

Insecurity and its Impact on Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives

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Introduction

Nigeria has been facing unprecedented security challenges over the past decades, ranging from criminalities such as hostage-taking, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping for ransom, to ethno-religious religious threats in forms of riots, demonstrations, agitations for resource control by the Niger Delta militants, herdsmen attacks and violent extremism epitomised by in the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency that is on-going in the North Eastern part of the country. The growing trend of insecurity expectedly poses a serious challenge to the economic development as it scares away foreign direct investment with the attendant problems of poverty, unemployment, electoral malpractices, corruption, Economic marginalization, governance failures that result in a circle of violence (Ijide, 2020, Bakut, 2021). Even though, the world treats Nigeria as a regional and sub-regional leader, and listens to her opinions on Africa and even world issues, there is a contradiction; Nigeria is an underperformer in domestic affairs with representation in the international fora and poorly coordinated position on many issues due to clumsiness in the nation's intervention in security matters (Zabadi, 2011 cited in Alli 2012).

These security crisis issues are premised on clear comprehension of the dynamic of internal and global security challenges of which Nigeria is not an exception. In Nigeria, there has been increasing wave of insecurity and crisis in recent times which have continued to threaten the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity. While, the common cause of these threats center on the strategic perspective which see the emergence of terrorism and its related threats as logical extension of the failure of governance. Nigeria is considered a key power in Africa, not only because of its size, but because of its political and economic roles on the continent, however, it faces serious socio-economic and

security challenges of which pose threats to state and regional stability (Mustapha, 2020).

Nigeria's foreign policy has its history wrapped up in the preparations of the country for eventual independence in 1960. The first step towards its birth was the agreement reached with Nigerian Nationalists that the country will become an independent nation on 1st October, 1960 (Saliu, 2016). Given its size, population and vast natural resources endowment, Nigeria was perceived at independence from colonial rule as a country destined to play crucial roles for progress and development throughout the world and a natural leader on the African continent. Nigeria has come a long way in international relations, from the immediate post-independence era of the early 1960's when US President Lyndon B. Johnson kept confusing Nigeria with Algeria (Alkali, 2003 cited in Jega 2010).

The geo-strategic location of Nigeria also plays a role in defining the nation's security focus, situated in a region of comparatively much smaller and weaker states, in terms of size human and material resources. Nigeria's security focus could be said to have been pre-determined. Hence, successful Nigerian leaders have come to accept that the nation has geo-strategic interest that has to do with the political instability within some of the neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad, Benin and Togo and increasingly in the Gulf of Guinea. This has made Nigeria to invest in Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) along with countries like Chad and Niger and has been pushing to involve even a reluctant Cameroon that is bordering the country to the East (Alli. 2012).

The long-recognized link between the domestic processes and the conduct of foreign policy goes a long way to explain Nigeria's growing frustration in its actualisation of its coveted leadership role in Africa. Weak economic and political structures, ineffective institutions and processes and bad governance characterized by quarrelsome, inept, corrupt public officers. Majority of citizen's lack of prosperity have affected Nigeria's appreciation of and support for their country's worthy endeavours in foreign policy and global politics due to domestic instability and insecurity (Jega, 2010). Nigeria is a key regional player in West Africa, it accounts for about half of West Africa's population with approximately 202 million people and one of the largest populations of youth in world (World Bank, 2023). Consequent upon this, the paper is aimed at evaluating the challenges posed by insecurity and how it has impacted on the attainment of Nigerian Foreign Policy objectives.

Conceptual Clarification

The Concept of Foreign Policy

Fafowora (2011) noted that foreign policy deals with the planned course of action and strategies that are devised by a country's decision makers that seeks to manipulate actors in the international system with the goal of achieving national interests. According to Adeniran (2007), Foreign Policy consists of three elements; one is the overall orientation and policy intentions of a particular country toward

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another. The second element is the objective that a country seeks to achieve in her relations or dealings with other countries. The third element of foreign policy as highlighted by Adeniran is the means for achieving that particular objective.

To Akuma & Nnaji (2021) Foreign policy is a necessary instrument of states in their relationships in exchange and dealings with each other in the international arena. Foreign Policy can also be seen as a set of intended actions by nation with regards to its diplomatic relationship with other countries. Foreign Policy is a set of decisions and proposal of actions meant to achieve goals, often national goals within the international system following certain principles and utilizing of strategies. It also consists of goals and objectives principles and doctrines, strategies and tactics of an actor operating within the international system (Asobie, 2017).

Concept of Insecurity

Achumba et al (2013) see insecurity from two perspectives; firstly, insecurity is the state of being open to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Also insecurity is also seen as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. Beland (2007) also defines insecurity as the state of fear anxiety, stemming from a concrete. or alleged lack of protection. Karsperson (2003) perceived sources of insecurity as collective problems affecting a significant segment of the population.

According to Ewetan, (2014), insecurity means absence of safety, hazard, and uncertainty, lack of protection and lack of safety. To Beland (2005), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection.

Methodology

The study employed Documentary Research which involves the utilisation of existing data collected for the purpose of prior study, in order to pursue interest which is distinct from the original work. It involves techniques used to categorise, investigate, interpret, and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents whether in the private or public domain, thus it relied on journals, newspapers, textbooks, official documents, internet materials etc.

Theoretical Framework

The subject matter under discussion is very broad topic that cannot be explained by a single theory of international relations. This paper adopts the Realist paradigm and Decision-Making Approach in discussing the paper. The Realist believed that the state is a homogenous and a rational actor in the international system. This means that the state is pre-occupied with maximising its powers, acquiring powers, using power and demonstrating powers as the means of ensuring its security. Although, the realist perspective regards the state as the key Actor in the international system, they argued that it is a statesman who personifies the state (Asobie, 2017). Also, the most distinguished theorist of the realist persuasion is

Morgenthau (1973), just like others in his realist persuasion argues that a disadvantaged State in terms of the distribution of power will tend to keep and sustain the power equilibrium so as to make change impossible. He also postulated that “no nation can have a true guide as to what it must do and what it needs to do in foreign policy without accepting national interest as that guide”. To the realists like Morgenthau, National interest broadly conceived, as a guide to the formation of foreign policy. This also corroborated with the views of former President Babangida in 1986, who says Nigeria’s National Interests can be identified as predicted on the nation’s military, economic, political and social security. Anything that will enhance the capacity of Nigerians to defend their national security must be seeing as being in their national interest (Akinbobola, 1999).

Literature Review

A Recapitulation of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy

Nigeria has become an important player in international relations, an assumed potential leader of Africa, and a major contributor to international peacekeeping and peace building operations, both regionally and globally. Given its size, population, and vast natural resources endowment, Nigeria was perceived at independence from colonial rule as a country destined to play crucial roles for progress and development throughout the world and a natural leader on the African continent (Jega, 2010). According to Asobie (2010) the first half of a century of Nigeria’s diplomatic history may be divided into five distinct periods. The first period, 1960-1974, may be characterized as the *Age of innocence*. The second, 1975-1984, was the Era of Awakening. The Third, 1985-1992, was the Epoch of Realism. The Fourth 1993-1998, was the Dark Age, and the fifth, 1999-2010 may be described as The Renaissance.

Nigeria’s foreign policy has its history wrapped up in the preparations of the country for eventual independence in 1960. The first step towards its birth was the agreement reached with the Nigerian nationalists that the country would become an independent nation in 1960. This was followed with the creation of a unit in the office of the Prime Minister saddled with the responsibility of handling Nigeria’s external relations. The recruitment of the first batch of Foreign Service Personnel through competitive processes and procedures marked the official beginning of Nigerian foreign policy even before the attainment of independence. In 1959, another batch of Foreign Services Personnel was recruited and, together with the first batch, were given diplomatic trainings in British diplomatic posts across the globe. Moreover, they were expected to reflect the British overall diplomatic outlook. Whoever was an enemy of Britain had to be avoided by Nigeria in the conduct of her foreign policy (Garba, 1987 cited in Saliu, 2016). Nigeria’s foreign policy commenced on a moderate level at independence from the British, the country maintained cordial relations with Britain, the erstwhile colonial master. Significantly, the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa adopted a conservative, pro-Western policy, that even though he embraced the policy of non-

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alignment, there was no firm commitment by his government towards it (Akinboye, 1999).

Successive Nigerian government, especially under military rule, have striven to assume or claim a leadership position through foreign policy declarations and actions and other modes of international engagements. This commenced with General Yakubu Gowon's drive for regional integration and key role in the formation of the Economics Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) increased oil revenues enabled Nigeria's more generous foreign policy undertakings, proactive engagements, and the emergence of hegemonic ambitions. From the 1980s, however, Nigeria's foreign policy concerns shifted to preoccupation with peacekeeping at the sub regional level and economic diplomacy at the international level. Increased civil strife and military conflicts in the West African sub region, especially in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d' Ivoire, gave rise to concerns with national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and a possible spill over effect to the rest of the countries in the sub region. Good neighbourliness was threatened, and there were fears of then destabilising implications of massive inflows of refugees from war-torn areas in the sub-region. The pursuits of economic diplomacy as an additional plank of Nigeria's foreign policy was aimed at cushioning the damaging impact of the economic crises that engulfed Nigeria in the 1980s and at assuaging the consequences of the structural adjustment measures introduced to contain the crises. Foreign policy was redirected from a predominantly political focus to an economic one in which foreign policy instrument were used to advance domestic economic development objectives (Jega, 2010). The second stanza of the Obasanjo Government distinguished itself in injecting more intellectual stuff into the concentric circles to emphasize the imperativeness of pursuing some concerns across the geographical boundaries delineated by a circle (Asobie, 2007; Saliu, 2016).

Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives: A Reappraisal and Re-Evaluation

According to Akinboye, (1999) the objectives of Nigeria's foreign have, since the country attainment of nationhood in 1960, have been broadly spelt out by successive administrations. Addressing the parliament on August 20, 1960, the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa identified certain fundamental objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy; the most prominent and on which other are anchored being "the promotion of the national interest of the federation of its citizens." That at the inception of the Murtala/Obasanjo regime in 1975 the broad stand of Nigeria's National interest was clearly addressed. The Adedeji commission that was set up by General Murtala Mohammed to examine Nigeria's foreign policy in all its ramifications made a number of recommendations that had far reaching effects on Nigeria's external relations. Based on the commission's report General Obasanjo, in June 1976 identified the elements of the national interest which also constitute the objectives of the country's foreign policy as follows:

- the defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity;

- the creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in African and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time, foster national self – reliance and rapid economic development;
- The promotion of equality and self-reliance in African and the rest of the developing world;
- The promotion and the defence of justice and respect for human dignity especially the dignity of the black men, the defence and promotion of world peace.

About six principles were announced to propel Nigerian foreign policy into action and guide the achievement of the foreign policy objectives of the country. Prominent among the principles are: African centre-piece, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, legal equality of states, non-alignment, preference for peaceful means in resolving international conflicts and multilateralism (Saliu, 1999; Gambari, 2008).

To Adigbuo (2019), Nigeria’s foreign policy particularly after its civil crisis, has been African-centered. The objectives have been to ensure the promotion of integration and development of Africa. To realise the goal of its foreign policy, calculations of national security and territorial integrity, African Security peace and unity played a major role.

Nigeria’s 4-D Foreign Policy Doctrine under Tinubu’s Administration

According to Odoh (2023) the unveiled “4D Foreign Policy” of the Federal government will provide a new concept which will anchored on Democracy, Development, Demography and Diaspora. That Nigeria depends on this new line of vision to actualise its objectives and benefit from its foreign policy engagements, and to present a unique ambiance crystallising the cultural heritage values and aspirations of the people of Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world, a people bound by common history and diverse cultures yet united for development, peace, progress and prosperity. That Nigeria has accepted democracy as a form of government and is working hard to entrench its values, which guarantees freedom, human rights and the rule of law and that Nigeria is keen on strengthening democracy in Africa and the world at large. On Development, as opined by Salau (2023) that the Federal government affirmed the importance of working to enhance Nigerian and African development, in order to halt the circle of dependency which is against the interest of Africa. On the Third D, the Tinubu administration is posed to use the country’s demographic advantage to harness its human capital resources for development. Nigerian diaspora community plays a major role in the development of the country as their remittances had become a significant contributor to Nigeria’s economic growth and development as captured on the Fourth D (Diaspora).

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Major Insecurity Problems in Nigeria

According to Vincent & Dennis (2022), the imposition of the sit at home order on the entire South East geopolitical zone by the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, to protest over the arrest and detention of its leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu by the Nigerian government, markets, schools, transportation, banks and government offices are forced to be under lock on Mondays. He opined that if there is a public holiday, the number of days for transacting business is further reduced in the region. The resultant effect was arresting people and sometimes killing the defaulters. Indeed, the enforcement brought fears in the region, thereby forcing people to comply. Since then, the South East has become a ghost region. The gunmen have contributed in no small measure in destroying the economy of South East. Security personnel have increasingly become the target of Eastern Security Network (ESN). The daily horrific trending news emerging from the south-east states, where police and other men in uniform are being killed justifies the escalation of tension in the country.

However, the violent activities of IPOB have continued to become a source of fears and worries among the Northern traders and businessmen who haul their goods and services to the region. That trucks which carry perishable goods and domestic animals are increasingly becoming target of these urchins or vagabonds. It is on record that IPOB members have severally attacked and set ablaze many trucks belonging to the Northerners, (Ibrahim, 2022).

Modibbo (2021) stated that there are effects of Farmers-Herders Conflict on Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria. That the deadly conflicts between herdsmen and crop farmers have become one of the major insecurity problem in Nigeria only second to Boko-Haram imperil. The violent conflicts between the two groups have been manifesting in form of bloody clashes attacks and counter attacks. These bloody attacks and counter attacks have created social or relational implications and economic adverse effects such as: loss of human lives; displacement of persons; destruction of houses and properties etc.

According to Oluwole (2021) cited in (Okafor & Olalekan, 2022), the escalating violence in the North-Central Nigeria has deeply unsettled local economy. Agriculture, the mainstay of the region's economy has been badly hit. And as a result of the herder-farmer conflict, the Nigerian government loss an estimated \$13.7 billion in revenue annually and this has impacted negatively on the livelihoods of the nation.

Furthermore, the rate of insecurity has increases Nigeria's government financial commitment on security, reduces national (local) investment, decreases Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it has affected the production of goods and services, and reduces the country's capacity to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). According to Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP), Nigeria has suffered dastard economic loss as well as increasing budgetary allocation to security forces towards waging war against the terrorists in Nigeria. The IEP's Report revealed that Nigeria lost at least N8 trillion on security between January 2021 and June 2022

even as violence affected eight percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Gabriel, 2022). This also corroborates with the views of the World Bank (2023) on Nigeria, where a lot of people are facing poverty due to the global difficulties and insecurity across the northern region that are very challenging. Nigeria has trade protection that blocks market development. It has a dual exchange rate that is very expensive for the people, high inflation and lacks enough diversification of the economy to really make sufficient progress (Anaeto, 2023).

According to Abbas (2024) the World Bank has said, seven states across the North-west and North-East regions of the country may suffer food crisis due to the high levels of insecurity and armed conflicts that has reduced the standards of living across the regions. The bank in its latest Food Security report also stated it projected that most areas in West and Central Africa will remain minimally food insecure with some being categorised as stressed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC2). Nigeria (far north of Adamawa, Borno, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Yobe, Zamfara states) will be at crisis food security levels, mostly because of persistent insecurity and armed conflicts and deteriorating livelihoods.

Impacts of Insecurity on the Attainment Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives

Nigeria's security challenges have a lot of political implication in the relation of Nigeria with other countries in the international arena, as highlighted by Philip & Olalekan (2018), that insecurity has given Nigeria a bad image, that on his visit to President Goodluck Jonathan with the Delegation of Presidential Advisory Council on Foreign Relations, former Common Wealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku stated that unless Nigeria was able to tackle the preponderance of violence across the country its image on the global scene will continue to suffer.

The emergence of the terrorist or violent acts in Nigeria that are until now on the rise and are becoming a frequent faction has made Nigeria to lose all these respect and its relevance in the international arena. Obviously, no country in the international system will be willing to create a bilateral relation with a country that is widely believed to be faced with terrorist actions.

The enshrined in the foreign policy objective of Nigeria is Economic Diplomacy which is one of the core components of the Transformation Agenda under the Jonathan Administration, which is aimed at attracting investors from other countries. The rise in the security problem in the country has frustrated these set objectives because instability and violence has brought about balance of trade deficits especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. A very visible effect of one of the effects of terrorism on Nigeria's foreign policy is that most countries do view Nigeria as an unserious minded nation to establish an economic agreement with. Thus, most terrorist acts have often times been politicized and facts misleading by government officials for personal gains (Akolade, 2016).

On the Boko Haram menace, and its impact on Nigeria's foreign policy, to Omotuyi and Omotuyi (2020), after many years of brutal campaign of in Nigeria by the Jihadists Boko Haram sect, the international community formally directly

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intervened to put an end to the atrocious activities in Nigeria as well as around the Lake Chad Basin. They went further to say that two momentous issues were significant in the attention of Boko Haram generated globally, the mass abduction of the Chibok schools girls in their hostel in Northern Nigeria and the pledged of allegiance by the Nigerian terror organization to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), had implication for the global fight against Islamic extremism. That in spite of their decade-long engagement in Nigeria's counter-terrorism struggle, they have not succeeded in weakening Boko Haram terrorists' structures in the country and its transnational spread in the Lake Chad Region. Their interventions have more less continued have implications for Nigerian Foreign Relations. The fight against Boko Haram had also contributed in the occasional friction between Nigeria and the United States of America.

Saliu (2016) also opines that the costs of Boko Haram for Nigerian Foreign Policy can be viewed from both the internal and external environment (s) of the country. They have been generated by the patterns of the Boko Haram's activities and the responses by the state to the insurgency. In line with the linkage approach, the Boko Haram menace has affected the internal politics of Nigeria as well as her external pursuits.

Nigeria's role as a peacekeeper is also being threatened by the intractable Boko Haram phenomenon in the country. The suddenness and the drastic reduction in Nigeria's force level in the Mali operation cannot be divorced from the requirements of military operations to defeat the Boko Haram insurgency in the country. This thus raises questions on the level of preparedness of Nigeria in meeting her future security obligations outside her borders.

He also went further to say that the USA has, on occasions, interfered in the domestic affairs of Nigeria under the pretext of helping to resolve the Boko Haram crisis.

Also as highlighted by Charles Omole (2020), that there are political and economic consequences to the increase in the terrorist activities in Nigeria, as a National security threats that can have collateral impact on every other development index such as:

Disproportionate Defence Spending & Deepening Corruption at All Levels

However, terrorism activities have impacted on the disproportionate defence spending & deepening corruption at all levels. In responding to the increasing insecurity in Nigeria, the government has been allocating hundreds of billions of naira to defence and security-related expenditure. These are large sums of money that should have been going elsewhere in the economy, especially in the education and health sectors. The domestic economic impact of this exorbitant defence expenditure is further devalued as long as it is mostly foreign procurement-based. This is not helpful to the growth of the economy as vast sums of money are budgeted to the defence and security sector. For the year 2020 budget announced by the President, the Ministry of Defence alone has a budgeted recurrent and

capital expenditures of N778.59 billion and N99.87 billion, about \$2.16 billion and \$27.70 million, respectively (Central Bank of Nigeria (2020) while the Ministry of Police Affairs has an allocation of N395.83 billion. The office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) has N114.91 billion (BOF, 2019). If security votes of the states are added, the Nigerian security sector shall be the single most funded public sector (Ademola, 2020).

Possible National Isolation & Decrease in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Insecurity has also reduced the confidence of foreign investors in such a nation that has massive security challenges. Investor confidence has worsened. Particularly where there is weak and ineffective government response to the security challenges. He also went further to say that according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), FDI flows to Nigeria averaged \$5.3 billion annually from 2005-2007. But UNCTAD data shows FDI to Nigeria averaged \$3.3 billion from 2015-2019, a period that has been marked by heightened and widespread terrorism in the country.

Travel Advisories on Foreign Citizens in Nigeria over Possible Terror Attacks

The security warnings issued by United States of America (USA) and UK governments of their citizens of possible terror attacks in Nigeria, particularly in the capital; Abuja is another important foreign policy challenger for Nigeria. The embassy said the targets may include but are not limited to government buildings, places of worship, schools, markets, shopping malls, hotels, bars, restaurants, athletic gatherings, transport terminals, law enforcement facilities and international organizations. As a result of this, the US embassy said, it will offer reduced services until further notice. It advised Americans in Nigeria to avoid all non-essential travel or movement. Additionally, it advised Americans in Nigeria to review their personal security plans, keep their cell phones charged in case of emergency and carry proper identification. The advisory by the US Embassy in Nigeria is similar to that of the British High Commission and the EU (Premium Times, 23rd October, 2022). British Airways has also cancelled its flights to Abuja from London, with several foreign missions issuing travel warnings to their citizens (Daily Trust, Oct, 2022). The implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy over the years has continued to face numerous problems which is not unconnected with the continuous security challenges faced by Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Present-day foreign policy decision and actions needs to focus on addressing the challenges of national survival, human security, progress, Promotion of Peace, Development, and Democratic governance. Building an effective Nigerian foreign policy requires, ensuring the welfare of Nigerians, guaranteeing the security of Nigeria and Nigerians, building a strong economy and currency.

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The government must creatively and innovatively design platforms and mechanisms for inclusion, such inclusion would improve social cohesion and harmony between citizens. For Nigeria to continue to enjoy stability and peace in order to project her leadership image and regional power status, it must promote and preserve human security because a country of hungry, unhealthy, uneducated and sickly people is a country of angry persons. There is the need for the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law and the promotion of dialogue between the state and society, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. There is need for the review of National Security Policy to go in line with Nigeria's national interest for the proper implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy, since national interest is a product of domestic conversation influenced by the external environment. Nigeria needs to rethink its foreign policy by deploying professional diplomats and expert to achieve its national interest in the international arena through a fresh national conversation. There is need to hold an all-inclusive retreat as was done at the April 1986, All-Nigeria Conference on Foreign Policy in Kuru for all segments of society to participate. Such retreat will provide a Road Map with practical recommendations beyond the Tinubu Administration.

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