such states or international organizations continue to behave similarly.

The current policy pattern could be altered by altering or halting its implementation, implementing a new set of policies, or both (Ojo & Sessay, 1988). Domestic policy refers to the collective decisions, actions, and interactions between states in the international system, influenced by economics, politics, culture, or promoting cooperation (Smith, 1974 cited in Adesola, 2004). The study uses the two definitions to analyse Kamala Harris's visits to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia, and the US's decision to skip Nigeria, revealing its current foreign policy.

### *State Visit*

The State Visit, a topic of global interpretation by practitioners, academics, and policy analysts, lacks a single, correct definition, but academic definitions provide a comprehensive understanding.

An official state visit is described as "a formal visit by the head of state of one country to another." (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2023).

Similarly, the Royal House of the Netherlands (2023), in a broader way defined a state visit this way:

A formal visit by the head of state of one nation to the head of another. A state visit, in general, is the highest level of an international visit and serves to reaffirm the positive relations between the two countries. The only person authorized to travel on a state visit on behalf of the Netherlands is the King. He frequently has a business delegation along with his wife, Queen Maxima. Every year, the King makes one or two state visits, and two heads of state from friendly countries arrive in the Netherlands (Royal House of Netherlands, 2023:1).

## Theoretical Framework

The study utilizes the Balance of Power theory of International Relations, defining power distribution among nations with roughly equal distribution, as demonstrated by Hans J. Morgenthau (Morgenthau, H., & Nations, 1948). Sidney B. Fay argued that a 'just equilibrium' in power among nations prevents any one from becoming strong enough to enforce its will on others (Chandramohan, 2021). The balance of power theory (BOP) posits national interest as its foundation, security and peace as its primary goals, and war to secure and attain this balance (Afshan & Ali, 2021). Thus, it is important to argue that the war to achieve this balance may have various dimensions to consider. As a result, the war a times aims to achieve a balance of power in various aspects such as economics, politics, military, diplomacy, socio-cultural, and technology. This refers to a dynamic power dynamics where big powers act as actors and small powers as spectators or victims, often achieving an unstable equilibrium through active intervention that favour the status quo (Aidt et al., 2019), and rarely exists before ending when war breaks out.

In addition, the Balance of Power involves a state annexing or splitting its territory deemed problematic for balance in compensation processes (Paul, 2018). Also, alliances establish a beneficial power balance by signing treaties or pacts related to security or military matters (Narang & LeVeck, 2019). Moreover, Intervention and non-intervention involve tyrannical intervention in a state's domestic affairs to maintain desired conditions, while nations use "divide and rule" to maintain rivalry and keep rivals weak (Underwood & Paul, 2020). More specifically, Buffer states maintain balance by separating powerful nations, using armaments and disarmaments to establish advantageous positions in power interactions (Choi, 2021). The rationale for the application of the Balance of Power theory as the theoretical foundation for this study is explained here, beginning with the aftermath of the Second world war (1939-1945), which saw the emergence of Russia and its allies and the defeat of Nazi Germany (Gordon, 2023). On the other hand, the Cold War witnessed a period of ideological struggle and confrontation and a proxy war between the United States of America (Capitalism) and the USSR (now Russia)-Socialism for dominance of Ideologies, and actual spheres of influence and territorial gains (Ponsonby, 2022). After the Cold War, Russia was humiliated, and the United States emerged as the dominant superpower, resulting in unipolarity (Serfaty, 2022).

Noteworthy, the study also argues that ever since, Russia has been trying to regain global superpower status, reassert herself, and get even with the USA politically, economically, militarily, and in all other spheres of relations (Fischer, 2020; Oualaalou, 2021; Ziegler, 2024). Furthermore, the study argued that though the Cold War ended in 1990-1991 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the independence of

states all over the world, this rivalry still existed between the United States and Russia at first (Sahakyan, 2018), Globalization and other factors have led to a multipolar world of power relations in international politics, with the US, Russia, and China currently in a three-horse power race (Baylis, 2020). Consequently, a situation arises where “the perception of the influence and prestige of the US over national interest” is likely perceived and monitored strategically by Russia and China and vice versa in Sub-Saharan Africa, what I also refer to as “Perceptibility of influence and prestige problem in foreign policy studies”. Besides, therefore meant that even China will have to take seriously its rise and growing influence over the years after independence, and by extension consider her influence in Sub-Saharan Africa, (Cull, 2023), which saw her join in the power and influence contests and competition with the USA and Russia (Murphy, 2023; Kurylo, 2024). However, the contests and competition for power and influence among the USA, Russia, and China have not resulted in conflict yet (Ikenberry, 2024). Hence, a balance of power ensues.

In addition, the rivalry between the USA, Russia, and China extends beyond Europe, the Americas, and Asia to Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa (Rudyak, 2024). The study argues further that the Cold War's strategic-economic war, now shifted from Europe to Sub-Saharan Africa, was a shadowy conflict of superpowers (Black, 2024). Also, advancing the arguments, Africa has become a chessboard for superpower countries, like the United States, to realize their interests in promoting democratic ideals and democracy worldwide (Wolhuter, 2024), while realizing her national interest through her foreign policy. On the other hand, The study argues that the United States aimed to 'Americanize Sub-Saharan Africa' through the spread of democracy, with the intent of 'goodwill' (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024). Correspondingly, Russia aimed to convert Sub-Saharan African countries to Socialist countries through the spread of Socialism in her foreign policy (Haruna & Salam, 2021), what I refer to as the 'Russianization of Sub-Saharan Africa'. Similarly, China is actively pursuing its foreign policy to spread Communism and achieve its national interests (Eisenman & Shinn, 2018), which is referred to in the study as 'Chinalization of Sub-Saharan Africa.' She may have become a threat to the existing international system's bipolarity (Kupchan, 2021).

Congruently, the study emphasizes that the realist paradigm of Balance of Power suggests an economic, political, and military battle between the USA, Russia, and China for Sub-Saharan Africa's heart (Negash & Salih, 2023). For instance, the study also argues that whoever has the largest volume of trade with most of Africa is likely to carry the day. Hence, the permutations and combinations of the use of state visits go back and forth and their reciprocity (Rabinowitz, 2023; Pike, 2024). The U.S. held the 2022 U.S-Africa Summit in Washington to strengthen trade and investment

ties with Sub-Saharan African countries, aiming to adopt American value systems (US Department of State, 2022) The goal is to promote democracy through free and fair elections, ensure women's political participation, create a business-friendly climate, combat terrorism, empower youth, and achieve climate change goals (US Department of State, 2022). Arguably, the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which literarily divided territories among European and global powers, did not end the rat race for colonies and spheres of influence (Berend, 2020). As a result, Africa became a chessboard for the superpowers, such as the USA, Russia, and China, as it gained increased value (Kessi et al., 2021). It is argued also in the study that Neo-colonization through economic and cultural diplomacy involves balancing power and trade among African nations, as they strive to maintain a balance of influence (Han & Paul, 2020). The USA, once the global power, is losing ground to Russia and China due to the Wagner group's presence and economic gains in certain African countries (Conway & Cassedy, 2023).

### **Context of US Kamala Harris State Visits to Ghana, Zambia, and Tanzania**

US Vice President Kamala Harris visited Tanzania, Zambia, and Ghana on March 26, marking a significant shift in US-Africa relations, following the second U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit in December 2022. The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, a key outcome of the Biden administration's U.S. Strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa, reaffirmed the U.S.'s role as a significant partner in Africa and reaffirm "African agency" (Brookings, March 30, 2023; BBC News Pidgin, March 27, 2023). The statement emphasized the continuation of the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit in December 2022, aiming to fulfill President Biden's commitment to "all in" with Africa (Today's News Africa, March 24, 2023; US Department of State, March 30, 2023). Vice President Harris met with national leaders in Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia following December 2022 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. President Biden emphasized the benefits of Africa's success globally (US Department of State, March 30, 2023; US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, March 30, 2023).

Nevertheless, it is from an idealistic perspective, the interdependence of nations in the global system, particularly economically, extends to other spheres of interactions, including politics, militarism, technology, sociocultural, and education (Moltz, 2011; Shambaugh, 2012; Cohen, 2018; Ikenberry, 2020; Mladenov, N. S., & Mladenov, 2021; Gill, 2022). The summit gathered 49 African heads of state and resulted in US commitments, including a \$55 billion pledge to support the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Furthermore, the African Union Agenda 2023 is designed in this way:

the blueprint and overall strategy for making Africa the future global powerhouse. A concrete expression of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom,

progress, and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance, it is the continent's strategic framework that seeks to achieve its goal for inclusive and sustainable development. (African Union, 2063, P.1).

The US is reportedly interested in investing over \$350 million in Africa's digital transformation, alongside a new Digital Transformation with Africa initiative (Brookings, March 30, 2023). In political terms, these measures primarily aim to ensure the security, preservation, and continuity of American interests and influence in Africa. Ambassador Johnnie Carson was appointed as U.S. special presidential representative for U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit implementation, highlighting economic interest as the primary basis for international interactions (Gourvitch, 1978; Agnew, 1994; Sorensen et al., 2022; Tyushka & Czechowska, 2023). Moreover, President Biden supported the African Union's bid for permanent G-20 membership, establishing the President's Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement, as part of the US's Second U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit commitments (Brookings, March 30, 2023). According to NNN news (2023), U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris visited Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia to counter China and Russia's increasing influence, following a December summit with African leaders (NNN news, March 28, 2023). Also, VOA News (2023) reports that the first female vice president with ancestral ties to Africa will focus on strengthening partnerships, security, and economic prosperity (VOA News, March 24, 2023). The analysis posits that the United States' use of cultural diplomacy is used and can effectively strengthen ties with Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **The Purposes and the Issues Surrounding the US State Visits to Ghana, Zambia and Tanzania**

The US is visiting Ghana, Zambia, and Tanzania to discuss human rights, democracy, and gender inclusion, with Vice President Harris focusing on trade and investment (US Department of State, 2023). The U.S. has signed a memorandum of understanding to support the African Continental Free Trade Area, focusing on trade and investing \$15.7 billion in private sector partnerships (Brookings, March 30, 2023). Besides, the vice president's visit should emphasize priorities, and the administration should utilize America's strengths in private capital, advanced technologies, and soft power to implement these commitments domestically and internationally (Brookings, 2023). However, the Vice President is visiting three nations where governments are investing in their democracies amid a global democratic recession (Today's Africa News, March 24, 2023). The US views her visit as an opportunity to collaborate with allies on common goals and considers Africa crucial in addressing global challenges (Today's Africa News, March 24, 2023). Post-Cold War Avenue aims to Americanize the world through democratic

ideals, like Chinalizing or Russianizing, with Sub-Saharan Africa at the center of this unique strategy and environment.

In particular, the United States and Ghana have friendly relations and consider Ghana a significant economic partner, with trade valued at over \$1.2 billion (Brookings, 2023). Therefore, the US plans to strengthen its alliance with Ghana by arranging a visit by the US vice president to the country (The White House March 27, 2023). Moreover, Ghana's economy faces significant difficulties since 2022, with an inflation rate exceeding 50%. To receive an IMF bailout, the finance ministry pursued debt exchange (International Monetary Fund May 17, 2023). Ghana's citizens anticipate positive results from diplomatic mission, with finance ministry pursuing debt exchange for IMF bailout, with US promising debt reduction and IMF support (BBC News Pidgin, 2023). Furthermore, US Vice President Kamala Harris plans to visit Africa to boost investments, promote economic growth, and empower women and girls through economic empowerment efforts (BBC News Pidgin, 2023). Besides, The US has visited Ghana to promote youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, and support efforts to enhance food security (BBC News Pidgin, 2023; Today's News Africa, March 24, 2023). Finally, the US vice president emphasized his presence in Ghana to enhance democracy, promote good governance, and ensure peace and security for the country (BBC News Pidgin, 2023).

Likewise, President Samia plans to visit Tanzania, honor the 1998 US Embassy bombing, and hold high-level discussions with entrepreneurs at a tech incubator and co-working space in Dar (Today's Africa News, March 24, 2023). Notably, Tanzania, the fifth largest African country, is poised for significant U.S. investments in various sectors, particularly in the digital sector, due to its political and economic empowerment. Also, the U.S. places gender inclusion as a top priority (Brookings, 2023). Furthermore, this will enhance the trade and international interactions between the two nations (Council on Foreign Relations, March 4, 2022). In her meeting with President Hichilema during her visit to Zambia, US Vice President plans to discuss food security and climate adaptation during Zambia visit, announce investments, engage in climate resilience efforts, and engage with stakeholders (Today's News Africa, March 24, 2023).

On the other hand, Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia, despite being US allies, are among the most stable and secure nations in Africa (Touo, 2021). However, the U.S. aims to protect the spread of JNIM security threats from Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, as well as its sphere of interest, democracy in Africa, from external Russian interest (Today's News Africa, March 24, 2023). Furthermore, the United States is committed to providing unwavering support to Ghana, Tanzania, and



Zambia (Today's News Africa March 24, 2023). U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris visited Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia to counter China and Russia's increasing influence in Africa after a summit with African leaders (NNN, March 28, 2023).

### **Reasons for Kamala Harris' Omission of Nigeria on Her US State Visits to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia in 2023**

Having established the contexts, purposes, and issues surrounding US Vice President, Kamala Harris' state visits to Ghana, Zambia, and Tanzania in previous subheadings. This section will discuss the reasons why Nigeria was skipped. Kamala Harris, US Vice President, visited Ghana, Zambia, and Tanzania, focusing on human rights abuses, abductions, insecurity, and corruption. Nigeria was skipped due to the minimal human rights abuses, abductions, forced disappearances, insecurity, and corruption in the countries she visited, compared to the situation in Nigeria (Amnesty International Report, April 2024, Pp.283-286; Pp.1-418). These are integral to the core national interests of the US, including economic, military, political, and security (Mallam, 2019). The USA engages with countries like Ghana, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zambia, and Sub-Saharan Africa on a basis that aligns with its national interests (Okeke & Odubajo, 2018; Clark, 2023). The USA's strategic relationship with Nigeria has been characterized by its unpredictable nature, characterized by both ups and downs and potential for retribution (Omilusi, 2020). Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari, who took office in 2015, had strained relations with the United States under Joe Biden, and anti-gay laws in Ghana and Nigeria contradicted US global interests (Coleman et al., 2023).

Nigeria was not included in the three visited nations due to its insufficient strengthening of human rights, democracy, security, and gender inclusion systems (Archibong et.al., 2018; Etim et.al., 2023). The Buhari administration, despite being democratically elected, has a poor human rights record in Nigeria, with numerous instances of such issues. But this study will discuss some reasons.

#### **i. Record of Gross Human Rights Abuse**

Firstly, The US Department of State has reported multiple allegations of the Buhari government and its agents carrying out unlawful and senseless killings (US Department, 2018). Also, the army, police, and other security forces used lethal weapons and disproportionate force to disperse protests, seize suspects, and execute criminals, without government accountability (Azuakor, 2019). Excessive security force and live bullets led to multiple murders, including hundreds on December 12. In Zaria, Kaduna State, an altercation disrupted the chief of army staff's convoy, involving members of the Shia group Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN). Despite investigations, IMN leader Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky remains in government prison (Human Rights Report Nigeria, 2015). Also, Security forces are accused of

extrajudicial killings, including arbitrary executions of multiple individuals, following the killing and mutilation of six soldiers by cattle rustlers in May (United States Department of State, 2018). Still, Community authorities claim military attacks on settlements at night, killing over 80 people in similar incidents. Military admits operation against militants, claims no civilians were killed, and promises inquiries. No news as of December (US Department of State, 2018). Additionally, Jones Abiri was detained by the State Security Service (SSS) under Buhari in response to negative coverage in the July 2016 edition of *Weekly Source* (Azuakor, 2019). Jones Abiri, accused of being a militant in the Niger Delta, spent most of his time in jail, denied medical care, bail, family visits, and legal representation. The Committee to Protect Journalists intervened (Azuakor, 2019).

### **ii. Abductions/ Forced Disappearances**

Moreover, during the Buhari regime, numerous individuals were abducted or forced to disappear, with some incidents involving criminal groups in the Niger Delta and Southeast (United States Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2015). In June, speedboat gunmen abducted two Lebanese citizens working for a construction company in Bayelsa State and killed their two police bodyguards (Vanguard News, June 24, 2015). Furthermore, Abductions continued in other regions, targeting prominent and wealthy figures, with kidnappers rarely revealing political motives (Saminu et al., 2022). On September 21, kidnappers abducted former finance minister Olu Falae from his farm in Ondo State and demanded a ransom of 100 million naira (\$500,000) for his release (Premium Times, September 21, 2015). Citizens, NGOs, and media accuse security services of forced disappearances of young men in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States, and the kidnapping of 276 Chibok girls in 2014, leading to numerous kidnappings, including 110 girls, 344 boys, 300 girls, and 140 students in 2021 (The Guardian April 11, 2024) to mention a few. Thus, approximately 3000 people were kidnapped by Boko Haram during Buhari's regime in Nigeria's Northeast between 2015-2023, though official figures are difficult to obtain.

### **iii. Insecurity**

Nigeria's insecurity worsened under Muhammadu Buhari's era, with Boko Haram attacks on police stations, military headquarters, Fulani herdsman, cattle rustling, farmers-herders crisis, and banditry (Sule, 2023; Ugweze et al., 2022; Ojo, 2023). Nigeria grapples with internal security issues like kidnapping, Boko Haram, ISWAP, Indigenous People of Biafra, and Yoruba Nation (Olanrewaju et.al, 2017), etcetera which make it impossible for investment, trade, and economic gains to be made or ties deepened in such an environment. The issues of women's political inclusion, youth empowerment, and climate change are not being adequately addressed

(Adamu, 2023; Amare et.al., 2023; Elum & Momodu, 2017). Notably, the recent Nigerian elections have been deemed rigged, unfree, and characterized by violence.

#### ***iv. Corruption and Nigeria's Special Endowments***

Another reason for the neglect of Nigeria by the US Vice President is corruption. The US Vice President's neglect of Nigeria is due to corruption, ranking among the world's most corrupt countries and Africa between 2015-2023. In 2016, British Prime Minister David Cameron described Nigeria and Afghanistan as "fantastically corrupt." (BBC News, May 10, 2016). Additionally, the Africa Report (2023) reports that Nigeria, under President Muhammadu Buhari, has failed to improve on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index within his four-month tenure. This is further corroborated by the fact that in the latest 2022 corruption perception index released by Transparency International, Nigeria retains its score of 24 out of 100 and is ranked 150 out of 180 countries assessed. Africa's largest economy is ranked 150 alongside Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Lebanon, and Guatemala. Among all the countries in West Africa, Nigeria is considered the most corrupt (Corruption Perception Index, 2022). On the other hand, this neglect of Nigeria may be justified, saying that Nigeria's size, location, and economy might make saving the best for another profitable strategy. They find this to be a dubious but compelling argument. More so, it is said that you should always serve the best wine at parties first to the guests. The US's strategy to save the best wine for international affairs in Sub Saharan Africa, despite its profitability, is under scrutiny.

#### **US Vice President, Kamala Harris Visit: Key Signals for US Foreign Policy in Africa**

The reasons why Nigeria was overlooked by the U.S. in the Visits to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia include insecurity, bad leadership, unwise economic policies, unfriendly foreign investment policies, kidnapping for ransom, violence from aggrieved groups, and terrorism, among others. It is important to understand that it demonstrated a change in U.S. policy to Africa under the Biden Administration. Rattner and Whitmore (2021), Biden's administration's increased focus on Sub-Saharan Africa policy offers an opportunity to advance foreign policy goals, demonstrate America's global leadership commitment, and promote democracy, human rights, and mutual prosperity (Rattner & Whitmore, 2021, p.3). They argued further that "African partners are critical to the fight against security issues" (Rattner & Whitmore, 2021, p.3).

Thus, this is informed by the August 2022, rollout of U.S strategic plans toward sub-Saharan Africa which is related to the context. The US's strategic plans for sub-Saharan Africa, launched in August 2022, aim to demonstrate commitment to Africa and underscore the importance of U.S.-Africa relations. The US's policy promotes democracy in Africa, despite Nigeria's absence due to contested elections and human rights violations, emphasizing the value of international human rights.

Furthermore, examining the context of Kamala Harris' State Visit to Ghana, Zambia, and Tanzania, which was intended to restore the United States' damaged reputation with Africa under the Trump Administration. There is the argument that the Cold War marked the beginning of an anti-communist relationship between the United States and Africa. The problem was that, during the Trump administration, China stepped in to fill the gap left by the U.S.'s largely secondary and occasionally tertiary role in the economic development of Africa. The US is attempting to reverse that and reassert itself. Finally, this highlights and it is crucial to remember that there is an official shift in U.S. bilateral relations with Sub-Saharan Africa from aid to trade. This has occurred.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, foreign policy includes a state's economic, political, military, technological, and sociocultural interests in other states. State visits and diplomacy are important tools for helping nations accomplish common goals across oceans and continents. Political and financial ties can be strengthened by culture. Economic interdependence is a feature of the international political system that opens the door to other aspects of a country's relations with others (political, military, economic, etc.). The idea of dominance and the hegemonic struggle between the United States, Russia, and China for the soul of Africa including Sub-Saharan Africa indicate the existence of a new world order. Practical and visible efforts must be seen at ensuring good governance, democracy (free and fair elections), the fight against terrorism, the inclusion of women in politics and positions beginning with the legislative houses of assemblies, youth emancipation, issues of climate change, and human rights must all be taken seriously by Nigeria, for the development of stronger ties with a democracy like the United States and committee of countries. In the words of Anthony Blinken (2022), "Africa is a major geo-political force. It has shaped our past, it is shaping our present, and it will shape our future." But, What and Where is the place of Nigeria in, as part of the international geopolitical force?

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