



Nigeria's Foreign Policy Pre and Post Independence

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Abstract

This paper seeks to present an evaluation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy pre and post independence. Nigeria's foreign policy refers to the country's ways of interactions with other nations, international organizations, and global institutions to promote its national interests, security, and economic well-being. Nigeria's existing foreign policy is guided by the country's Constitution, national interests, and regional and global realities. The policy aims to promote Nigeria's sovereignty, unity, and economic well-being. Nigeria's foreign policy before and after independence has been shaped by its colonial history, regional dynamics, and global shifts. The country has made significant strides in regional leadership, economic development, and international cooperation. Nigeria's foreign policy before and after independence has undergone significant transformations, reflecting the country's evolving national interests, regional dynamics, and global shifts. As Africa's most populous nation and a major oil producer, Nigeria has played a pivotal role in regional and international affairs, with the primary objectives of promoting and protecting national interests, fostering African integration and unity, and enhancing international cooperation. Initially, Nigeria's foreign policy focused on decolonization, pan-Africanism, and non-alignment (Akinyemi, 1978). The country was a founding member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and actively supported liberation movements in Southern Africa (Ogunbadejo, 1976). Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 marked a significant shift in foreign policy, emphasizing good governance, human rights, and international cooperation (Obasanjo, 2002). The country's role in regional peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and global health initiatives demonstrates its commitment to international norms (Adebajo, 2014). Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 marked a significant shift in foreign policy, emphasizing good governance, human rights, and international cooperation. The country's role in regional peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and global health initiatives demonstrates its commitment to international norms. Nigeria's foreign policy faces numerous challenges, including: Security concerns: Boko Haram insurgency and regional security threats, economic dependence, vulnerability to global economic shocks, Corruption is reported to be Undermining foreign policy effectiveness and Foreign interference. Nigeria's foreign policy requires a nuanced understanding of the country's challenges and opportunities. By adopting a comprehensive approach, addressing corruption, and diversifying the economy, Nigeria can enhance its regional leadership and global influence. Nigeria should device home grown solutions to her legion of challenges rather than implementing the advice of Western oriented global organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary fund. The paper concluded that Nigeria's foreign policy before and after independence has been shaped by its colonial history, regional dynamics, and global shifts. The country has made significant strides in regional leadership, economic

development, and international cooperation. However, challenges persist, including corruption, security concerns, and economic dependence on oil. Recommendations were made as follows Developing a clear and coherent foreign policy strategy ,diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil exports, address corruption andgovernance issues, diversify the economy through investments in agriculture, manufacturing, and technology, enhance diplomatic engagement with global powers (US, China, EU) ,address corruption and governance issues through institutional reforms and increased investment in human capital (education, healthcare).

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Governance, Nigeria, Pre-Independence , Post-Independence

Introduction

Nigeria's foreign policy refers to the country's ways of interactions with other nations, international organizations, and global institutions to promote its national interests, security, and economic well-being. (Mustafa, 2020)

Nigeria's existing foreign policy is guided by the country's Constitution, national interests, and regional and global realities. The policy aims to promote Nigeria's sovereignty, unity, and economic well-being.(Adedeji,2017) Nigeria's foreign policy before and after independence has been shaped by its colonial history, regional dynamics, and global shifts. The country has made significant strides in regional leadership, economic development, and international cooperation.

Nigeria's foreign policy before and after independence has undergone significant transformations, reflecting the country's evolving national interests, regional dynamics, and global shifts. (Mustafa, 2020) As Africa's most populous nation and a major oil producer, Nigeria has played a pivotal role in regional and international affairs.(Adedeji, 2002) , with the primary objectives of promoting and protecting national interests, fostering African integration and unity, and enhancing international cooperation. Nigeria's foreign policy faces numerous challenges, including: Security concerns: Boko Haram insurgency and regional security threats (Adebajo, 2020), Economic dependence: Vulnerability to global economic shocks (Mustapha, 2020),.Corruption is reported to be Undermining foreign policy effectiveness (Osaghae, 1998). and Foreign interference

Nigeria's foreign policy requires a nuanced understanding of the country's challenges and opportunities. By adopting a comprehensive approach, addressing corruption, and diversifying the economy, Nigeria can enhance its regional leadership and global influence

.Nigeria should device home grown solutions to her legion of challenges rather than implementing the advice of Western oriented global organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary fund

This paper seeks to present an evaluation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy pre and post independence **Literature Review.**

Colonial Era (1914-1950)

During colonial rule, Nigeria's foreign policy was determined by Britain. The country's external relations were managed by the British Colonial Office. Nigeria fought in support of

Britain and hence the allied forces during World Wars 1 and 11

Key Features:

1. British protection and administration
2. Limited international representation
3. Economic ties with Britain and other colonial powers
4. Membership of international organizations (e.g., League of Nations)

Post-WWII Developments:

1. Emergence of nationalist movements
2. United Nations (UN) Trusteeship Council oversight
3. Gradual transfer of power to Nigerian leaders

Pre-Independence Diplomacy (1950s-1960)

As Nigeria transitioned towards independence, the country began to establish its own foreign policy:

1. Participation in international conferences (e.g., 1958 All-African Peoples' Conference)
2. Establishment of diplomatic relations with other African countries
3. Membership in regional organizations (e.g., African Liberation Committee)

Key Figures:

1. Herbert Macaulay: Early Nigerian nationalist and international advocate
2. NnamdiAzikiwe: Leading nationalist and first Governor-General of Nigeria
3. Obafemi Awolowo: Nationalist leader and first Minister of Finance

Pre-Independence Foreign Policy Objectives:

1. Decolonization and self-determination
2. Pan-African solidarity and cooperation
3. Economic development and independence
4. International recognition and legitimacy

Early Years (1960-1970s)

Initially, Nigeria's foreign policy focused on decolonization, pan-Africanism, and non-alignment (Akinyemi, 1978). The country was a founding member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and actively supported liberation movements in Southern Africa (Ogunbadejo, 1976). The key features include the following; Biafran Civil War (1967-1970)

Decolonization and African unity: Pan-Africanism: Nigeria played a key role in African liberation movements.

International cooperation and non-alignment: Non-Alignment: Nigeria maintained good relations with Eastern and Western blocs, without supporting/aligning with any of the two blocs. Regional security and stability: Regional Integration: Nigeria helped establish ECOWAS (1975). **Mid-1970s to 1980s Mid-1970s to 1980s**

1. Oil Boom: Nigeria's economy grew, influencing foreign policy.
2. National Interest: Nigeria prioritized economic diplomacy.
3. Regional Leadership: Nigeria led ECOWAS and African Union initiatives.

Key Events:

ECOWAS establishment (1975)

Oil Boom: Nigeria's economy grew, influencing foreign policy.

. National Interest: Nigeria prioritized economic diplomacy.

Regional Leadership: Nigeria led ECOWAS and African Union initiatives.

National Interest and Economic Diplomacy (1980s-1990s)

Nigeria's foreign policy shifted towards economic diplomacy, prioritizing national interests and regional influence (Osaghae, 1998). The country's participation in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Economic Community (AEC) exemplified this approach (Adedeji, 2002).

Democratization and Globalization (2000s-present)

Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 marked a significant shift in foreign policy, emphasizing good governance, human rights, and international cooperation (Obasanjo, 2002). The country's role in regional peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and global health initiatives demonstrates its commitment to international norms (Adebajo, 2014).

Current Challenges and Opportunities

Nigeria's foreign policy faces contemporary challenges, including Boko Haram insurgency, regional security concerns, and economic diversification (Mustapha, 2018). The country's relations with global powers, particularly China and the United States, also require nuanced engagement (Ogunnubi, 2020).

Regional Organizations and Initiatives

Nigeria has played a key role in regional organizations, including:

1. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
2. African Union (AU)
3. Organization of African Unity (OAU)
4. African Economic Community (AEC)
5. New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

Key Foreign Policy Objectives

1. Regional integration and cooperation
2. Economic development and diversification
3. Peacekeeping and conflict resolution
4. Counter-terrorism and security

5. Global governance and multilateralism

Relations with Global Powers

1. United States: Strategic partnership on security, trade, and development
2. China: Economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and strategic partnership
3. European Union: Trade, investment, and development cooperation
4. United Kingdom: Historical ties, trade, and security cooperation

Current Challenges

1. Boko Haram insurgency and regional security concerns
2. Economic diversification and dependence on oil exports
3. Climate change and environmental degradation
4. Human rights and democratic governance
5. Global health initiatives and pandemics

Future Directions

1. Diversification of economy and export base
2. Strengthening regional organizations and cooperation
3. Enhancing global governance and multilateralism
4. Addressing climate change and environmental challenges
5. Promoting human rights and democratic governance

Principles

1. National Interest: Protection and promotion of Nigeria's sovereignty, unity, and economic well-being.
2. Non-Alignment: Maintenance of good relations with all nations, without alignment with any bloc.
3. Pan-Africanism: Support for African unity, solidarity, and development.
4. International Cooperation: Engagement with global organizations and nations to address common challenges.

Objectives

1. Regional Integration: Strengthening ECOWAS and AU for regional cooperation and development.
2. Economic Diplomacy: Promotion of trade, investment, and economic cooperation.
3. Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution: Contribution to global peace and security.
4. Counter-Terrorism and Security: Collaboration to combat terrorism and transnational crimes.
5. Global Governance: Active participation in international organizations and multilateral forums.

Institutional Framework

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA): Primary institution responsible for foreign policy formulation and implementation.
2. National Assembly: Ratification of international agreements and oversight of foreign policy.
3. Presidency: Final authority on foreign policy decisions.
4. Nigerian Intelligence Agency (NIA): Provides strategic intelligence for foreign policy decisions.

5. Nigerian Embassy/High Commission: Representation of Nigeria's interests abroad.

Policy Instruments

1. Diplomacy: Bilateral and multilateral engagement with other nations.
2. Economic Aid: Development assistance to friendly nations.
3. Trade Agreements: Promotion of trade and investment.
4. International Organizations: Participation in global bodies (e.g., UN, AU, ECOWAS).
5. Public Diplomacy: Cultural exchange, tourism, and people-to-people engagement.

Regional and International Relations

1. ECOWAS: Regional economic community.
2. AU: Continental organization for African unity.
3. UN: Global organization for peace and security.
4. Commonwealth: Association of former British colonies.
5. Bilateral Relations: Ties with individual nations (e.g., US, China, UK).

Implementation and Monitoring

1. Foreign Service Officers: Implementation of foreign policy abroad.
2. Diplomatic Missions: Representation of Nigeria's interests abroad.
3. Policy Review: Periodic evaluation of foreign policy effectiveness.
4. National Security Council: Advice on national security implications.

Key Players

1. President: Chief executive and final authority.
2. Minister of Foreign Affairs: Chief diplomat and policy advisor.
3. National Security Adviser: Strategic security advice.
4. Permanent Secretary, MFA: Administrative head of foreign ministry.
5. Ambassadors/High Commissioners: Representation abroad.
3. African Economic Community (AEC) formation (1991)

1990s-2000s

1. Democratization: Nigeria transitioned to democracy (1999).
2. International Cooperation: Nigeria engaged with global organizations.
3. Peacekeeping: Nigeria participated in UN and regional peacekeeping missions.

Key Figures:

1. Olusegun Obasanjo (President, 1999-2007)
2. Goodluck Jonathan (President, 2010-2015)
3. Muhammadu Buhari (President, 2015- 2023)
- 4 Bola Ahmed Tinubu (29th May, 2023 till date)

Discussion

Current Foreign Policy

Objectives:

Economic diversification and development, Regional security and cooperation. Global governance and multilateralism. Climate change and environmental sustainability

Challenges:

. Boko Haram insurgency, Economic dependence on oil, Corruption and governance issues Regional security concerns

Strengths:

1. Regional leadership: Nigeria has played a significant role in West African regional organizations, such as ECOWAS. (Mustafa, 2020)
2. Economic potential: Nigeria's large market and natural resources make it an attractive partner for foreign investment.
3. Cultural diplomacy: Nigeria's cultural heritage, including music, literature, and film, has promoted soft power globally.
4. International cooperation: Nigeria has participated in UN peacekeeping missions and global health initiatives.

Weaknesses:

1. Dependence on oil exports: Nigeria's economy remains vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices.
2. Corruption: Corruption has undermined Nigeria's foreign policy effectiveness and credibility.
3. Security challenges: Boko Haram insurgency and regional security concerns have impacted Nigeria's foreign policy.
4. Lack of policy coherence: Nigeria's foreign policy has been criticized for lacking clear objectives and consistency.

Opportunities:

1. Diversification of economy: Nigeria can leverage its large market and resources to diversify its economy.
2. Regional integration: ECOWAS and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offer opportunities for regional cooperation.
3. Global governance: Nigeria can play a more significant role in international organizations, such as the UN.
4. Diaspora engagement: Nigeria's large diaspora community can contribute to foreign policy and economic development.

Threats:

1. Global competition: Nigeria faces competition from other emerging economies.
2. Security threats: Boko Haram and other regional security concerns pose a significant threat.
3. Climate change: Nigeria is vulnerable to climate change impacts, particularly in the Niger Delta region.
4. Global economic instability: Nigeria's economy remains susceptible to global economic shocks. (Adebajo, 2014)

Key Relationships:

1. United States: Strategic partnership on security, trade, and development.
2. China: Economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and strategic partnership.
3. European Union: Trade, investment, and development cooperation.
4. African Union: Regional cooperation, peacekeeping, and economic integration.

Future Directions:

1. Economic diversification and development.
2. Strengthening regional organizations and cooperation.
3. Enhancing global governance and multilateralism.
4. Addressing climate change and environmental challenges.
5. Promoting human rights and democratic governance.

Conclusion

Nigeria's foreign policy before and after independence has been shaped by its colonial history, regional dynamics, and global shifts. After independence it has been largely Africa centred. The country has made significant strides in regional leadership, economic development, and international cooperation. However, challenges persist, including corruption, security concerns, and economic dependence on oil.

Recommendations

Developing a clear and coherent foreign policy strategy, diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil exports, address corruption and governance issues, diversify the economy through investments in agriculture, manufacturing, and technology, enhance diplomatic engagement with global powers (US, China, EU), address corruption and governance issues through institutional reforms and increased investment in human capital (education, healthcare).

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