

REFORMING AND RESTRUCTURING NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Reforming and restructuring Nigeria's foreign policy is a pressing concern that has garnered significant attention in recent years. The country's foreign policy has undergone various transformations since its independence in 1960, with the primary objectives of promoting and protecting national interests, fostering African integration and unity, and enhancing international cooperation. However, despite these efforts, Nigeria's foreign policy has faced numerous challenges, including economic instability, regional security concerns, global competition and interference.. To address these challenges, it is essential to reform and restructure the country's foreign policy to align with its current national interests and global realities . Consequently literature materials were assembled from Journals, conference proceedings, books , bulletins , government documents , they were afterwards analyzed and discussed, The review highlighted Key areas for Reform such as economic diplomacy, Regional integration, diversifying the revenue base and global governance..The paper concluded by stressing the need to reform Nigerias foreign policy, Short, medium and long term Recommendations were made as follows, Carrying out a thorough foreign policy review, Strengthening the Ministry of Foreign Affairs capacity.. Foster interagency coordination., Engage civil society and private sector. Diversify economy through foreign investment Develop, strategic partnerships with emerging economies Promoting cultural diplomacy and national branding. Establishing Nigeria as a regional hub for trade and investment ,conflict resolution., Develop a comprehensive national security strategy. Enhancing global influence through peacekeeping and fostering a culture of transparency and accountability.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Governance, Nigeria, Reforming , Restructuring

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Reforming and restructuring Nigeria's foreign policy is a pressing concern that has garnered significant attention in recent years. The country's foreign policy has undergone various transformations since its independence in 1960, 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

Despite these challenges, Nigeria's foreign policy also presents opportunities such as Regional leadership via ECOWAS and African Union membership (Bach, 2016), Economic growth: Diversification through foreign investment (Adedeji, 2017)., Global governance: Participation in international organizations (UN, WTO) (Akindele, 2019) To address these challenges, it is essential to reform and restructure the country's foreign policy to align with its current national interests and global realities. Key Areas for Reform are, Economic Diplomacy, which entails enhancing trade and investment opportunities, promoting economic cooperation, and attracting foreign direct investment.

Regional Integration by Strengthening ties with neighboring countries, promoting regional peace and security, and enhancing cooperation through organizations such as ECOWAS.

Global governance will Increasing Nigeria's participation and influence in international organizations, such as the United Nations, and promoting global peace and security.(Adedeji. 2017).To achieve meaningful reform, Nigeria must adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses its economic, regional, and global challenges. This can be achieved through:

- Conducting a thorough review of the country's foreign policy objectives and strategies.
- Enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- Fostering greater collaboration between government agencies, civil society, and the private sector, developing strategic partnerships with key international actors

This paper attempts to throw light on the necessity and ways to reform and restructure Nigeria's Foreign Policy

2..0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Existing Foreign Policy Frameworks of Nigeria

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)

2.1.1 Basic Objectives

1. Promotion of National Interest: Protection and promotion of Nigeria's sovereignty, unity, and economic well-being.
2. African Integration: Strengthening African unity and cooperation through ECOWAS, AU, and other regional organizations.
3. Global Cooperation: Engagement with international organizations (UN, WTO, Commonwealth) to address global challenges.
4. Economic Diplomacy: Promotion of trade, investment, and economic cooperation.
5. Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution: Contribution to regional and global peace and security.(Mustapha , 2020)

According to Adedeji (2017) the objectives of Nigerias foreign policy are

1. Protect and promote Nigeria's sovereignty and unity.
2. Foster African integration and cooperation.
3. Promote global peace and security.
4. Enhance economic cooperation and development.
5. Protect Nigerian citizens abroad.

2.1.2 Principles:

1. Non-alignment
2. Pan-Africanism
3. Non-interference
4. Sovereign equality
5. Mutual benefit

2.1.3 Institutional Framework

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 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.

2.1.4 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.

2.1.5 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 ,Brazil, Saudi Arabia etc).

2.1,6 Challenges

1. Security Concerns: Boko Haram insurgency, regional security challenges.
2. Economic Dependence: Vulnerability to global economic shocks.
3. Corruption: Undermining foreign policy effectiveness.
4. Global Competition: Emerging global trends and competition.

5. Climate change This has environmental, agricultural/food security , health and National security implications(Agbo *et al* 2024; Abdullahi, 2019)

2.2 Reforming Nigeria’s Foreign Policy

Nigeria’s foreign policy requires comprehensive reform to address emerging global challenges, leverage opportunities, and promote national interests. The key areas for reform include the following;

2.2.1 Economic Diplomacy

1. Diversify export markets and products
2. Enhance trade agreements (e.g., AFCFTA)
3. Attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
4. Promote economic cooperation with key partners (e.g., US, China, EU)

2.2.2 Regional Integration

1. Strengthen ECOWAS and African Union ties
2. Enhance regional security cooperation
3. Foster economic integration through AFCFTA
4. Promote regional infrastructure development

2.2.3 Global Governance

1. Increase participation in international organizations (e.g., UN, WTO)
2. Enhance diplomatic engagement with key countries

3. Promote global peace and security
4. Address climate change and environmental challenges

2.2.4 Citizen Diplomacy

1. Protect and promote Nigerian citizens abroad
2. Foster people-to-people diplomacy
3. Enhance cultural exchange programs
4. Promote Nigerian culture and values globally

2.2.5 Institutional Reforms

1. Strengthen Ministry of Foreign Affairs capacity
2. Enhance policy coordination and coherence
3. Foster interagency collaboration
4. Promote transparency and accountability

2.2.6 Implementation Strategies

1. Establish a Foreign Policy Review Committee
2. Conduct regular policy reviews and evaluations
3. Enhance public-private partnerships
4. Foster international cooperation and diplomacy

2.2.7 Key Stakeholders

1. Federal Government of Nigeria
2. National Assembly
3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. Private Sector
5. Civil Society Organizations

2.3 Restructuring Nigeria's Foreign Policy:

Nigeria's foreign policy requires restructuring to address current and emerging global challenges, leverage opportunities, and promote national interests. The key components to consider are;

1. Policy Reorientation: Align foreign policy with national development goals.
2. Institutional Strengthening: Enhance Ministry of Foreign Affairs capacity.
3. Strategic Partnerships: Foster relationships with key countries and organizations.
4. Regional Integration: Strengthen ECOWAS and African Union ties.
5. Citizen Diplomacy: Promote people-to-people exchange.

On Structural Adjustments grounds, steps should be taken to reorganize departments, enhance training in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, rationalize overseas representation in diplomatic missions, establish expert advisory body in the Foreign Policy Advisory Board and enhance collaboration among agencies.

2.3.1 Challenges and Opportunities

Just like every process of change, There are challenges as well as obstacles to attempt to restructure Nigeria's Foreign Policy. These challenges include; resistance to change,

Limited resources , corruption and Global competition while the opportunities include; emerging global trends, regional integration aids/grants and trade expansion (Adedeji, 2017)

2.3.2 Strategic partnerships.

According to Adedeji,(2017) restructuring Nigeria’s foreign policy requires a strategic approach, addressing institutional, policy, and structural adjustments. Effective implementation will enhance Nigeria’s global influence, promote national interests, and contribute to sustainable development

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Literature materials were assembled from Journals, conference proceedings, books , bulletins , government documents , they were afterwards analyzed and discussed,

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reforming and Restructuring Nigeria’s Foreign Policy

Nigeria’s foreign policy has undergone significant transformations since its independence in 1960. The country’s strategic location, vast natural resources, and large population makes it a crucial player in West Africa and the global arena.

Nigeria’s foreign policy faces numerous challenges which necessitates reforming and restructuring , the challenges include :

1. Security concerns: Boko Haram insurgency and regional security threats (Adebajo, 2020).
2. Economic dependence: Vulnerability to global economic shocks (Mustapha, 2020).
3. Corruption: Undermining foreign policy effectiveness (Osaghae, 1998).
- 4 Foreign interference

Despite these challenges, Nigeria’s foreign policy also presents opportunities such as

1. Regional leadership: ECOWAS and African Union membership (Bach, 2016).
2. Economic growth: Diversification through foreign investment (Adedeji, 2017).
3. Global governance: Participation in international organizations (UN, WTO) (Akindele, 2019).

Theoretical Frameworks

Nigeria's foreign policy can be analyzed through various theoretical frameworks:

1. Realism: Emphasis on national security and self-interest (Morgenthau, 1948).
2. Liberalism: Focus on economic cooperation and international institutions (Keohane & Nye, 1977).
3. Constructivism: Role of identity and norms in shaping foreign policy (Wendt, 1992)

To address challenges and leverage opportunities, Nigeria's foreign policy should:

1. Diversify the economy: Encourage foreign investment and trade (Adedeji, 2017).
2. Strengthen regional ties: Enhance ECOWAS and African Union cooperation (Bach, 2016).
3. Address corruption: Implement effective anti-corruption measures (Osaghae, 1998).

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

4.2 Proposed Foreign Policy Framework for Nigeria:

4.2.1 Vision Statement:

Nigeria’s foreign policy aims to promote a peaceful, prosperous, and influential nation, leveraging its diversity, resources, and strategic location to advance African integration, global cooperation, and national interests (Akindele, 2019; Morgenthau, 1948).” This proposed foreign policy framework aims to promote Nigeria’s national interests, regional stability, National Security, Food security , self reliance, balance of trade surplus, global cooperation devoid of foreign interference

Nigeria’s foreign policy requires a proper and in depth understanding of the country’s challenges and opportunities. By adopting a comprehensive approach, addressing corruption, and diversifying the economy, Nigeria can strive to 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

4.2.2 Core Objectives:

1. Enhance regional security and stability
2. Promote economic development and cooperation
3. Foster global governance and multilateralism
4. Protect Nigerian citizens abroad
5. Promote cultural diplomacy and national branding
- 6 Resist foreign interference

4.2.3 Strategic Priorities:

Short-term (2024-2025)

1. Strengthen ECOWAS and African Union ties
2. Enhance economic cooperation with key partners (US, China, EU)
3. Address regional security concerns (Boko Haram, piracy)
4. Promote Nigerian culture and tourism

Medium-term (2025-2030)

1. Diversify economy through foreign investment
2. Develop strategic partnerships with emerging economies
3. Enhance global governance participation (UN, WTO)
4. Foster pan-African cooperation and integration

Long-term (2030-2040)

1. Establish Nigeria as a regional hub for trade and investment
2. Promote African unity and cooperation
3. Enhance global influence through peacekeeping and conflict resolution
4. Develop a comprehensive national security strategy

4.2.4 Policy Instruments:

The instruments for implementation will include ,Diplomacy, Economic aid, Trade agreements, International organizations, Public diplomacy, Cultural exchange programs, Strategic partnerships (Akindele, 2019: Adedeji, 2019 : Wendt, 1992)

4.2.5 Regional and International Relations:

ECOWAS, African Union, United Nations, Commonwealth, Bilateral relations with key countries (US, China, France, UK), Emerging economies such as Brazil, India, South Korea, Turkey (Bach , 2016)

4.2.6 Institutional Framework:

According to Wendt (1992) the institutional framr works include Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Assembly, Presidency, Nigerian Intelligence Agency (NIA),. Civil Society Organizations

4.2.7 Theoretical Frameworks

Nigeria's foreign policy can be analyzed through various theoretical frameworks:

1. Realism: Emphasis on national security and self-interest (Morgenthau, 1948).
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4.2.8 Monitoring and Evaluation:

Regular policy reviews, Performance metrics (trade, investment, security), Stakeholder engagement, International bench marking (Wendt, 1992)

4.2.9 Challenges and Opportunities:

Security concerns, Economic dependence, Corruption, Global competition, Emerging global trends (climate change, technology, security challenges, migration /immigration etc)

To address challenges and leverage opportunities, Nigeria's foreign policy should:

1. Diversify economy: Encourage foreign investment and trade (Adedeji, 2017).
2. Strengthen regional ties: Enhance ECOWAS and African Union cooperation (Bach, 2016).
3. Address corruption: Implement effective anti-corruption measures (Osaghae, 1998).

4.2.10 Implementation Roadmap:

Conduct foreign policy review, Establish Foreign Policy Advisory Board,. Strengthen Ministry of Foreign Affairs capacity, Foster interagency coordination, Engage civil society and private sector (Bach, 2016:Wendt, 1992)

4.2.11 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Increased foreign investment, Enhanced regional cooperation, Improved global rankings Increased citizens engagement, enhanced food security, enhanced climate change mitigation , Effective conflict resolution, improved security (Mustapha, 2020: Adedeji, 2020: Akindele (2019)

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Nigeria's foreign policy faces significant challenges, including security concerns, economic dependence, and corruption. However, the country's strategic location, vast natural resources, and large population also present opportunities for regional leadership and global influence.

Effective foreign policy reform requires a comprehensive approach, addressing corruption, diversifying the economy, and strengthening regional ties. Nigeria must leverage its membership in international organizations, such as the UN and AU, to promote global governance and cooperation.

5.2 Recommendations

The following should be done in the very short term : Conduct a thorough foreign policy review., Establish a Foreign Policy Advisory Board., Strengthen Ministry of Foreign Affairs capacity.. Foster interagency coordination., Engage civil society and private sector.

Medium-term (2026-2030:) Diversify economy through foreign investment., Develop strategic partnerships with emerging economies., Enhance global governance participation (UN, WTO).Foster pan-African cooperation and integration., Promote cultural diplomacy and national branding.

Long-term (2030-2050): Establish Nigeria as a regional hub for trade and investment., Promote African unity and cooperation., Enhance global influence through peacekeeping and conflict resolution., Develop a comprehensive national security strategy.. Foster a culture of and accountability.

Implementation Roadmap:. Establish a Foreign Policy Implementation Committee., Develop a comprehensive foreign policy strategy., Allocate necessary resources., Monitor and evaluate progress and review and adjust strategies as required

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