

Nigeria's Participation in Peace Support Operations and The National Interest, 1960 – 2023

Iwuanyanwu David Ezennaya
iwuanyanwudavid@gmail.com

&

Dr. Innocent F. Ezeonwuka
If.ezeonwuka@unizik.edu.ng

Department of History and International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

National interests are a public declaration of a country's needs and intentions based on an assessment of the current situation. Such a declaration performs several key functions. Firstly, it establishes a hierarchy of foreign policy priorities to avoid the ineffective use of resources and over-extension. Nigeria has actively been involved in Peace Support Operations (PSOs) around the world, which raises the question of national interest. It is against this background that the study set out to investigate the national interest element in Nigeria's participation in PSOs. Data for the study were collected from both primary and, secondary sources. Interviews and discussions were held with very knowledgeable sources on the subject of national interest and peace support operations. The concept of Peace Support Operations was expanded alongside the tool of Liberal/Neo-Liberal Theory as a framework. Available and presented qualitative data not only affirm Nigeria's active participation and involvement in PSOs but strongly buttress the dire need for her to continue, since, her national interest though variegated appears to be on the gainful mode. However, since she has consistently shown increasing support and participation in global peace efforts, though most importantly lacking in clear-cut policy formulation and direction in both domestic and external security projection, the need to interject and interrogate these anomalies remains apparent. While conceding and supporting Nigeria's participation in global issues, this study advocates that the Nigerian government should make and implement a distinct or deliberate policy on PSOs that provides direction to Nigeria's future participation. Nigeria should take full advantage of the country's participation by ensuring that commensurate economic, military, and diplomatic advantages are secured for the country. Finally, Nigeria should strive to achieve political, economic, technological, and military advancement in order to achieve all her aspirational interests using PSOs as a medium.

Keywords: Peacekeeping, Peace Support Operations, National Interest, Government, Diplomacy.

Introduction

Like every other sovereign state of the world, Nigeria's national interest has been largely determined and defined by the nation's leadership. It is the elites who constitute the leadership of the nation that determine what should constitute the national interest of the nation. Nigeria adopts several strategies to achieve these national interests. These strategies range from diplomacy to military actions and from cultural exchange to economic cooperation. This study will discuss these strategies under internal and external strategies.

Violent conflicts between states or between groups within a state have far-reaching consequences in terms of both human and material losses. Such conflicts are politically disruptive and also destructive to the society and the economy. They hinder the process of human development by undermining the prospects for social and economic growth. In view of the colossal costs of conflict on human societies and the imperative of peace for sustainable development, efforts have been made over the years by the international community to achieve better management and faster resolution of conflicts in the world.

The formation of the League of Nations after World War 1 was a response by the international community to prevent war and maintain international peace and security. The inability of the League of Nations to carry out this important function paved the way for World War II and the eventual collapse of the League. After World War II, the allies came up with the idea of establishing another organization, the United Nations (UN) established on 24 October 1945. Article 1 of the UN Charter outlines its purpose to include among others; to maintain international Peace and Security.¹

Peacekeeping, a third-party approach to the management of conflict was first introduced as a measure of conflict resolution by the UN in 1948 in the Arab-Israeli crisis in the Middle East.² Since then; the UN has mounted over 50 Peacekeeping missions across the globe. A cease-fire with the consent of the warring parties was the immediate pre-condition for the UN to deploy peacekeepers.

Each mission faced a variety of challenges. As a result of the emergent enormous complexities, the traditional Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) is giving way to a new concept called Peace Support Operations (PSO) that is more encompassing. PSOs describe the operations and activities of all civil and military organizations deployed to restore peace and/or relieve human suffering. Over time, regional and sub-regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have put in place their PSO for the maintenance of peace and security within and beyond their environment.

Countries participate in PSOs in keeping with the UN, Regional, or Sub-regional commitment to maintaining peace, for humanitarian reasons, and for national interest among others. Indeed, it is accepted that the foreign policy of nations is dictated by their national interest. It is equally recognized that, in international relations, there is no permanent friend or enemy, but permanent interest.³ Ultimately, all nations, big or small, have their national interest which could be tangible or intangible.

Nigeria has participated in many PSOs around the world from the Congo in 1960 to Sudan (Darfur) in 2004. Her success in PSOs especially in the sub-region and recent efforts at spearheading PSOs in the continent of Africa have projected Nigeria's image in global peace efforts. Consequently, this study looks into how national interest has influenced Nigeria's participation in PSOs. In doing so, the researcher has evaluated how other participants in PSOs take care of their national interest in the process.

Theoretical Base

Although many theories have been adduced by different scholars to explain Peace Support Operations and Peacebuilding, the Liberal/Neo-Liberal Theory is deemed more appropriate for this study. Liberalism and Neo-liberal institutionalism is one of the theories of international relations. According to Mingst, the liberals hold that human nature is basically good and that innate goodness makes societal progress possible. Unacceptable human behavior such as war is the product of inadequate social institutions and misunderstanding among leaders.⁴ Thus, liberals believe that through collective action, states can cooperate to eliminate the possibility of war. The earliest recorded ideas on liberalism originated from classical Greek philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle, etc. Then, scholars like Montesquieu and Kant further projected the liberal idea. In the twentieth century, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America became its greatest adherent. Its most contemporary advocates are political scientists Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane.

The origin of liberal theory is found in Enlightenment optimism which rests on the Greek idea that individuals are rational human beings, able to understand the universally applicable laws governing both nature and human society. Then, comes the nineteenth-century liberalism reformulation of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment rationalism when they added a preference for democracy over aristocracy and for free trade over national economic self-sufficiency. The twentieth-century liberals came up with the proposition that war is preventable. This is demonstrated in the League of Nations covenant which basically was focused on preventing war. The covenant accommodated a provision legitimizing the notion of collective security, wherein aggression, by one state would be countered by collective action, embodied in a "league of nations". Since the 1970s, liberalism has been revived under the rubric of neoliberal institutionalism. Neoliberals have asked time and time over why states choose to cooperate most of the time in the anarchic condition of the international system and have also attempted to provide an answer.⁵

Some of the basic trusts of liberalism include that: (i) Individuals are rational human beings, able to understand the universally applicable laws governing both nature and human society. (ii) Understanding such laws means that people have the capacity to improve their condition by creating a just society. (iii) If a just society is not attained, then the fault rests with inadequate institutions – the result of a corrupt environment. (iv) Human nature is not defective and that problems are created as man enters civil society and forms several nations. (v) War is a product of society, not an attribute inherent in individuals. (vi) International anarchy can be overcome through some kind of collective action. (vii) Individual freedom and autonomy can best be realized in a democratic state that is based on the economic system of free trade. (viii) War is preventable and that aggression by one state would be countered by collective action, embodied in a "league of nations".

Application of Liberal Theory to the Study: States emerged basically for the maintenance of security and peace. When ascribed to the state, the unique feature of sovereignty, what is implied, is that both internal and external security, stability, and peace are the concern of the state. Nigerian foreign policymakers realized the imperative of peace at all levels when they factored global peace support within the middle-range objectives of their foreign policy. Purely from the liberal and neoliberal assumption that human nature is good and that this innate goodness

makes societal progress possible, the Nigerian state has pursued its foreign policy in intra and interstate peace from the liberal prescriptions.

Nigeria's policy on global peace support, therefore, revolves around the basic assumptions of the liberal/neoliberal scholars, particularly, the notion that international anarchy can be overcome through some kind of collective action, that war is preventable and that aggression by one state would be countered by collective action embodied in a "league of nations". Nigeria's faith and absolute involvement in global peace support operations on the platform of international organizations such as the United Nations Organization, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS/ECOMOG) attests to how committed she is to the global peace project.

Clarification of concepts

Peacekeeping:

The term peace has its origin from the Latin word "Pax" and French "Pars" both mean peace, armistice, truce, harmony, amity, calm, and quiet.⁶ Peace could simply mean freedom from war, hostilities, strife, dissension, and civil commotion. It connotes a state of tranquility and quietness. In this study, peace is conceptualized as "the condition that exists when nations or other groups are not fighting; a period free from war, hostilities, strife, dissension, and civil commotion".⁷ The term peacekeeping has undergone some modifications in its conceptualization since the UN introduced it. Peacekeeping is an adaptation of the provisions of Chapter 1, Article 2 of the UN Charter, which empowers organizations with the jurisdiction to work towards a conflict-free world. The UN defines peacekeeping operation as: "An operation involving military-personnel but without the enforcement of powers, established by the UN to help maintain or restore peace in areas of conflict."⁸

The concept of peacekeeping was developed by the United Nations at the start of the Cold War in the late 1940s because of the unworkability of the original collective security system envisaged by the organization and the increasing disagreement among the major powers. It is, therefore, safe to say that Peace-Keeping Operations are essentially practical mechanisms developed by the United Nations to contain and control armed conflicts and to facilitate their resolution by peaceful means. As a mechanism for controlling inter-state conflict, peacekeeping has thus become an important instrument that the United Nations utilizes to exercise its vital role of maintaining international peace and security. Peace-keeping can, therefore, be rightly called "The Invention of the United Nations".⁹

Agwu observed that peacekeeping consists essentially of observer missions and lightly armed forces monitoring the cease-fire, operating in an essentially static mode with the consent of the parties involved.¹⁰ Dokubo further observed that peacekeeping in its traditional sense, meant conflict containment and it adopted the form of neutral outside assistance to mediate and encourage belligerent parties to disengage.¹¹

National Interest:

The term national interest is perhaps one of the most controversial concepts in international relations. This is because of the diverse interpretations and misinterpretations of the concept by analysts and practitioners as well as decision-makers all over the world. Morgenthau observed that "as long as the world is politically organized into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in politics".¹² However, Ojo and Sesay have argued that there is nothing like the national interest of a state, that the national interest is nothing more and nothing less than what policy elites, at the time say it is. Shafritz defines national interest as "those policy aims identified as the special concerns of a given nation".¹³ To Sarkesian, "national interests are those conditions or circumstances that contribute to the well-being of a nation, as measured against the irreducible also for which the nation is formed".¹⁴ Such disagreement is evident in some definitions offered by other scholars on the concept of national interest. The most common objectives are maintaining good relations with other countries, protecting of ideology, and welfare of people, and enhancement of national prestige and power. Each state defines its objectives to suit its national interests.

Seabury explained that the idea of national interest may refer to some ideal set of purposes that a nation should seek to realize in the conduct of its foreign relations. He further stated that a descriptive meaning of national interest presupposes it to be those purposes that the nation, through its leadership, appears to pursue persistently through time. Seabury argued that national interest is what foreign policymakers say it is.¹⁵ From this definition, it could be inferred that every state has in its foreign policy, a set of goals which it aspires to promote with other states in the international system. It can be adduced that the foreign policy of any state should be seen to reflect such identifiable goals.

For Morgenthau, "the national interest of a peace-loving nation can only be defined in terms of national security, and national security must be defined as the integrity of the national territory and of its institutions".¹⁶

Mohammed shares this opinion when he avers that "the concept of national interest bears relevance to our evaluation of national security because national security measures are primarily intended to safeguard national interest".¹⁷ These two definitions emphasize the linkage between national interest and national security.

Frankel offers a definition of the concept from 3 analytical dimensions. He called them the aspirational, the operational, and the polemic. According to him, at the aspirational level, the concept refers to the vision of the good life, to some ideal set of goals, which the state would like to realize if these were possible". At the operational level, Frankel argues that national interest means the total of interests and policies pursued. Lastly, at the polemic level, the concept refers to the use of the term political argument in real life, to explain, evaluate, rationalize, or criticize international behavior.¹⁸

Suffice it to say therefore that every country, no matter how powerful or weak, has a variety of *interests* and objectives which it seeks to promote or achieve at any time in relation to those of other members of the international system. These interests are divided into core, secondary, and general. Kwankwaso sums it up by saying that national interest could basically be categorized into three: vital, strategic, and peripheral.¹⁹

Vital Interest: Vital interest concerns the preservation of core values and the nation's survival. Vital interest is unique to the sphere of international politics and is usually defined by two characteristics. The first characteristic is that vital interest is one for which the country is unwilling to compromise. The second characteristic is that it is one over which the nation would go to war. Vital interest is survival (survival of a state), with an acceptable degree of independence, territorial integrity, traditional lifestyles, fundamental institutions, values, and honors intact.²⁰ Concerning vital interest, Nigeria went to war in 1967 with the seceding Biafra, to preserve the territory and integrity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Strategic Interests: These refer to those interests in the nation's strategic environment that are considered important enough but are less than vital. Regional security, combating terrorism, and other transnational crimes all fall into this category. The defense of these interests will enhance the protection of Nigeria's vital interests.

Peripheral Interest: Interests that are considered peripheral relate to a country's obligation to the international community as a member of the comity of nations. It is in keeping with the demands of this category of interests that Nigeria has continued to act in support of international peace and security duties under the auspices of the UN, and regional and sub-regional bodies such as the AU and ECOWAS respectively.²¹ The definitions provided by various authors justify the claim that "there is as yet no universally acceptable single definition of what constitutes the national interest of a state".²²

Peace Operations:

The term peace-support operations encompasses a very wide range of both civilian and military measures to strengthen peace, halt armed conflicts, and prevent armed conflicts from reigniting.²³ Gow and Dandeecker used the term PSOs to emphasize the main characteristic that distinguishes traditional peacekeeping from the types of operations undertaken in the 1990s. They further explained that PSOs fit the concept of operations of ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone in which ECOMOG strived to reconcile the operational need for a broadly consensual environment, with the need in certain circumstances to ensure compliance through the use of enforcement measures, especially in situations where they are lower level of consent than would be expected in a traditional UN PKOs.²⁴

Adeshina describes PSOs as a "category of operations that utilizes military and civilian agencies to address various functions such as economic, political and social which traditional peacekeeping would not."²⁵ Mackinlay explains that PSO may include diplomatic actions, traditional peacekeeping, and the more forceful military actions required to establish peaceful conditions. In this context, a multinational response comprises several elements including humanitarian, military, civil administration, infrastructure development agencies and teams, and political negotiations.²⁶

From the definitions above, PSOs capture the interdisciplinary aspect between military and civilian actors in efforts to strengthen peace and prevent or halt an ongoing conflict. For this study, the definition of PSOs adopted describes PSOs as the activities of all military and civilian organizations assigned to restore peace, prevent conflict

from reoccurring, and relieve human suffering. The concept of PSOs often includes peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding. This definition of PSO is adopted for Peace Forces.

Nigeria's National Interest

The foreign policy of any given country is primarily concerned with promoting and protecting that country's national interest within the community of nations. It appears difficult to identify Nigeria's conception of national interest since its independence.

According to Eze, "While it is difficult to define the national interest of Nigeria, it is even more difficult to redefine it because of the variegated diplomatic permutations and ideologies Nigeria adopted over the years. Some foreign policy experts believe that Nigeria has no clear-cut political ideology and national interest. Part of the policy facilitations is attributable to the fact that foreign policy is inextricably linked to its domestic policy"²⁷ The seeming reason for the foregoing observation is that since independence, Nigeria's national interest has more often than not, been defined by the executive arm of government dominated by petty bourgeoisie in alliance with comprador elite.

Generally, one may not be wrong to say that the process of the formulation and/or conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy post-independence is dominated by the Prime Minister/President or the Head of State relying on the advice of the foreign affairs ministry and other relevant arms of the Federal bureaucracy. Essentially, the trends in Nigeria's foreign policy indicating its national interest have not been very stable over time; nevertheless, it has always assumed the minimal core elements of national interest viz: protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity including the security of the country.

Since Nigeria's independence, one may rightly assert that it was only on three occasions that members of NGOs, International Relations experts, and representatives of the organized private sector were formally involved in the process of defining Nigeria's national interest. They were so involved in 1961, 1986, and 1988.

Relationship between National Interests and Peace Support Operations

The pursuit of national interests and the realization of foreign policy objectives are among many reasons that have been advanced for the increasing participation by nation-states in Peace Support Operations. Okoosi-Simbine describes the basis of Peace Support Operations and concludes that apart from nations participating in peacekeeping as inputs to conflict prevention, management, and resolution, in the search for international peace and security, they also use peacekeeping opportunities to pursue self-centered or sustaining goals.²⁸ She further explains that nations see and apply peacekeeping as an instrument of foreign policy execution and pursuit.

Hence, while participating in peacekeeping, some states also use the opportunities offered by such participation to promote their national interest. This may be in the form of gaining international recognition, respect, or legitimacy all of which are crucial in diplomacy, influencing the domestic policies and politics of other nations; and promoting an ideology as the USA did in the UN-sponsored peacekeeping in the Congo between 1960 and 1964 in her effort to stall the spread of communism in Africa.²⁹ In essence, national interests dictate largely a nation's participation in Peace Support Operations. The interview with Professor Euka offers expert insights into the complexities and challenges of Nigeria's peacekeeping efforts and national interest. He further pointed out in his books where valuable recommendations were made which highlighted some driving factors behind Nigeria's involvement and national interest considerations that shape its contributions³⁰.

Nigeria's Participation in Peace Support Operations

Nigeria, on 1st October 1960, became independent and an actor within the international system, which was divided into two hostile blocs namely; the East and West. Thus, at independence, Nigeria was faced not only with the challenges of nation-building and development but also the dilemma of how to help bring order to a chaotic world. However, as a non-aligned country during the Cold War years, Nigeria maintained a neutral position which made her a dependable mediator and counted participant in forces raised to maintain peace in conflict zones.³¹

The UN Charter made adequate provisions in Chapter VII, Articles 39-50 for the maintenance of international peace and security. In addition, Chapter VIII, Articles 52-54 also provided for Regional Arrangements whereby regional organizations such as the AU (formerly OAU) as well as sub-regional bodies like ECOWAS, can mobilize resources to mount peace support missions. Nations are also free to engage in bilateral arrangements for the same purpose, and these three arrangements have served as the key strategies for maintaining international peace and security since the end of the Second World War and the formation of the United Nations in 1945.

Since Nigeria became independent, its troops and diplomats have been involved in peacekeeping or peace support operations in many countries. Most of these have been at the initiative of the UN, but in furtherance of the Nation's African policy and indeed a foreign policy that has Africa as its centerpiece, several operations have been under the auspices of the OAU now AU, ECOWAS, and some bilateral arrangements.

Nigeria's Participation in Global Peace Support Operations

Out of a total of 51 UN peace missions around the world, Nigeria has participated in over 25 from 1960 - 2023. In addition to these, Nigeria has also participated in 3 OAU/AU, 3 ECOWAS, and 2 bilateral peace missions.³² Till date, Nigeria has contributed over 130,000 troops and produced 18 Force Commanders (FC)/Chief Military Observers (CMO).³³ For ease of reference, this study groups Nigeria's participation in PSOs into 4 categories namely; UN, OAU/AU, ECOWAS, and bilateral. These will be discussed in succeeding paragraphs with a view to identifying the national interest element in Nigeria's participation.

UN Peace Support Operations: Nigeria's first participation in PKOs was in Congo from 1960 to 1964. Maj Gen JIU Aguiyi-Ironsi in January 1964 was appointed Force Commander of UNUC and he became the first African Commander of a UN Peacekeeping Force. Thereafter, Nigeria has participated in 24 UN PSOs. Nigeria's participation in these PSOs is predicated on her membership of the UN for the maintenance of global peace and security as enunciated by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as Nigeria's Foreign Policy. However, Nigeria's participation in these operations has brought her to the limelight and also made her relevant in the international arena, especially in global peace efforts.

OAU/AU Peace Support Operations: The Chad operation in 1981-1982 was the first Peacekeeping mission to be sponsored by the OAU. Nigeria's Maj Gen Geoffrey Ejiga was the Force Commander. Nigeria had the largest contingent and burden in terms of the cost of the operation. Despite the sad way the Chadian peace mission ended, it showed that the OAU/AU can mount a peace force in Africa. Nigeria's participation in these operations is informed by her membership of OAU now AU for the maintenance of regional peace and security under the Constitution. Furthermore, the nation's foreign policy that has Africa as its centerpiece is another reason among others.

ECOWAS Peace Support Operations: Nigeria's initiative at the formation of ECOWAS and ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) as a peace support apparatus was the first of its kind organized by a sub-regional body in the African continent. The success story of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG force at Peace Enforcement, Peacekeeping, and Peace Building in Liberia and Sierra Leone was acclaimed and applauded worldwide. This ECOMOG type of operation has come to be accepted by the UN and has set the pace for what is today referred to as Peace Support Operations. The Peace Enforcement aspect of this type of operation was amply demonstrated by the American-led NATO Forces in Bosnia, Yugoslavia. Initially, some analysts believed that Nigeria's involvement in these operations was predicated on the leaders/regime interest of Gen I Babangida and Gen S Abacha in Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. Others felt Nigeria's "Big Brother" syndrome was once more at play in the sub-region. Following the crisis generated by the decision of President Abdullahi Wade to contest for a Third Term in the 2012 presidential election in Senegal, former president Obasanjo mediated between Wade and the different opposition. This was crucial in helping dissipate the tension that was piling up as the country moved towards presidential elections. In due course, Nigeria realized that, apart from the maintenance of sub-regional peace and security and the attendant spillover effects, the nation was beginning to realize her aspirational interest of being a dominant power in the sub-region, a power in the African continent and her quest for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council in retrospect. Nigeria is currently using this medium to appeal to the World Bank through the UN for debt cancellation as a stabilization force in the region.

Bilateral Peace Support Operations: Nigeria has participated in 2 PSOs at a bilateral level. These are the operations in Tanzania in 1964 and the Chad operation in 1978. While the Tanzanian PSOs were at the invitation of that government, the Chadian PSOs were in the nation's interest due to the likely spillover effects of a contiguous country.

Impact of Peace Support Operations on Nigeria and Her Armed Forces

The performance of Nigeria and her Armed Forces in PSOs varied widely. Despite the acclaimed successes it recorded in ECOMOG and some of the UN-sponsored operations, there are remarkably diverse impacts these operations have had on the Armed Forces in general and the nation in particular. These are categorized into positive and negative impacts.

Positive Impact

Hegemonic Status: From 1960 to date, Nigeria's contribution to international peace and security has placed her on a higher plane in world affairs. Nigeria's active participation in PSOs has enhanced her global rating in African affairs. Participation in PSOs in both Liberia and Sierra Leone tended to have conferred the status of a de facto regional hegemon on the country. As a result of these peace operations and the attendant successes recorded, the possibility of Nigeria being a regional power is becoming more realistic.³⁴ It is on this premise that, some analysts believe that Nigeria has an edge over other interested African nations in the bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, to represent Africa. It is now fashionable for many countries in crisis within the continent to turn to Nigeria for help than go elsewhere. The case of Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Sao Tome and Principe and Sudan are recent instructive examples.

Enhanced Nationalism and Patriotism: A remarkable impact of the Nigerian Armed Forces participation in PSOs is in the area of nationalism. The soldiers after fighting side by side with troops from other participating countries were able to compare their own weaknesses and strengths with that of the contingents from other countries. The opportunities provided by these operations made Nigerian soldiers more aware of the need for self-realization to be both nationalistic and patriotic.

Enhanced Institutional Respect: Nigeria's participation in PSOs has enhanced the rating of her Armed Forces. This is exemplified in the number of Nigerian Army Officers that have been appointed UN Force Commanders from Maj Gen J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi to Lt. Gen JO Owonibi. The Nigerian Military has creditably discharged its duties abroad. For now, Nigeria is always expected to offer leadership anywhere in Africa that requires PSOs.

Exposure: Participation in PSOs spanning many years has exposed the Nigerian Military personnel considerably. Participating troops had the opportunity to leave the Nigerian environment and see the world, an experience only a few privileged officers had hitherto enjoyed. Some were able to acquire the languages and cultures of those countries where they served thus raising their level of social mobilization.

Training: One very important impact of Nigerian Armed Force participation in PSOs is its higher level of training. In the absence of war, participation in PSOs especially peace-enforcement has provided great opportunities for the Armed Forces to train its personnel on how to fight in real combat. The challenges in the mission area provide opportunities for more practical experiences of soldiering. In an era in which military hardware is being improved through testing daily, PSO deployments also serve to test the familiarity of Nigerian troops with modern weapons.³⁵ The Liberian and Sierra Leonean operations are equal to or are comparable with low-intensity to medium-intensity operations in all ramifications. As it is the proud desire of every officer and soldier to be battle-tested, these rare opportunities were made readily available sometimes through participation in PSOs. The ECOMOG operations, which transformed from peacekeeping to peace enforcement, were clear examples.

Performance: The impact of Nigeria's participation in PSOs over the years has been diverse ranging from positive to negative. However, her leadership role in the ECOMOG operations and the success recorded in the sub-region is unarguably a remarkable achievement that was recognized and applauded worldwide.

Negative Impact

Impact on the Economy: Nigeria's participation in PSOs especially in the sub-region and region had serious impact on her economy. By March 1998, Nigeria had spent over \$ 9 Billion US Dollars to ensure the maintenance of peace and security in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This is evident in the speech of President Obasanjo at the United Nations General Assembly in 1999. There he expressed that for too long the burden of preserving international peace and security in West Africa has been left almost entirely to a few states in the sub-region. Nigeria's continued burden in Sierra Leone is unacceptably draining Nigeria financially. Some analysts have estimated the cost to run into eight hundred billion naira while others believe it was by far more. Many analysts believe that the amount often quoted is grossly underestimated. It is difficult to estimate the actual amount of money Nigeria has spent on PSOs because of a lack of concrete government data. Eneanya corroborated this by arguing that among other pains, substantial commitments of human and material resources in conflict resolution and peacekeeping have not yielded any significant dividends in terms of investment opportunities for Nigeria in the countries that it helped.³⁶

Impact on Personnel and Equipment: Apart from the financial commitment particularly during regional and sub-regional operations, Nigeria's loss -in terms of personnel and equipment in these PSOs is very high. Due to poor documentation and operational planning problems, it is difficult to give an accurate account of these two important issues. However, the 2012 Tuareg insurrection in Mali, which has already led to a military coup against the elected government of President Ali Toure, and the carving out of Mali, the so-called Azawad Republic by

pro-AQIM. Tuareg Islamists have further complicated the security situation in the Sahel, creating still more complicated security problems for ECOWAS and putting Nigeria's personnel under a new kind of pressure.

Impact on Health: One of the very serious impacts resulting from Nigeria's involvement in PSOs is the exposure of her troops to dangerous diseases such as Gonorrhoea, syphilis, and HIV/AIDS. The soldiers infected with HIV/AIDS virus and sexually transmitted Diseases (STD) are many. As Adeshina noted, it is believed that the increase in HIV/AIDS cases in the Armed Forces is linked to the participation of her troops in PSOs.

Strategies for Enhancing Peace Support Operations

As Adeshina noted, PSOs are assuming a more prominent role in the Armed Forces especially in developing nations³⁷. This situation applies to Nigeria. For enhanced PSOs, the following strategies would need to be applied:

- A deliberate government policy on PSOs needs to be put in place like the USA, Ghana, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India with existing policies. There should also be the political will to equip and train the Armed Forces for PSOs as well as provide adequate logistics to enable all the possible gains in her participation to be derived.
- Formulation of a PSO doctrine as a strategy to enhance our participation. Nigeria has been participating in PSOs for years without doctrine.
- In furtherance of the current global emphasis on collective regional security mechanisms, ECOWAS has named 3 Centres of Excellence for PSOs in the sub-region. These are; Bamako-Mali at tactical level, Kofi Anan Centre for PSOs, Accra-Ghana at operational level and the National War College (NWC), Abuja-Nigeria at strategic level. Standardised Training Modules (STM) 1, 2 and 3 respectively have also been introduced to these centres. Although, Nigeria has gone ahead to establish STM 1 and 2 packages at Infantry Corps Centre and School (ICCS) and Command and Staff College (CSC) respectively to complement the training in Mali and Ghana, which is a positive development, there is need to provide adequate facilities to enhance PSO training at ICCS, CSC and NWC.
- There is a need to include National Interest in STMs 1 and 2 to enhance the knowledge and performance of officers of this category.
- There is a need to organize regular lectures and seminars like the UN-sponsored seminar on PSOs held in NWC in April 2005 as this will broaden the professional knowledge of participants in PSOs.
- There is the need for Nigeria to provide all that is necessary for wet-lease contracts with the UN during PSOs in order to maximize her gains during reimbursements like Ghana.
- Cost reimbursements from the UN on Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) need to be ploughed into the professional development of the armed forces like Ghana, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India.

Nigeria's Commitment to Peace Support Operations

Nigeria's commitment to PSOs has been done through various means and ways such as:

- Payment of her dues to all international organizations of which she is a member; part of which is used for PSOs.
- Contribution of contingents to UN, AU and ECOWAS PSOs.
- Demonstration of strong will and support for the principles of Peaceful settlement of disputes and good neighbourliness.
- Cooperation with other nations when called upon for bilateral PSOs arrangements.
- Training of military officers and men of other nations such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Tanzania where Nigeria operated.
- Providing seasoned Force Commanders for UN, AU and ECOWAS PSOs.
- Financing large percentages of PSOs carried out by ECOWAS and AU and,
- Contributing eminent persons for crucial negotiations, contacts and consultations organised by international bodies for resolving conflicts.

Conclusion

The broad objective of this study was to assess national interest and Nigeria's participation in PSOs. It set out with the following specific objectives: to examine how actively Nigeria has been involved in PSOs and why she was so involved, identify the advantages derivable from participation in PSOs, evaluate to what extent Nigeria has taken advantage of the possible gains in her participation and advance strategies for enhanced national interest and Nigeria's continued participation.

Nigeria's participation in many PSOs in different parts of the world has projected Nigeria's image in global peace efforts as a leading nation in Africa. This study inferred that the pursuit of national interests and the realization of foreign policy objectives are among the many reasons advanced by countries for their involvement in PSOs. It

also noted that, apart from nations participating in PSOs as inputs to conflict prevention, management, and resolution, they also use PSO opportunities to pursue self-centered or sustaining goals.

The study inferred that Nigeria's active participation in PSOs across the globe is a product of certain values such as aspirational, philosophical, moral, and altruistic convictions and beliefs not for the sake of stupendous wealth or the quest to engage the military away from home.

Nigeria's participation in PSOs has impacted the country, the armed forces, and the individual participants in diverse ways. The impact has been both positive and negative. Nigeria has expended huge human and material resources in support of international peace and security. These participations have made Nigeria relevant in the international arena and brought enhanced institutional respect for the armed forces. It has also taken its toll in terms of finance as well as introduced diseases such as HIV/AIDs, and STDs.

There are several advantages derivable by a country in participating in PSOs, such as international recognition, economic gains, and diplomatic and military advantages. Nigeria would do well to maximize these advantages as a leading peacekeeping nation in Africa in her national interest. The current partial or incidental advantages accruing are rather fall-outs not as a result of well-programmed and articulated interventions.

This study therefore submits that, to a large extent, national interest has been the overwhelming reason for Nigeria's participation in PSOs, followed by the leader's interest which is usually married with the national or regime interest. Nigeria has only partially taken advantage of its participation in PSOs and this demands that, a deliberate government policy with comprehensive Long-Term Strategic Objectives be advanced to maximize her advantage in consonance with her huge investments and loss of troops and equipment. There is also the need for officers at both tactical and operational levels and to some extent soldiers be well informed of the national interest except on issues classified as "Top Secret" as this will enhance knowledge and performance in operations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Nigeria should continue to participate actively- in PSOs as the advantages and gains outweigh the negative impacts.
- Government should make and implement a deliberate government policy with focused Long-Term Strategic Objectives outside the UN, AU, and ECOWAS mandates that provide direction to Nigeria's participation in PSOs.
- Government should take full advantage of Nigeria's participation by ensuring that commensurate economic, military, and diplomatic advantage accrues to Nigeria from her participation in PSOs. Effective coordination by both government and the armed forces would maximize such benefits.
- Government should ensure that national interest as opposed to regime or leader's interest dictates the country's participation in PSOs.
- Government should be proactive in its policy towards those involved in PSOs and ensure that they are properly taken care of when the return especially those affected negatively to boost the morale of others.

Endnotes

1. W. T. Gbor, (ed) *The Nigerian Army in Global Security*, Lagos, Nigeria: Magavons West African Ltd, 2004, 9.
2. Gbor, (ed) *The Nigerian Army...* 37
3. Rabi Musa Kwankwaso "National Defence Objectives" lecture delivered, by the Honourable Minister of Defence to Participants of Course 13NWCon4Jan05, 35.
4. K. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1999
5. R. Axelrod and O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions", In *Cooperation Under Anarchy* K. Oye.(ed); Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986
6. P. Hanks, *Encyclopedic World Dictionary*.
7. *The New Webster's Dictionary of English Language International Edition*. Lexicon International Publishers Guild Group New York, New York 738
8. United Nations, *The Blue Helmets: A Review of UN Peace-Keeping*, New York: UN Publications, 1985, 3.
9. L. Onoja, *Peacekeeping and International Security in a Changing World*, Jos, Plateau State: Mono Expressions Publishers, 1996, 2.
10. F. A., Agwu, *World Peace through World Law: The Dilemma of the United Nations Security Council*, Ibadan: University Press Plc,

11. C. Dokubo, "Nigeria's International Peacekeeping and Peace Building Efforts in Africa, 1960 – 2005," in Bola A.A. (eds) *Nigeria and the United Nations Security Council*, Vantage Publishers, 2005
12. Hans J Morgenthau, "Another Great Debate: The National Interest of United States", in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXVI, No 4 December 1952
13. Jay M. Shafritz, *The Dorsav Dictionary of American Government and Policies*, Chicago, Illinois: The Dorsay Press, 1988, 356 - 366.
14. S. C. Sarkesian, *US National Security, Policy Makers, Processes and Politics* Quoted in Ode Jon "Nigeria's Grand Strategy: Retrospect and Prospects" NWC, Abuja, Nigeria. Research Project 2003, unpublished.
15. Paul Seabury, quoted in KJ Hosti, *International Politics a Framework for Analysis* 3rd edition New Jersey: Prentice - Hall Inc, 1997, 139.
16. Hans J Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York: Alfred A Knopf 1973, 553.
17. Abdullahi Mohammed, "Meeting the Current Challenges of National Security", Lecture delivered by the National Security Adviser to Participants of course 7, National War College, Abuja, 11 Jan 1999. 3.
18. Joseph - Frankel, *Contemporary International Theory and the Behaviour of States*. London: Oxford University Press, 1973, 78.
19. Rabi Musa Kwankwaso "National Defence Objectives" lecture delivered, by the Honourable Minister of Defence to Participants of Course 13NWCon4Jan05, 35.
20. Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow, Quoted by JON ODE, *Making strategy: An Introduction to National Security Process and Problems*, Alabama: Air University Press Maxwell Air force Base, 1988, 28.
21. Kwankwaso, "National Defence Policy... 14
22. Olusola Ojo and Amadu Sesay, *Concepts in International Relations* Lagos, Nigeria: JAD Publishers, 1988, 58
23. James Gow and Christopher Dandeecker, "Peace Support Operations: Tie Problem of Legitimacy" *The World Today*, August - September 1995.
24. Gow and Dandeecker, "Peace Support Operations... 2
25. R. A. Adeshina "Impact of Peace Support Operations on Nigerian Army 1960 - 2004" in John WT Gbor(ed) *The Nigerian Army in Global Security*, 252-253.
26. Mackinlay (ed) "A Guide to Peace Support Operations... 2
27. Michael Onyebuchi Eze, "Post-Colonial Displacements", *The Politics of History in contemporary Africa*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 81. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230110045_3
28. P. Hanks, *Encyclopedic World Dictionary*.
29. Mackinlay (ed) "A Guide to Peace Support Operations... 2
30. Chuka Euka, University Lecturer, Interviewed at Awka, 4th May, 2023.
31. C. A. Garuba, (ed) *International Peace and Security: The Nigerian Contribution*, Abuja: National War College, 1997, 1.
32. Gbor, "A Worthy Contribution to World Peace... 267.
33. Hassan, Brig. Gen., interviewed at Abuja, 11th April, 2021.
34. Adeshina "Impact of Peace Support Operations on Nigerian Army...261
35. Hassan, interview.
36. Euka, Chuka, *Nigeria's Peace Roles in African Conflicts: The Promptings, Pluses, and Pains*, Awka: Arise and Shine Press, 2017.
37. Adeshina "Impact of Peace Support Operations on Nigerian Army...251