Legislative Aides and Political Transition in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

By

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Abstract

The wave of democratization in Africa has led to transition from military to civilian governments in most African countries including Nigeria in 1999. With the return to civil rule, democratic political institutions have been reinvigorated while the political space has been widened leading to increased participation by political actors. Meanwhile, the political system is becoming increasingly complex, the electorates are becoming increasingly conscious of their political environment and political office holders must live up to their responsibilities. The legislature remains an indispensable institution in every democratic society as it is perceived as the major institutions of representation. Legislative aides (LAs) are like actors who work behind the scene and contribute significantly to the ability of the legislature as a distinguishing institution of every democratic system to play its role in deepening democracy. Transition is a time of change and uncertainty. It is usually a very stressful time for legislator especially for those seeking re-election. It is also characterized by great expectation from the electorates and change in their political appetite.

From a broad perspective, transition period encompasses period before election, election period and period immediately after elections have been concluded, results announced, and up to the time of inauguration of new political office holders. Apparently, as the nation prepare for another transition in 2015, this transition period presents unique challenge to LAs who must assist to ensure continuity of the legislative business in the country while their bosses are being ‘consumed’ by campaigns and various other political activities of the transition period. The LAs in periods of transition must be agents of change, stabilization and continuity. Hence, during transition, the LAs must be proactive and dynamic, the LAs must assist in finalizing activities of the incumbent legislature by tracking outstanding Bills, follow up Committee meetings, monitor debates and report back their boss. They must document and
publicize achievement of their boss, they must also ensure (especially if
their boss seeks to return to House) that arrangements are made for the
business of the incoming Assembly to take off without hitches and from a
vantage position. Furthermore, the LAs must carry out a SWOT and
Political Risk Analysis of the political environment at all stages of the
transition to aid them in their duties. This paper examined the place of the
legislature in Nigeria’s democracy, it outlined the conventional roles of
the legislative aides, it also examined the challenges posed to legislators
during political transition and explicated the role the legislative aides
must play in transition period to ensure success of the legislators.

Introduction
Democracy in its classical form implies broad-based and active
participation of all those defined as citizens in the conduct of public affairs.
Meanwhile, modern idea of democracy emphasizes certain features which
includes popular participation, representative government among others,
with the main objective of reducing or if possible eliminating abuse of state
power (Jega, 2007). As a system of government, democracy is supposed to
allow for extensive representation and inclusiveness of as many people and
views as possible to feed into the function of a fair and just society. More
so, democracy as a government by the people and for the people is
implemented through elected representatives which requires free,
transparent, and fair elections in order to achieve legitimacy. Democracy
has been characterized by the existence of certain institutions which
function to give democracy its distinguishing feature. From ancient Greece
to the Italian city-republics, these distinct institutions have existed with
defined functions and responsibilities which in most countries are also
enshrined in the constitutions.

The legislature stands out as the most distinguishing institution in a
democratic society. While the executive and judicial arms may exist even in
authoritarian societies albeit in a grossly abused manner, an independent
legislature elected by and responsive to the people remains indispensable
in every democratic society. As Prof. Nwabueze has noted, the Legislature
is the distinctive mark of a country’s sovereignty, the index of its status as a state and the source of much of the power exercised by the executive in the administration of government. The sovereign power of the state is therefore identified in the organ that has power to make laws by Legislation, and to issue “commands” in the form of Legislation binding on the community (see Sagay, 2010). The responsibilities of the legislators are enormous and requires the assistance of sound and indefatiguable aides to ensure successful discharge of legislative functions.

Meanwhile, change is constant, transition is a time of change and it is as constant as change in governance and politics. The way transition periods are managed can either make or mar the political system and actors. Transition is a serious and challenging time for the legislature and only well-prepared aides can devise strategies and tactics needed to ensure successful transition and ultimate stability of the polity. Thus, legislative aides must be proactive in periods of transition by ensuring that no vacuums are created in legislative responsibilities of the legislators: Bills must be properly tracked; committee meetings must be attended and legislators properly advised; House debates must be followed; political relationships must be managed and maintained to mention a few. The legislature in Nigeria’s fourth republic has experienced five (5) civilian to civilian transition. Given the usual disruption of legislative activities in transition times, there is need for legislative aides to be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the transition period. Despite the strategic importance of transition period in every democratic society, little attention has been paid to the management of transition periods by the actors especially in the legislative arm of government. Against this background, this paper attempts to situate the role of legislative aides in the period of transition with a view to bringing to limelight the activities expected of legislative aides in transition period.
The Legislature in Contemporary Democracy

Legislation is a serious business of the state and legislators are people of high reputation and political acumen. Even in Athens, characterized as the epitome of direct democracy, not all persons were allowed to participate in discussion of the affairs of the polity. For instance, slaves and women were denied participation because they were considered as mean persons without the capacity to discuss the affairs of the polity. Fashagba (2011:1) noted:

The presence of legislative institution in any modern polity suggests the indirect participation of the electorates in the making decisions on issues that affect their daily lives. Not only is the presence of a legislature salient to the acceptability of democratic regime, but also the extent to which the legislature demonstrates capability to freely express itself and asserts its power determine how democratic the government is.

Institutionalized legislature is therefore a defining attribute of all established democracies and also contributes to the overall process of democratization. The legislature is an institution that promotes vertical downward accountability of the state to the public at large, particularly to organized interests or civil society. It also promotes horizontal accountability across and between other state and quasi-state institutions by scrutinizing the operations of the executive, including the civil service, as well as the operations of the judiciary, the military, independent agencies and state-owned enterprises (Barkan, 2009).

Boynton (2001) opine that, before and after the second world wars, as colonialism failed and nations grew in number, constitutions incorporating a national legislature replaced extant governing institutions throughout the world while their influence continue to be on the rise. Thus, he concludes
that, the twenty-first century is a century of the legislature. It is important to note that the powers and functions of legislature may differ from parliamentary to presidential systems of government, the legislature may also be bicameral or unicameral. Be that as it may, there exist certain universal functions of the legislature which shape the business of the legislature. These functions include the following:

1. **Legislation (statute-making)**: the major function of the legislature the world over is enactment of laws. They debate bills on various subjects brought before them and can repeal, alter or add to the provisions of existing laws.

2. **Interest Articulation & Aggregation**: the legislature is a place where every interest and shade of opinion can have its cause presented and debated. Demands and interests by various groups in society can be articulated and aggregated within the context of a national legislature.

3. **Control of Administration/Oversight**: the legislature plays a vital role in checking abuse or arbitrary use of executive power. It has the power to discipline members of the executive or any administrative officer by impeachment, by address (i.e. the legislature petitions the executive to order the removal of an officer who is not subject to impeachment, on grounds of unfitness to hold public office) or by vote of no confidence. Related to this is the control over spending. In every democratic system, public money cannot be raised or spent without the sanction and/or approval of the legislature. Generally, this is the oversight function of the legislature. According to John Stuart Mill, it is the duty of the legislature to “to watch and control the government [executive]; to throw the light of publicity in its acts, to compel a full exposition and justification of all of them which anyone considers questionable.”
4. **Representation:** The legislature is an important feature of representative democracy. Legislators are elected by electorates in their constituencies to represent them at the national level and present their demands and grievances to the government. For instance, the former Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriation, Senator Iyiola Omisore aptly argued that:

> Everybody that comes to the National Assembly is representing a particular constituency. He is presumed to be representative of the people. For a budget to be passed, you must take care of your constituency. The basis of bringing the budget to the National Assembly from the basic period in 1999 is that it is assured that every member of National Assembly is satisfied that his own constituency has been taken care of by the budget. *(Sunday Tribune, 2009, p. 44)*.

In Nigeria, from the colonial era to independence, the legislative arm of government has continued to exist and function in various capacity. With the return to democracy in 1999, the legislature has continued to play significant role in deepening the nascent democracy despite numerous challenges. The powers and functions of the legislature are also enshrined in the constitution of the country. Specifically, Section 4 of the 1999 constitution vests the National Assembly with the legislative powers of the federation. With respect to the legislative powers, Section 4(1) provides that:

> The legislative powers of the federal republic of Nigeria shall be vested in a National Assembly for the federation which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representative *(FGN, 1999:16)*

Furthermore, Chapter five of the constitution provides for the establishment of the National Assembly, its composition and powers.
Transition & the Legislature in Nigeria: Focus on the Fourth Republic

The re-emergence of the legislative arm of government in 1999 increased the expectation of the electorates especially from the legislators. This is because, being the representatives of the various constituents, the members of the National Assembly, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives, have the mandate to debate and reflect the concerns, opinions and interests of the constituents in government policy decisions. The legislature was expected to reverse the decline in the economy, stabilize the polity and integrate the society, generally. It was expected to take actions and initiate necessary reforms with a view to transforming the state, and changing its poor national picture (Fashagba n.d.)

In the fourth republic, the National Assembly has played significant role in democratic deepening, it has passed several bills to drive some of the government reform agenda and meet the aspiration of the people. Some of the bills included the Independent Corrupt Practice and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Act, 2000; the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Act, 2004; the Electoral Reform Act, 2006 and 2010; the Privatization Law; and the Pension Reform Act, among others. The bills have been passed to address some of the evident social, economic and political challenges militating against the nation’s development.

Understanding the political climate in the legislature and the defining features of transition periods is germane to appreciating the roles of legislative aides (LAs) in such periods. Transition period is a time of change from one political administration to another even if the incumbent is re-elected, it is not always business as usual. Transition marks the end of a particular tenure, the election, inauguration and the beginning of a new tenure for political office holders.

According to United States National Governors Association (1998), transition begins with the days immediately following the election of new
office holders which may usually be anticlimactic for some persons after an intense period of campaigning and elections. For them, the early transition period runs from election day to inauguration day while a broader transition period runs from election day to a time beyond when critical decisions have been taken. It encompasses events leading to the election, inauguration and swearing in of new political office holders, the handing over and taking over of political offices and functions, and change of old administration of political affairs of the state.

Generally, during this period for most officials, there is need for renewed zeal to quickly prepare to assume their respective responsibilities. For the legislature, the experience is unique as there may not be official individual handing over and taking over from the predecessors. Hence, there is need for proactive and innovative aides who ensures smooth transition to ensure legislative business continues and from a vantage position.

In the fourth republic, Nigeria has experienced four (4) transitions albeit without alternation in power (i.e. power take over by another party other than the incumbent). Each of the transition had its challenge, contribution to democratic consolidation in the country and learning points for the legislative arm of government and the actors therein.

As noted by Oni (2014) the legislature was a premature institution, at the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999 because legislative functions had since been scrapped by the military with the abortion of the second republic in 1983. Sadly too, this house only lasted for two years before it was suspended by the Abacha military junta after overthrowing the Shonekan Interim National Government. The nation had to wait for six years to witness another legislative business. Without doubt, over fifteen (15) years of legislative business with three (3) successful civilian to civilian transition (without alternation in power) presents both opportunities and challenges to the legislative arm of the government and ipso facto the legislative aides.
The Legislative Aides

Generally, the legislative aides assist Members of Parliament (MPs) in legislative activities. They monitor legislation through the committee review stage and on the floor. The legislative aide must be knowledgeable of the committee system and the rules of the House and Senate and meets with lobbyists and constituents interested in the proposed legislation. The legislative aides also perform other tasks such as handling the Member’s legislative correspondence, drafting legislation, writing floor speeches, monitoring Committee activity, and meeting with constituents and other interest groups. These conventional roles can be grouped as follows:

A. Assisting with Legislative functions
   i. Votes: When the House is in session, legislative aides must inform their boss about each issue that comes to a vote. But the legislative aides must understand and consider the personal values and political goals of the legislator, the aspirations and demands of their constituents, the political agenda of their political party and the consequence of the vote. A single mistake in voting can ruin the political career of the legislator!

   ii. Committees: there are several committees in the House each of which presents various opportunities for its members. Each legislator belongs to one or more House Committees. LAs ensure that their boss knows the agenda of each of these meetings. In addition, the LA conducts extensive research on committee issues and ensures that the legislator engages profitably in the committee activities.

   iii. Screening/Question Period (QP): This is a critical activity of the legislators, question period may come up during screening of officials appointed to hold certain office in the nation. E.g. Ministerial or Ambassadorial nominees. Again, the LAs must carry
out extensive research on each nominee and analyse the cost/benefit of the success of each nominee to the legislator, his/her party and constituents and thereafter help determine which questions the legislator should ask and which statements they should make during the screening/question period based on the legislator’s interests.

iv. **Bills:** LAs assist their boss in drafting Private Member’s Bills and/or in creating amendments to legislation. To do this, the LAs needs advice of experts and researchers on the issue being addressed by the Bill.

v. **Legislative Lobbying:**
Lobbying is a prominent feature in the legislative process. Lobbying here involves the publicity given to either a Bill or a Motion which is slated for presentation on the floor. This process is intended to educate the legislators of the said proposed Bill or Motion and to seek for their support. Legislative Aides must be professional lobbyists and must guide their boss on how, when and what to lobby for.

vi. **Oversight Function:** Oversight function is a core function of the legislative arm of government. It is a legislative process used by the legislature to check the adequacies and the excesses of the other arms of Government. This could be in either physical visit to government institutions or invitation of Ministries, Departments and Agencies to Public Hearings at the Committee levels. Oversight functions actually attract a lot of public interest and should be handled very seriously. In line with this, Legislative Aides will need to furnish their boss with details of the following information:

– The law establishing such an institution/agency/parastatal;
– Its objectives, functions and powers;
– The personnel, appointment and retirement procedures;
– Sources of funding;
– Budgetary provisions (current and past);
– Current activities of the institution;
– Public opinion; and
– Observations, commentaries in both print and electronic media.

B. Managing Communications/Correspondence
   i. **Briefs:** The LAs schedule and prepare legislators for interviews, press conferences and other contact they have with the media and public about issues before the House and other political matters. This must be done in such a way that the legislator is perceived by the public as one knowledgeable in the affairs of the state and who speak in a manner consistent with that of a representative with the interest of his/her constituents, party and nation at large.

   ii. **Constituents:** The LAs must ensure that constituents are informed about federal issues that affect their everyday life, such as health care and employment.

   iii. **Correspondence:** The LAs work with legislators to respond to constituency correspondence, write letters to colleagues, Ministers, and the President on national cum political issues. The tone of communication must be diplomatic, effective and appropriate. LAs must ensure that all correspondence are responded to even if it means giving holding replies.

The Legislative Aides in Transition Periods in Nigeria
Legislative aides are indispensable in the smooth running of legislative activities. Shawulu, who served as an aide to former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ghali Umar Na’abba noted that legislative aides have come to be regarded as the backbone of the congress. He added that the
Legislative aides in the current political dispensation in the country may not have performed to expectation due to the confusion on the role they should play right from the inception of the current National Assembly in 1999 (The Nation, 12 Aug.2008). This confusion may not be unconnected with the challenge of transition. As stated earlier, transition periods are usually critical periods. Transition periods are periods of uncertainty and require dynamism. The duties of a legislative aide are usually elastic and may be overstretched in transition period.

The Place of Legislative Aides in Nigeria’s Political Transition

Usually in Nigeria, once the ball is set rolling for General Elections, politicians including legislators are consumed in political activities ranging from planning for election, campaigns, attending unending political meetings and gathering to organizing and attending political rallies. For the legislators, these activities could be overwhelming and definitely impinge on their time to carry out their legislative functions such as attending House and Committee meetings, keeping track of Bills etc. The 24 hours in the day seems insufficient to accommodate the itinerary and schedules for the day. Under such condition, the legislative aides are faced with enormous responsibilities to ensure smooth running of legislative activities, the legislative aides irrespective of whether their boss is seeking re-election or not must be proactive and ensure all legislative issues are attended to and no stone is left unturned.

For the LAs and for the purpose of our discourse, the transition period activities can be broadly divided into three: period before the general elections; election period; period immediately after election results are announced.
Legislative Aides in Pre-election Period

- **Appraise Performance of Outgoing Assembly, Document & Publicize Achievements**
  Whenever the nation gears up for General Elections, the legislative aides must appraise the performance of legislators in the current Assembly. Specific attention must be given to bills sponsored, contributions to legislation, debates, committee membership etc. of their bosses. The legislator’s performance vis-à-vis his/her party’s agenda and manifesto must be assessed and achievement documented. All achievements of the legislator in the current dispensation must be properly documented and made public in a manner that entices the electorates.

- **Attending House Committee Meetings**
  This is very crucial, while the legislator is busy with election campaign and other activities, the aide must ensure to attend and follow deliberation in House Committee Meetings so as to report back to the legislator for necessary action.

- **Tracking Bills**
  While preparation for election is ongoing, the legislative activities including debate on new and outstanding Bills introduced in the House must also continue. The legislative aide must follow up debates on bills and progress at every stage of each bill. The legislator must also ensure to note whether the interest his boss is jeopardized or protected at every stage of any Bill, document and communicate the boss appropriately.

- **Constituency Watch and Correspondence**
  The wants of the electorates are insatiable. As soon as one demand is met it is easily forgotten and new demands arise especially in periods before elections. Thus, the LA must investigate the political appetite of the electorates and emerging interest groups in their boss constituency,
document it and bring this to the knowledge of the legislator. This is also the time to intensify correspondence with the constituency, all hitherto unanswered mails must be responded to even if it means using consultants to give answers to unknown questions. LA must discover the most effective means of mass communication in the constituency and reach the people through that. Using the 80/20 Pareto’s principle, letters may be written to individuals in the constituency thanking them for their support all through the dispensation.

- **Seal all Deals**

No business must be left unfinished. In view of the high level of uncertainty in transition period, LAs must ensure all pending deals especially those beneficial to the legislator’s political interests are concluded. For instance, if there is a promise by the Federal Government to extend any form of kind gesture to a legislator’s, the aide must follow up to ensure such kind gestures are secured. This will increase achievement profile of the legislator and political strength needed for the transition period. The reason being that as soon as the votes are cast and new political equation emerge, some promises may become bad debt.

Generally, the role and level of activity of LAs also depends on whether their boss are seeking re-elections to the House. Table 1 below shows the possible level of activities for LAs at various stages of transition period and risk ratings of such activities.
Table 1: Activity Level & Risk Rating for Legislative Aides in Transition Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Period</th>
<th>Determinant Factor</th>
<th>Level of Activity/ Risk Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-election period</td>
<td>Boss is seeking re-election to House</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boss not seeking re-election to House</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boss seeking election for the first time to the House</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election period</td>
<td>Boss is contesting re-election to House</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boss not contesting re-election to House</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-election period</td>
<td>Boss has been re-elected</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boss not re-elected</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boss elected to House for the first time</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Designed by the author

Legislative Aides in Election Period

- Information gathering
  
The LA must seek information concerning the whole electoral process and electoral outcome and document them appropriately. LA must also monitor elections directly and follow up with announced electoral results.

Legislative Aides in Post-election period

Post election periods are very challenging for LAs whose boss have been re-elected or elected for the first time to the House. More challenging is it for legislative aides who must ensure the ball is set rolling for real business when the legislator may decide to take some rest after hectic elections or even go on vacation before the formal inauguration. The following are the roles of the LA in post election transition period:
Relationship Management, Appreciation and Clean-ups

- Immediately after the election result is announced, the proactive LA should arrange to establish and manage relationship with other elected political office holders by arranging to meet with and congratulate the President elect, Governor elect of his state, other elected legislators especially those of same party and who share same idea or have similar political interest with the legislator.

- The LA must ensure that the legislator employs various media to appreciate supporters and all those who voted for him/her. It is advisable to use the Pareto’s 80/20 Principle. To do this, the legislator with the assistance of the LA identifies 20% most influential personalities in his constituency who supported him/her and send out appreciation message to them.

- Party members especially leaders must also be appreciated for providing the platform for the legislator.

- Establish relations with principal officers of the National Assembly

- As for the clean-up, the LA must identify ‘electoral mistakes’ made during the elections and address them appropriately to ensure the opposition does not take advantage of that to unseat the legislator. Individuals used during the elections must be properly taken care off while election/campaign activities should gradually wind-up to ensure such election/campaign activities/persons do not adversely slowdown preparation for the real legislative business.

Securitization

Security has been considered as a “first order value” worth preserving (Anyadike, 2013), it is associated with the safety and survival of the individual person. The LAs must establish contact with official security
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operators and agencies to get information on the security provisions for the legislator. It is important to augment official or state security provisions with private or personal security arrangements. The LAs must understand security situation and arrangements for the inauguration day and guide the legislator appropriately.

❖ Plan for Inauguration Day and Event
The LA must obtain adequate information concerning the inauguration activities and make adequate preparations for the legislator to conspicuously participate in the inauguration ceremony. All conditions precedent to inauguration (especially as contained in Section 52 of the 1999 Constitution) must be taken care of while ensuring attention to details as any error might jeopardize political ambition of the legislator. Specifically, Section 52(1) of the 1999 Constitution states:

Every member of the Senate or the House of Representatives shall, before taking his seat, declare his assets and liabilities as prescribed in this Constitution and subsequently take and subscribe the Oath of Allegiance and the oath of membership as prescribed in the Seventh Schedule to this Constitution before the President of the Senate or, as the case may be, the Speaker of the House of Representatives…

❖ Agenda Identification, Agenda Setting and Agenda Synchronization
- Every party has political agenda it wants to achieve in every dispensation. The LA must not just be conversant with the political agenda and interest of his legislator’s party, but must also understand agenda of other party members in the House. There is also need to understand the political agenda of the Executive, specifically the President elect and the Bills that may likely emanate from the executive and ‘what is in it for the legislator.’ This will enable the aide to carryout
research before now on how the legislator should vote on such issues when brought before the House.

✔ Assist in setting priorities
Decide early few things you want to accomplish use the transition period to set the priorities and begin skeletal work on the issues that top priorities. Work on Member Bill(s) to emanate from the legislator must commence early to ensure adequate details are obtained and the Bill gets the attention it deserves.

✔ Capacity Building
Having understood issues toping the political agenda in the new dispensation. Legislative aides must ensure to build their capacity on various issues that may likely come up for legislative debate in the new attention. This is because formal legislative powers mean little if a legislature lacks the capacity to use them. For instance, the rise of many American state legislatures as effective bodies came with investments in capacity building. There are variations in capacity for management of process (referral, dispositions, debate etc) and degree of internal complexity (level of effectiveness of committee system, respect for specialization/expertise, deference to committee decisions etc.) (Awah, 2013).

✔ Understanding Political Interests and Gang-ups
Beyond the party agenda, every legislator is a politician who has personal political interest which must be understood by the LA. The transition period is the time to discover and initiate gang-ups with other legislators who can collaborate to ensure the political interests are aggregated and achieved.
House Leadership and Committees

Leadership positions like the Senate President, Speaker etc and membership of certain House Committees are very strategic for the smooth operation of the legislative arm. If any legislator aspires to occupy any of the leadership position or be member of certain House Committees, the transition period is the time to strategize. It is important for legislators who do not aspire to occupy any leadership position in the Assembly to play a role in electing credible leaders who will drive the affairs of the Assembly. Thus, LA must work assiduously to identify leadership positions in contention with a view to guiding the legislator to align appropriately.

Constituency Watch

Watch legislators’ constituency and arrange for meeting with various interest and lobby groups especially those within their boss constituency so as to elicit information on their demands and aspirations in the new dispensation.

SWOT and Political Risk Analysis

Transition period is the time for political calculations. The LAs must carry out a SWOT and Political Risk analysis to gain insight on the political standing of the legislator and how he/she can pursue political interest in the House.

SWOT is an acronym that represents:

- S = Strength
- W = Weakness
- O = Opportunity
- T = Threat
Table 2: SWOT Framework for LAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Empirical Indicators</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>- Legislator is returning to the House for second/third term</td>
<td>LA to identify political agenda not achieved previously and begin ground work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legislator is member of the ruling party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legislator has the support of his state Governor elect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>- Legislator coming to House for the first time</td>
<td>- LA to study proceedings of past Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legislator not member of the ruling party</td>
<td>- LA to seek collaboration with legislator from other parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legislator in opposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Governor elect not in support of the legislator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Governor elect not in support of the legislator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Governor elect not in support of the legislator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>- Legislator’s party is majority in the House</td>
<td>- LA to identify pressing agenda &amp; interest that must be achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Legislator’s party has a national outlook</td>
<td>- LA to discover if the legislator has interest in House leadership and begin lobbying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Leadership position(s) in which the legislator has interest has been zoned to his/her geographical region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>- Legislator’s party not majority in the House</td>
<td>- Consider collaborating with other small parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Leadership position(s) in which the legislator has interest has been zoned to region outside that of the legislator</td>
<td>- Pursue national agenda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by author

Political Risk Analysis

Political risk is the chance or possibility that a negative political event might crystallize and jeopardize the political goals the legislator wants to achieve especially in the House. The duty of the LA is to identify risks that may eventually crystallize and use the transition period to devise mitigants for those risks. Examples of some political risks faced by legislators are:
Table 3: Post Election Risk Factors and Mitigants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Risk Rating</th>
<th>Mitigants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constituency Risk</td>
<td>The risk that post election crisis may erupt in the constituency</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>- Keep in touch with security operatives &lt;br&gt;- Strengthen support base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Composition Risk</td>
<td>The risk that house composition in terms of leadership composition may not be favourable to the legislator</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Build collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Party Risk</td>
<td>The risk of intra-party crisis</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>- Keep in touch with party leadership &lt;br&gt;- Collaborate with other legislator’s from same party to seek early resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Risk</td>
<td>The risk of opposition may not give up the contest.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>- Keep in touch with good lawyers &lt;br&gt;- Maintain sound relationship with opinion leaders in the constituency &lt;br&gt;- Identify pressing constituency needs/projects and show interest in undertaking them.</td>
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Source: compiled by the author

Conclusion

Behind every successful legislator, there are sound legislative aides! The legislature is the distinguishing institution of every democratic society. Sustaining Nigeria’s nascent democracy requires dynamic legislature. Transition periods are times of change and uncertainty for legislators.
especially for those seeking re-election who are consumed by electoral activities such as campaign, rallies etc. Meanwhile, legislative activities cannot be put to a halt on the excuse of tight schedule result from election preparation. Thus, during such period, the success of legislators in such periods depends to a great extent on the dynamism of their legislative aides who much ensure that no vacuum is created nor the interest of the legislator, his constituency, party and nation jeopardize because of legislator’s tight schedule. Again, the role of the legislative aides in the transition period must be elastic to ensure successful transition. The legislative aides must appreciate the nature of political transition, its challenges and opportunities for the legislators and the roles required of legislative aides in transition periods. The legislative aides must understand and undertake SWOT and Political Risk Analysis in order to function efficiently and effectively during the transition period. This will ensure that the legislature as a unique and indispensable arm of democratic government maintains its pride of place and contributes to democratic deepening in the country.

References


