

War and Diplomacy in 19th Century West Africa: Analyzing the Sokoto *Jihad* from the Perspective of Diplomacy

Ibrahim Khaleel Abdussalam, PhD

Department of History
Bayero University, Kano
P.M.B 3011, Kano
Nigeria

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to construct an aspect of West African history from the perspective of international relations and diplomacy, using the Reform (Jihad) and the state that emerged from that development (The Sokoto Caliphate) as a case study. International Relations were simply diplomatic history up to the 19th century in all regions of the world including West Africa. The paper demonstrates that many aspects of this major revolutionary phenomenon of 19th century West Africa and the formation and consolidation of the state were about international relations and diplomacy. The paper analyzes the narrative of the Jihad and the Caliphate from the perspective of the interplay of diplomacy. Extended result of this approach suggests that other historical developments in the region during the period can be viewed from the perspective of diplomacy.

Key Words: Reform, War, Diplomacy, International Relations, State, Consolidation

1. Introduction

It is generally accepted that issues of international relations and diplomacy are traditionally grounded in history.¹ Since history more adequately discusses the behaviours of the actors in the interactions among individuals, communities, groups or organizations and even states. As history also discusses the nature of such interactions, the study of history is essentially the study of international relations and diplomacy. This was especially the case up till the 19th century even in Europe and the United States as well as in the West African sub-region. The Sokoto *Jihad* (conceptualized here as reform) and the establishment and consolidation of the *Caliphate* (the state established as outcome of that reform and one of the important states of 19th century West Africa) were major developments in the century. The developments therefore provide a good illustration of this perspective. This paper demonstrates that the background to the Sokoto *Jihad*, the course of the *Jihad* and the consolidation of the *Caliphate* were issues of international relations and diplomacy in the region during the century. All the stages of this revolutionary phenomenon, the course of the *Jihad*, the establishment and consolidation of the *Caliphate* and its expansion, as well as its dealings with neighbours, were expressive of the trend of international relations and diplomacy in the region. The paper examines these stages as examples illustrating that important developments in the history of West Africa in the 19th century are issues of international relations and diplomacy.

2. Background to the Jihad

The social, religious, political, and economic environment in West Africa in the late 18th to the early 19th centuries encouraged diplomatic revolutionary moves by actors with inherent capacity for such endeavor. Psychologizing Shehu Usman dan Fodiyo, hereinafter simply referred to as the Shehu, and analyzing his actions in the process of the institution of the *Jihad* and the establishment of the *Caliphate*, reveal him as a veritable diplomat. This analysis to a large extent also explains the diplomacy and international relations at play in the region. The background and influence the Shehu had in the course of his learning allowed him to understand and put in proper context the environment he was in as deserving of reform. This also built in him the conviction, the zeal, and the resolution to initiate the reform. His reformist ideas were shaped by two of his teachers.

¹ K. Mingst (1999) Essentials of International Relations. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc. P.3

These were Shaikh Uthman Binduri, his paternal uncle, and, especially, the radical reformer, Shaikh Jibril bn Umar, his venerated master. He imbibed attitudes of piety, righteousness and reformist ideas from the lessons he acquired from them. Abdullahi dan Fodio, the Shehu's younger brother, wrote of the influence Binduri had on him thus:

This Sheikh of his was learned and pious, well-known for righteousness and ordering of the right and the forbidding of the wrong and for being occupied with what concerned him. He it was whom our Sheikh [the Shehu Usuman dan Fodio] imitated in states and deeds. He accompanied him for nearly two years, moulding himself according to his pattern in piety and in ordering the right and forbidding the wrong.²

And of the far-reaching influence of Shaikh Jibril on him, in terms of reformist ideas and strictness in adherence to the *Shari'a*, he recorded the Shehu's own impression thus:

If there be said of me that which is of good report, then I am but a wave of the waves of Jibril.³

The indication is that Jibril must have imbibed the Shehu with the idea of *Jihad* in order to bring about reform and cleanse the un-Islamic practices in Hausa land, and the Shehu also seemed to have inculcated that and prepared himself for same, as captured by Balogun:

In point of fact, Jibril had in Uthman a fertile ground for his ideas of reform, and he successfully put the ideas across. It remained only to wait for a suitable opportunity so that the already sown seed might germinate and grow.⁴

3. Diplomacy in Teaching and Preaching

It was in the strategy of implementing this idea of reform by the Shehu that the issue of diplomacy came to play. In spite of the fact that he was greatly influenced by the reformist stance of Jibril and was inclined towards ensuring that drastic reform was instituted in Hausa land, the Shehu did not see wisdom in adopting the extreme radical position of his venerated teacher in bringing the reform. He did not only reject the viewpoint of his teacher, he even criticized him in his writings. He rather adopted a more subtle but effective means of making people understand the extent of religious, moral, and political degeneration in the society and the necessity, indeed, the obligation for reform. This side of the Shehu as a genius started to be demonstrated through his teaching and preaching. This allowed him to mentor his community and sensitize the people to prepare for, accept and support reform. The Shehu therefore did not just embark on the *Jihad* out of sheer zeal and the use of raw power, he armed himself intellectually and employed diplomatic means to prepare the ground for it. In doing that he gave extraordinary leadership necessary for such effort. This, according to Smaldone, was the reason for the rapid rallying of people in support of the cause:

The Jihad as an instrument of Islamic reform attracted a variety of adherents whose motives, individual and collective, were complex. Extraordinary leadership was essential to bring unity to such diversity, and herein lays the genius of the Shehu. In the personal leadership qualities of Shehu Usuman dan Fodio the diffuse Muslim protest movement found the crucial central focus necessary to galvanize its scattered and heterogeneous constituency into a coherent community.⁵

The first diplomatic means the Shehu adopted was dialogue between him and the people in order that they would understand the necessity for reform. He preached everywhere he went with humility and compassion. His warm and friendly human relation inspired confidence and affection, thereby attracting and endearing people unto himself. This was because, as suggested by Hisket, the Shehu seemed to have had a keen practical understanding of human psychology.⁶ This strategy has been detailed by Muhammad Bello, quoted in part:

² Abdullahi dan Fodio, "Ida' al-musukh man 'akhadhtu 'anhu min al shuyukh", (Ed. and trans.) M. Hisket (1957), "Material Relating to the State of Learning Among the Fulani Before their Jihad" in BSOAS, XIX,3. p.563.

³ M. Hisket (1957). p.566

⁴ I.A.B. Balogun (1979), "Uthman dan Fodio: The Mujaddid of West Africa" in Y.B. Usman (Ed.), Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University, for the Sokoto State History Bureau. p.476

⁵ J.P. Smaldone (1977), Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate. Historical and Sociological Perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.25

⁶ M. Hisket (1973), The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio. New York: Oxford University Press. p.30

...Then when he came before the people, he would greet them so that everyone could hear. And when he had sat down upon his platform he would salute them three times. He looked pleased and smiled at them. Then he would call for silence. He was never wearied by them and never refused them... Forthwith he preached his sermon to them all. He cared for none of them except that his words should be useful to them. If perhaps he were asked a question in the middle of his speech, he would stop and answer it.⁷

This dialogue with the people went beyond his native Degel. He ventured out to the surrounding areas in his preaching journeys. Abdullahi recorded that these journeys were successful in that many people answered the Shehu's call and came to him.⁸ On the basis of this success, the Shehu extended his diplomatic preaching and dialogue with people to the neighbouring kingdom of Kebbi, where he also got many followers.⁹ The strategy further helped in preparing the ground for the acceptance of his reform.

Shehu's strategy of dialogue and reaching out to people was not confined to direct preaching. His writings also served as another effective avenue. The writings reached wider audience and territory. In fact, preparing the ground and the minds of people for the reform was more through his writings. The writings served as a considerable degree of diplomacy because they provided the apologia and the justification for the reform.¹⁰

To further demonstrate his diplomatic genius, the Shehu did not only concentrate on dialogue with the people, he made a giant diplomatic move of contacting and establishing good working relations with rulers in the region in which he was preparing the ground for his reform. He started by contacting Bawa Jangwarzo, the king of Gobir and the paramount and most powerful ruler in that region. Jangwarzo had a powerful military, which he had deployed to overcome the neighbouring kingdom of Zamfara and continued to make raids across the border into Katsina.

The Shehu realized that the power of Jangwarzo would most certainly constitute an obstacle to his reform and, indeed, had the potentiality to prevent it outright. This was in the context of the growing popularity of the Shehu and the increasing number of his followers. He anticipated possible hostility from Jangwarzo and wanted to avoid possible confrontation with him. He at the same time envisaged probable support from Jangwarzo and the advantage that could bring to his cause. Taking cognizance of these, he decided to contact this powerful king in the area.¹¹ This diplomatic move took the Shehu to the court of Jangwarzo in Alkalawa to visit him, explain his mission of reform to him, call on him to practice true Islam and present other demands. He did not mince words in his call on Jangwarzo to embrace reform, even as he was consciously calculative in employing humility and warm friendliness in putting forward his demands. The move proved successful as the Shehu was able to walk himself into the heart of Jangwarzo, with the resultant effect that the Shehu's followership swelled even more. Abdullahi reported this much:

...he travelled to the Emir of Gobir, Bawa, and explained to him the true Islam, and ordered him [to observe it] and to establish justice in the lands. ...it came about that those did not fear God, fear to deny his order because of his connection with the Sultan.¹²

The success of this diplomatic step and the relations the Shehu established with Jangwarzo enhanced his confidence in continuing his effort of instituting reform in the region, thereby strengthening his influence and followership. This also encouraged him to embark on such diplomatic missions to other rulers.

⁷ Muhammad Bello, Infaq al-Maisur, trans. and paraphrased E.J. Arnett (1929) as The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani. Kano. Quotations taken from T. Hodgkin (1975), Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology (2nd ed.). London: Oxford University Press. pp 257-258

⁸ Abdullahi bn Muhammad, Tazyin al-Waraqat, trans. and ed. M. Hisket (1963) as Tazyin al-Waraqat: Ibadan. p.85

⁹ Hisket (1963), Tazyin al-Waraqat, p.86

¹⁰ Such writings included: Tanbih al-Ikhwan 'ala Ahwal Ard al-Sudan, trans. H.R. Palmer (1913-14) with the title "An Early Fulani Concept of Islam" in JAS, XIII and (1914-15) in JAS, XIV; Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan wa man sha' min al-Ikhwan, trans. and ed. A.D.H. Bivar (1961) with the title "The Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad" JAH, II, 2; Bayan Wujub al-Hijra 'ala al-ibad, trans. and ed. F.H. El-Masri (1968), Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan; Kitab al-Farq, trans. and ed. M. Hisket (1960) with the title "Kitab al-Farq: A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthman dan Fodio". BSOAS, XXIII, 3.

¹¹ Hisket (1973), p.43

¹² Hisket (1963), Tazyin al-Waraqat, p.86

The Shehu's next diplomatic move took him to Zamfara in order to also establish friendly relations with the king there. The mission to Zamfara did not only establish rapport with the king but also resulted into an increase in the Shehu's followership. This considerable increase, coupled with the foothold the Shehu was gaining in Zamfara, gave Jangwarzo so much concern. This was so especially because of the existing hostile relations between Gobir and Zamfara. The development led to Jangwarzo's rethink of his friendly relations with the Shehu. Abdullahi again gave a good picture of the reason for Jangwarzo's fears, envy and his change of attitude.

*After a time his people grew and became famous, till they were known in Hausaland as 'the Community'. Men kept leaving their countries and coming to him. Some from the armies of the sultans repented, and came to him with all they possessed, leaving their sultans. Then the sultans became angry, till there ensued between them and their chiefs the war that we remember... He strove to avert a quarrel. But the trouble grew and grew. He then tried to appease the sultans by visiting them and pretending to be loyal to them. But they saw the growing numbers of his following and the hold that Islam had gained. Its growing strength made them furious, and devils among Jinns and men urged them on, saying 'If you do not disperse this concourse of people, your power will be gone; they will destroy your country, by causing all the people to leave you and go to them.'*¹³

What followed was the beginning of the plot by Gobir to eliminate the Shehu. The suspicion gathered momentum, resulting into a gradual deterioration, which consequently led to the flight and the holy war.

It is interesting to note however, that even in the precarious situation of the ongoing plot to eliminate him, the Shehu demonstrated diplomatic acumen to ease the tension. He was able to use the advantage of the strong following that he had gained, which was now enough to constitute a threat to the authority of Jangwarzo, and the external political relations he had established in the course of his preaching and dialogue, especially that with the king of Zamfara, a foe of Jangwarzo, to turn the tide. It should be recollected at this juncture also, that the Shehu already had a complex of alliances, for he had allies among the nobility as well as among the commoners.

Above all however, the Shehu seemed to have exhumed a sort of a miracle at this time, which transformed him from being a subject for elimination to an awe inspiring leader in the eyes of Jangwarzo. He suddenly became recognized as a partner in the ongoing political power play among the chiefs in the area, especially between Gobir and Zamfara. Rather than being eliminated therefore, the Shehu got concessions that gave greater freedom to his followers. Beyond that, he gained a privileged position in which Jangwarzo now sought his advice in his campaigns against his rivals. An instance was his campaign against Maradi, for which he sought the advice and blessing of the Shehu in defeating it.¹⁴

4. War Diplomacy

It was clear from the diplomatic initiatives of the Shehu that making war as a strategy of instituting his reform was not part of his initial agenda. The fact that he did not organize his community of followers on the basis of military tradition would testify to this. He rather organized the community to imbibe scholarly tradition. He trained his subordinates and followers first and foremost to embrace the culture of scholarship and to use that approach as a strategy to accomplish the objectives of reform. He seemed to have believed more in resorting to dialogue, appealing to reason, and employing logical presentation of arguments in bringing about the required reform.

*At first the Shehu's scholarly community at Degel was not organized for war and the town itself was unfortified. There was no formal military command structure, no specialized army organization or equipment, no training in tactics, no strategic planning.*¹⁵

And the Shehu demonstrated the willingness to continue on this course of action with the authorities in Gobir, but for the change in the status quo as occasioned by the successors to Jangwarzo. The actions of some of the successors caused the fast deterioration in the relationship between the Shehu and the court of Gobir and the gradual drift to war. With Yakubu, the immediate successor to Jangwarzo, a sort of cordial relationship was still maintained as the Shehu still had some influence on Yakubu. The drift began with the reign of Nafata, who, fearing the growing influence and power of the Shehu, placed restrictions on the activities of the Shehu, the freedom of his followers and even a ban on certain religious practices.

¹³ Hisket (1963), Tazyin al-Waraqat, p.90

¹⁴ Hisket (1973), p.45

¹⁵ Smaldone, p.24

Despite this development however, the Shehu still employed forms of rapprochement by trying to maintain contact with the court of Gobir. It has actually been reported that he was a teacher to Nafata's son Yunfa, and whom, according to the Hausa Chronicle; he supported to later become the next king.¹⁶ But that development, that is the ban by Nafata, did not only strain the relationship between them, it provoked the Muslims to take a step towards militancy.

It was during the reign of Yunfa that the breach of the cordial relationship between the Shehu and Gobir got to its peak. The respect Yunfa showed for the Shehu as his former teacher and benefactor, and the gesture of renouncing some of the hostile policies of Nafata was short-lived. Following the footsteps of his predecessors therefore, Yunfa also seemed to suddenly realize that tolerating the Shehu would jeopardize his authority because of the growing influence of the latter. He then plotted to eliminate the Shehu by inviting him to his court. The plot failed and the Shehu and his party returned to Degel. This was a further indication that rapprochement would no longer work, even with Yunfa. This, and the incident of the attack on the Muslim community at Gimbana by the forces of Yunfa, forced the Shehu's communities to resort to arms as a last option in order to defend themselves. The battle that ensued gave Yunfa the excuse to order the Shehu to go into exile without his people. The Shehu refused to go alone but insisted that he had to go on the *Hijrah* (flight) together with his followers as he would never abandon them. Again, Abdullahi's account of this is very informative:

Then we returned to our country, and [the Sultan of Gobir] dispatched an army after that against the community of Abdal-Salam, and it attacked them, and some of the Muslims were killed and some were taken prisoner, and the rest of them scattered in the country of Kebbi. Now this increased him in pride and arrogance, and he, and those who followed him from among the people in his country, unbelievers and evil-doers began to threaten us with the like of that until the Sultan sent word to the Shehu that he should go away from his community and leave them for a far place, he together with his family alone. The Shehu sent word to him [saying], "I will not forsake my community, but I will leave your country, for God's earth is wide!" Then we ready to emigrate, and he sent word to the Shehu that he should not leave his place. The Shehu refused and we immigrated to a place on the far borders of his lands, in the desert places, called Gudu.¹⁷

The *Hijrah* itself was a form of diplomacy as it could be one other step or a strategy to avoid an all out war with Gobir. It is informative that the Shehu had treated this issue of flight to some extent in one of his writings,¹⁸ indicating that he would rather avoid war through this diplomatic way of flight to another land. In this the Shehu explained the necessity of emigrating from the land of unbelief to another land where Muslims would have the freedom to practice their religion. More migrants joined their leader at Gudu, having been driven by the pursuit and persecution of Yunfa's forces, on the basis of a directive given by Yunfa to his provincial governors:

Then [the Sultan] ordered the governors of his towns to take captive all who travelled to the Shehu and they began to persecute the Muslims, killing them and confiscating their property.¹⁹

At this juncture it became inevitable that the Shehu's community must take up arms against Gobir if only the community would survive. Even in this circumstance, the Shehu considered adopting the characteristic subtle diplomatic means in responding to Gobir, hoping that they could still strike a compromise. But his community was already in the mood for war and persuaded him to accept the only alternative of open war with Gobir. And while they paid allegiance to him as their leader, they also persuaded him to reluctantly accept the responsibility of the grand commander who would lead them in war and in governance.

We went to the Shehu and said:

'Truly this matter has become intolerable; recourse must be had to arms. There can be no doubt that the situation demands a prince to manage our affairs, for Muslims should not be without order or government.' Then we did homage to the Shehu, as directed by the Qur'an and Sunna in such circumstances, and made him the leader of the Jihad. We rose to ward off attack. Self-defence and defence of dependants and possessions is a righteous act, according to received opinion...²⁰

¹⁶ Published in J.A. Burdon (1909), *Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes*. London; Also see Hisket (1973), p.70

¹⁷ Tazyin al-Waraqat, p.108

¹⁸ Uthman dan Fodio, *Tanbih al-Ikhwan 'ala Ahwal Ard al-Sudan*, trans. H.R. Palmer (1913-14) with the title "An Early Fulani Concept of Islam" in *JAS*, XIII. pp.407-14

¹⁹ Tazyin al-Waraqat, p.108

²⁰ Tazyin al-Waraqat, p.109

When the war got underway, the Muslims on their part employed diplomacy in fighting the war. The Muslims did not only fight the war with the war propaganda necessary in executing such a war, but also advanced enough explanations to justify fighting against Gobir. Reasons explicitly explaining that executing the war was neither for their personal interests nor a quest for leadership, but with the motive of religious revival and reforming the society. The most elaborate and articulate justification, which also explained the correct procedure to be followed in fighting opponents, was given by no less a person than the Shehu himself, quoted in part:

*That to make war upon the heathen king who does not say 'There is no God but Allah' on account of the custom of his town, and who makes no profession of Islam, is obligatory by assent; and to take government from him is obligatory by assent ...And that to make war against the king who is an apostate – who has not abandoned the religion of Islam as far as the profession of it is concerned, but who mingles the observances of Islam with the observances of heathendom, like the kings of Hausaland and for the most part – is also obligatory by assent, and that to take government from him is obligatory by assent ...And that to make war upon the Muslims who are residing in Muslim territory is unlawful by assent, and that wrongfully to devour their property is unlawful by assent; And that to enslave the freeborn among the Muslims is unlawful by assent, whether they reside in the territory of Islam, or in enemy territory ...And that to make war upon the congregation of warmongers obligatory by assent, and that their property is booty, and that their enslavement is unlawful by assent; And that to make war upon the oppressors is obligatory by assent, and that wrongfully to devour their property is unlawful by assent...*²¹

This was no doubt an apologia or justification for the declaration of war. It also served as a strategic diplomatic means employed by the Shehu to execute that war. This strategy of executing the war on the diplomatic as well as military fronts helped the Muslims to win the war eventually. Although the Shehu was the supreme commander, he did not take active part in the battles. The battles were commanded by Abdullahi, his brother, Muhammed Bello, his son and other notable commanders such as Aliyu Jedo and Namoda. But the Shehu himself was not idle as he handled the diplomatic front effectively. For the Muslim fighters, Shehu's apologia for waging the war served in the first place in urging them to fight with zeal, commitment, and dedication. It built in them the belief in the righteousness of their cause and in being on the side of God, and the conviction that their final reward is paradise. They therefore fought fiercely without fear of death, which sustained their determination throughout the course of the wars until success was achieved and the *Caliphate* was established. To their foes, the Shehu demonstrated that even in war, his dealings with them would be humane and that the people and their property would not be plundered unnecessarily as taught by the religion he was reviving.

Beyond that, Shehu's war diplomacy included reaching out to other states. This constitutes an important consideration in war campaigns and strategies even in contemporary affairs, which is not neglected by the most powerful countries in today's world. The Shehu sent letters to the rulers, and the leaders of Muslim communities, of the surrounding Hausa states of Katsina, Daura and Kano. To the rulers, he invited them to embrace the path of truth. And to the leaders of the Muslim communities, he urged them to support the effort to revive the religion and set up an Islamic state.²² This effort of war diplomacy did not only effectively galvanize the support of the Muslims in the surrounding states and elsewhere, it pre-empted the possible hostile response from the rulers. It also pre-empted what they probably might have considered in terms of military alliance with Gobir, Zamfara and Kebbi, the initial and immediate theatres of war.

Having waged the war on both the military and diplomatic fronts, the Muslims were finally victorious over the forces of the Hausa rulers. Yunfa was killed and Alkalawa fell, coming under the control of the Muslims where they eventually established a foothold. After the conquest of Alkalawa, several other Hausa kingdoms fell and soon the whole of the states came under the *Caliphate*. The issuing of flags by the Shehu to the flag bearers who extended the battle to conquer the remaining Hausa states was itself an effective strategic and diplomatic move. The strategy facilitated the conquests because the campaigns were commanded by local Muslim leaders who knew their terrain very well, who believed in the cause, and who were convinced with the motivation. This ensured the rapid process of bringing Hausa and other non-Hausa states under the *Caliphate* as far as the boundaries of Bornu and Adamawa in the east, and Nupe in the south.

²¹ Uthman dan Fodio, *Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan wa man sha'a min al-Ikhwan*, A.D.H. Bivar (ed. and trans.) (1961) with the title "The Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad" in *JAH*, II, 2

²² Hisket (1973), p.96

5. Diplomacy in Governance

The first act by the Shehu of consolidating the *Caliphate*, which was still in the process of being established, was dividing the earliest conquered areas of Gobir, Zamfara and Kebbi between his brother, Abdullahi, who was given the western half, and his son, Muhammad Bello, in charge of the eastern half. This enabled them to establish firm control of the heartlands of the *Caliphate* and to steadily extend it to surrounding areas. The Shehu recognized that governance requires diplomacy, and that governors should possess the ability to employ diplomatic means to consolidate the state, make policies, and achieve state objectives. He therefore conceptualized the objectives of the *Caliphate* and the strategies for accomplishing those objectives through diplomacy and diplomacy qualities. These are well spelt out in his *Kitab al-Farq*, in part:

*I say – and help is with God – the purpose of the Muslims in their government is to strip evil things from religious and temporal affairs, and an example ... is that every governor of a province should strive to fortify strongholds and wage holy war against the unbelievers and the war-makers and the oppressors and set up a military station on every frontier and combat every cause of corruption which occurs in his country and forbid every disapproved thing ... and he should strive to reform the markets and set right the affairs of the poor and the needy and order the doing of every approved thing.*²³

He showed severally in this writing that the government of the Muslims should employ diplomacy and should not be run like the way of the government of the Hausa kings. He described the way of the government of Hausa kings before the *Jihad* as devoid of diplomatic considerations. That their governments practiced hereditary succession was not open and did not give sovereignty to the state but to them. That they did not protect the right of the people in their policies prevented conducive atmosphere for the growth of trade and agriculture and allowed miscarriage of justice.

Still on what should constitute some of the diplomatic considerations in order to ensure effective governance, the Shehu in his *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra*..., gave explanations regarding instituting a just government and the basic qualities of governors and leaders. These qualities include honesty, truthfulness, fulfilling promises, goodwill, soft-temper, courage, and generosity. An important quality of diplomacy that allows a leader to earn the loyalty of the people and ensure stability of governance, according to him, is for the leader to be accessible to the people. This will neither give room for oppression nor for others to come between the leaders and the people. He also stressed that a basic requirement for acquiring these qualities is knowledge. A leader should therefore have this first and foremost before he can take up that responsibility. With this, he can lead his nation aright, discharge his duties effectively and employ the right diplomacy in any circumstance, and for all that, will be loved by his people.

As experienced by many states, the *Caliphate* faced enormous challenges in the process of consolidation and expansion. These were challenges that could not be resolved on the battle field, as, in some cases, making war would not be a justifiable action. Only dialogue, superior argument, and logical presentation of issues would strengthen the position of the state and its sovereignty. This is where diplomacy takes the upper stage in dealing with opponents, allies, friends, and neighbours. The perfect example of this was the diplomatic correspondences between the *Caliphate* and Borno. The leaders of the *Caliphate* found themselves in a dilemma, choosing between consolidating and expanding the reform they started and confronting another Muslim state. The diplomatic exchanges that ensued between the two states and the way they were able to handle the challenges vividly demonstrated the standard of the diplomacy at play in this part of the West African sub-region in the 19th century.

6. Conclusion

At every stage of this important development of 19th century West Africa, the revolutionary reform or *Jihad* of Uthman dan Fodiyo, diplomacy played a prominent role. This is a clear illustration that history is for a major part about international relations and diplomacy. This paper showed that throughout the process leading to the *Jihad*, the course of the *Jihad* wars, the establishment of the *Caliphate* and its consolidation, diplomacy was at play. It thus established that we cannot write history without treating the dynamics of intra and inter diplomatic relations as well as aspects of wider international relations.

²³ Uthman dan Fodio, *Kitab al-Farq*, M. Hisket (ed. and trans) (1960) "Kitab al-Farq: A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthman dan Fodio" in *BSOAS*, XXIII, 3. p.570

It is noteworthy therefore, that even before European imperialism, there was among African people and states, a robust and complex system of diplomatic relations in the process of state formation in the region. In the case of the Sokoto *Caliphate* specifically, there is so much that can be borrowed for the benefit of the contemporary diplomatic relations and the international system.

References

- Adeleye, R.A (1971), *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804 – 1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and Its Enemies*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Arnett, E.J. (1929), trans. and paraphrased Infaq al-Maisur of Muhammad Bello, as *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*. Kano
- Balogun, I.A.B. (1979), “Uthman dan Fodio: The Mujaddid of West Africa” in Y.B. Usman (ed), *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University, for the Sokoto State History Bureau
- Bivar, A.D.H. (ed. and Trans.) (1961), *Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan wa man sha’a min al-Ikhwan of Uthman dan Fodio*, with the title “The Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihad” in *JAH*, III, 2
- Burdon, J.A. (1909), *Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes*. London
- El-Masri, F.H. (1968), trans. and ed. *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra ‘ala al-ibad*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan
- Hisket, M. (ed. and Trans.) (1957), *Ida’ al-musukh man ‘akhadhtu ‘anhu min al shuyukh of Abdullahi dan Fodio*, as “Material Relating to the State of Learning Among the Fulani Before Their Jihad” in *BSOAS*, XIX,3
- Hisket, M. (ed. and Trans.) (1960), *Kitab al-Farq, A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to ‘Uthman dan Fodio*” in *BSOAS*, XXIII, 3
- Hisket, M. (1963), trans. and ed. *Tazyin al-Waraqat of Abdullahi bn Muhammad*. as *Tazyin al-Waraqat*: Ibadan
- Hisket (1973), *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Hodgkin, T. (1975), *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology (Second Edition)*. London: Oxford University Press
- Mingst, K. (1999), *of International Relations*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc
- Palmer, H.R. (1913-14), trans. *Tanbih al-Ikhwan ‘ala Ahwal Ard al-Sudan of Uthman dan Fodio*, with the title “An Early Fulani Concept of Islam” in *JAS*, XIII
- Smaldone, P. (1977), *Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and Sociological Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press