

UDC 32

## The need for the evolution of Nigeria's foreign policy

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### Abstract

The foreign Policy of a country talks on the strategies put in place in dealing with other countries and how they pursue their country's interests within the global system. Since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, there have been different evolutions of ideas about her foreign policy. These conceptualizations are often regime specific and borne out of a psychological hunger to carve a regime identity that will create and leave lasting impressions on the minds of Nigerians. They are not necessarily products of deep and profound philosophical reflections. The crafting and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy from independence in the 1960s- early 1980s has been driven by fourteen different administrations and looking from when Nigeria got democracy: from Olusegun Obasanjo's administration to the present Muhammadu Buhari administration, Nigeria has seen different faces of economic shift. During YaRadua administration, the bilateral agreement was seen as "a seven point agenda". Dr Goodluck Jonathan's regime called it "a transformation agenda", the present government of Gen. Buhari calls it "change agenda". While the substance of Nigeria's foreign policy remained largely the same, from regime to regime however, it witnessed various adjustments and modifications depending on the orientations of the political leaderships. Nigeria's foreign policy mandatorily should produce results for the country and its citizens. The training program for our diplomats should be reviewed to give them the necessary knowledge to practice the art and science of diplomacy because they are at the frontline of our foreign policy.

### For citation

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### Keywords

Foreign policy, NEPAD, NAM, ECOWAS, OAU, United Nations, peace keeping.

## **Introduction. Nigerian foreign policy in Africa**

According to Professor Leonard Twa [Twa, www], Nigeria's foreign policy can be seen as the good, bad and ugly. He believed at the onset of the crafting of Nigeria's policy, it was highly placed and initiated; Nigeria's policy was indeed ready for takeover of Africa as Nigeria played the most significant role through the use of hard and soft power to assist other African nations in distress within 20 years since our independence. Nigeria participated in the Non-Align movement (NAM), created regional organizations like ECOWAS, OAU, and NEPAD etc. Nigeria provided military, financial, food and other sources of assistance in the fight for freedom in countries like: Angola against their Portuguese colonizers, Zimbabwe against the British government which led to the surrendering of power to the then President Robert Mugabe. With the help of the United Nation, Nigeria fought against the apartheid regime in South Africa that was created by the British colonizers, and also participated in peacekeeping activities in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Namibia etc.

The question now becomes, is Nigeria still the "Giant of Africa or the big brother" like she once was? With regards to its present status and economic situation.

After Nigeria's independence, where Jaja Wachuku was made the first Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, which was later called external affairs, Nigeria's foreign policy was focused on Africa as with regards to some fundamental principles.

The fundamental principles are:

- African unity and independence; its capability to exercise hegemonic influence.
- The peaceful settlement of disputes.
- The non-alignment and non-intentional interference in the internal affairs of other member nations in Africa.
- The regional economic cooperation and development.

"In carrying out these principles, Nigeria participates in the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth of Nations, and the United Nations".

According to Reuben Abati [Abati, www] in his article on "Obasanjo's foreign policy", he pointed out that Nigeria has been largely ignorant as Nigeria has restricted their foreign policy to Africa. According to him, it was a goal necessary before the 1990s, but there is a large need for its growth so as to help Nigeria meet the needs of recent diplomatic trends. It is notable that, Africa as the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy is quite myopic as it's necessary for Nigeria to gain new diplomatic grounds in the world. At this point, Nigeria needs human rights, democracy etc. which are pivotal for development. Africa alone should not be the only reason for the existence of a foreign policy in Nigeria. None of the important international diplomatic actors, such as the USA, France and Great Britain, build their foreign policy on only one pillar. Nigeria, looking at its current economic and security problems, needs new international partners to facilitate its growth.

## **Challenges faced by Nigerian foreign policy and its citizens**

According to Professor Leonard Twa, Nigeria's biggest foreign policy problem is the issue of self-interest by the government or greed by those in power. Nigeria is not just the giant of Africa by words, but she has the human strength, economic might and natural resources to stand as the giant. But this

isn't the case with what is going on in the country today. Those countries she fought for their freedom, helped to gain financial stands like, Ghana, Namibia etc. are doing economically better than Nigeria. Nigerians keeps suffering both security threats- a case of Boko Haram in the North, economic deterioration causing the rate of crime to keep increasing, lack of employments and basic amenities in the country which leads to fear of foreign investors interest in the country and thereby limiting the growth of the country and an international audience. Although on the contrary, according to the realist Amb Martin Uhomoibhi [Uhomoibhi, www], he believes Nigeria is faced with so many challenges just like many other leading nations. He believes we lack capacity building, professionalism in the Foreign Service, lack of orientation of those who run the foreign policy. According to him, the foreign ministry should be empowered and take the primacy of place, the minister of foreign affairs needs to be an expert in this field not just a quack.

## Conclusion

It is pertinent for the Nigerian government and those in strategic points of its foreign policy to stop the act of "self-interest". They should make proper use of their human and natural resources for the growth and betterment of the general public and not for their pockets. Taming the political class and the diplomats is necessary for proper positive redirection of Nigeria's foreign policy. This would lead to a proper check and balancing of power in Nigeria governmental system, they should take responsibility and make sure Nigerian sectors are been led by those who are experts in these sectors as this will encourage professionalism and growth. Nigeria must engage in capacity building, invest solely on professionalism in the Foreign Service, if one has no mastery of this field, he or she shouldn't be allowed to work in this sector. This is because, they are the mirror with which the country is been perceived. The orientation of the country's history and policy to those who run its foreign policy. Also, the foreign ministry should be empowered where the minister of foreign affairs needs to be an expert in this field not just a quack.

Nigeria's foreign policy mandatorily should produce results for the country and its citizens. The training program for our diplomats should be reviewed to give them the necessary knowledge to practice the art and science of diplomacy because they are at the frontline of our foreign policy.

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## О необходимом развитии нигерийской внешней политики

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### Аннотация

С момента провозглашения независимости Нигерии в 1960 году произошли различные изменения в отношении ее внешней политики. Ее характер обусловлен особенностями страны и ее населения, сильной потребностью в том, чтобы выработать национальную идентичность и образ Нигерии, который будет представлен на международной арене. Разработка и реализация внешней политики Нигерии от независимости в 1960-х – начале 1980-х годов велась силами 14 разных правительств с тех пор, как Нигерия получила демократию: от администрации О. Обасанджо до нынешней администрации М. Бухари. За это время Нигерия переживала разные стадии экономического сдвига развития. Хотя суть внешней политики Нигерии оставалась в основном той же, от режима к режиму, однако она оказывалась объектом различных корректировок и модификаций в зависимости от ориентации политического руководства. Внешняя политика Нигерии должна давать результаты для страны и ее граждан. Учебную программу для нигерийских дипломатов следует пересмотреть, чтобы дать им необходимые знания для практики в искусстве и науке дипломатии, поскольку они находятся на острие внешней политики.

### Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

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### Ключевые слова

Внешняя политика, НЕПАД, ДН, ЭКОВАС, ОАЕ, Организация Объединенных Наций, поддержание мира.

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