

Rethinking Nigeria's External Relations: A Critical Evaluation of Foreign Policy Perspectives and Imperatives

Kehinde Tola Benjamin^{1*} and Ezugwu Olileanya Amuche¹

¹*Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University Ota, Nigeria*

**Corresponding author*

Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy and its implications for the country's domestic development and global engagements. Drawing upon a range of scholarly works and empirical evidence, the study examines the historical trajectory of Nigeria's foreign policy, highlighting its active participation in peacekeeping missions and diplomatic initiatives across the African continent. The research underscores the necessity for Nigeria to reevaluate its foreign policy orientation, emphasizing the need for a more strategic alignment with the country's economic interests and internal developmental priorities. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of Nigeria securing a more robust and equitable representation within key international organizations, such as the African Union, to effectively advocate for its interests and priorities on the global stage. The findings of this study highlight the critical role of a well-aligned and proactive foreign policy in advancing Nigeria's economic growth, regional stability, and global influence. The paper concludes with key recommendations aimed at fostering a more holistic and economically-driven foreign policy framework that bolsters Nigeria's resilience and autonomy within the international community.

Keywords: African Union; Diplomacy; External relations; Foreign Policy.

1. Introduction

The foreign policy initiatives embraced by a nation fundamentally influence how it is perceived within the intricate dynamics of the international community. The conduct of foreign policy plays an indispensable role in shaping a nation's standing and influence on the global stage. Nigeria, recognized as a pivotal regional and continental force, has strategically pursued a foreign policy framework aimed at projecting its robust stature as a leading actor in African affairs. In undertaking efforts to preserve regional stability and contribute to the emancipation of African populations, Nigeria has effectively assumed a prominent role in the orchestration of diplomatic engagements across the African continent since its independence in 1960 (Adigbuo, 2022). In a bid to assert its stature as a prominent player in African affairs, Nigeria has actively

engaged in initiatives aimed at fostering regional stability and championing the emancipation of African populations. Regrettably, despite its active involvement, the country's endeavours have yet to yield favourable results, prompting a critical assessment of the underlying factors contributing to this incongruity. Despite its concerted efforts and attention on the needs of African countries, the outcome of Nigeria's foreign policy endeavours has yet to yield the anticipated dividends. This realization underscores the need for a comprehensive and critical re-evaluation of Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory, thereby highlighting the urgency and significance of a comprehensive review at this juncture. This paper thus endeavours to undertake a thorough and overdue appraisal of Nigeria's foreign policy, examining its key objectives, underlying challenges, and the imperative need for recalibration to align with contemporary global realities.

The contemporary global political landscape is inextricably intertwined with the foreign policy orientations of nations, underscoring the critical role of diplomatic manoeuvres in defining a country's position and influence within the international community. As Nigeria, an esteemed powerhouse in the African region, continues to assert its dominance in continental affairs, its foreign policy has emerged as a focal point of scrutiny and analysis. With a strategic focus on promoting regional stability and advocating for the emancipation of African populations, Nigeria has persistently positioned itself as a key diplomatic player on the African stage (Ukaogo, Okonkwo, Orabueze, Eze, & Ugwu-Okoye, 2020). However, despite its concerted efforts, the realization that the expected outcomes of its foreign policy ventures have yet to materialize has ignited a fervent call for a comprehensive and long-overdue review of Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory.

Amidst the ongoing dynamics of regional and global diplomacy, the trajectory of Nigeria's foreign policy remains a subject of paramount significance, necessitating a meticulous exploration of its underlying objectives and operational challenges. Within this context, the urgency of a comprehensive re-evaluation is underscored, as Nigeria grapples with the persistence of multifaceted diplomatic complexities. This exigency is further accentuated by the recognition that Nigeria's diplomatic engagements have not fully translated into tangible and sustainable gains, prompting a critical assessment of the factors contributing to this divergence between intent and outcome. Consequently, a rigorous review of Nigeria's foreign policy becomes imperative to unveil the intricacies that underpin its efficacy, providing a nuanced understanding of the constraints and opportunities that shape its role as a diplomatic powerhouse within the African continent and beyond.

Against the backdrop of Nigeria's enduring aspirations for regional leadership and its persistent pursuit of African unity and progress, the imperative for an in-depth and comprehensive review of its foreign policy architecture becomes an indispensable exercise. By delving into the intricate interplay of historical legacies, contemporary challenges, and evolving global dynamics, this paper aims to elucidate the nuanced complexities surrounding Nigeria's foreign policy and to propose viable pathways for recalibration in alignment with the evolving contours of the modern international order.

Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative research methodology to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Nigeria's foreign policy perspectives and imperatives. The rationale behind choosing the qualitative method rests upon its inherent capability to facilitate an in-depth exploration of historical contexts, policy documents, and empirical evidence. This aligns seamlessly with the research's overarching goal of attaining a nuanced

understanding of Nigeria's intricate foreign policy landscape. The data collection process was primarily facilitated through Document Analysis, involving an extensive review encompassing scholarly works, policy documents, governmental reports, and empirical evidence germane to Nigeria's foreign policy. This rigorous scrutiny extended across diverse sources such as historical archives, official statements, policy documents, and pertinent literature. To organize and interpret the amassed data effectively, a thematic analysis approach was employed, systematically categorizing information gleaned from document analysis and case studies into pivotal themes. This analytical framework aimed to unravel significant patterns, recurring elements, and salient trends inherent in the data, thereby offering a coherent insight into the evolution of Nigeria's foreign policy, its economic inclinations, diplomatic engagements, and its positioning within the international system.

Overview of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Since gaining independence, Nigeria has steadfastly pursued a foreign policy agenda with a pronounced emphasis on issues pertinent to the African continent. Notably, this policy orientation has endured across successive administrations, underscoring the continuity of Nigeria's foreign policy approach. The tenure of Tafawa Balewa marked a seminal phase in Nigeria's early foreign policy history, characterized by a distinctly Afrocentric framework that laid the groundwork for subsequent governmental tenures. Demonstrating a firm commitment to fostering the interests and well-being of its African counterparts, Balewa articulated Nigeria's proactive stance in aiding the continent during his address at the United Nations, a pivotal moment that epitomized the country's dedication to regional cooperation and support (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012).

Central to Balewa's foreign policy was the adoption of a non-aligned stance, although Nigeria exhibited a discernible inclination toward Western powers (Ebegbulem, 2019). Notably, his administration facilitated Nigeria's active engagement in various international organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the Commonwealth of Nations, reflecting the country's proactive participation in global diplomatic initiatives. Of significant note, the instrumental role played by Dr. T.O. Elias, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice at the time, and other legal luminaries in the drafting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter attests to Nigeria's active involvement in shaping the institutional frameworks of Pan-African cooperation and governance.

The subsequent administrations following Tafawa Balewa's era remained steadfast in anchoring Nigeria's foreign policy within the contours of the African domain, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to fostering regional cooperation and solidarity. This persistent focus on African-centric diplomacy has underscored the consistent thread that binds Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory, portraying the country as a staunch proponent of African unity and development, as well as a proactive participant in the continent's broader socio-political and economic aspirations.

Nigeria, throughout its history, has proactively engaged in various peacekeeping endeavors both within the African continent and beyond, while also providing financial backing for liberation movements in several African states. Notably, Nigeria's active participation in peacekeeping operations underscored its commitment to fostering stability and security in regions grappling with internal strife. Moreover, the country's role in funding organizations it was a part of highlighted its dedication to the collective goals and

objectives of these institutions, thereby reinforcing its position as a responsible and proactive member within the international community.

The pivotal contributions of Yakubu Gowon, during his tenure as Head of State, reverberated through Nigeria's active involvement in regional economic initiatives, particularly in his instrumental role in the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Gowon's unwavering commitment to providing substantial financial support to the ECOWAS budget propelled Nigeria into a more dynamic position within regional efforts aimed at fostering enhanced trade and economic cooperation across West Africa. Concurrently, Gowon remained steadfast in offering resolute support to anti-colonial liberation movements across the African continent, further solidifying Nigeria's role as a proactive advocate for the emancipation and self-determination of African nations. It is noteworthy that the period of Gowon's administration coincided with a phase of economic prosperity for Nigeria, primarily attributable to the unprecedented oil boom, which significantly bolstered the country's capacity to provide financial aid to fellow African nations and organizations in need of support (Kia, Nwigbo & Ojie, 2016).

The Murtala/Obasanjo administration, building upon the legacy of an African-centred foreign policy, demonstrated a renewed and resolute commitment to combating colonialism and racial segregation within the African context. Notably, the era witnessed a significant escalation in Nigeria's financial and material contributions to the liberation movements operating across the continent, underscoring the administration's unwavering support for the emancipation and self-determination of African nations. Moreover, the administration spearheaded the indigenization of certain foreign-owned enterprises in Nigeria, exemplified by the nationalization of British Petroleum (BP) as a strategic move to prevent the apartheid government's access to Nigeria's oil reserves and to register dissent against British policies in Rhodesia. The subsequent governments maintained the trajectory of an Afrocentric foreign policy, perpetuating Nigeria's active role in championing the interests and aspirations of the African continent on the global stage.

During the tenure of Shehu Shagari, Nigeria's foreign policy exhibited a pro-Western inclination, albeit with a persistent commitment to supporting liberation struggles across the African continent. Notably, the administration vehemently opposed the apartheid regime in South Africa, underscoring its dedication to promoting the values of equality and justice within the African context. Additionally, the decline in oil revenues during this period prompted the expulsion of illegal immigrants from the country, reflecting the administration's efforts to address internal economic challenges and maintain social stability. The subsequent administration under Muhammodu Buhari marked a significant phase characterized by diplomatic overtures aimed at fostering regional peace and cooperation, particularly through the establishment of diplomatic agreements with neighboring countries such as Benin Republic, Togo, and Ghana. However, Buhari's administration encountered diplomatic tensions with the British government following the controversial attempt to abduct Alhaji Umaru Dikko from London, illustrating the complexities and challenges inherent in Nigeria's foreign policy dynamics during this period (Oni & Taiwo, 2016).

Olusegun Obasanjo's foreign policy was aimed at reshaping the image of Nigeria in the international system. Nigeria was readmitted as a member of the commonwealth and earlier sanctions imposed on the country was removed. He made sure Nigeria maintained peace with her neighbours. This could be seen when Obasanjo did not contest the ruling by the International Criminal Justice to give oil rich Bakassi Penisular to the Cameroonians. Since return to democracy, Nigeria has advocated for democratic values within the African state. The country opposed any form of military takeover or disruptions to democratic

elections and transition in any African states. This could be seen when Nigeria challenged the Gambian President, Yahya Jammeh's refusal to step down after losing the 2016 national elections. The country condemned the 2020 military coup in Mali. Nigeria's former president Goodluck Jonathan led under ECOWAS led s mediation team to the country to address the situation.

During the Ibrahim Babaginda regime, a discernible shift in Nigeria's foreign policy orientation was evident, characterized by an increased emphasis on economic diplomacy as a core tenet of its external relations strategy. Notably, the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program under Babaginda's administration marked a significant departure from conventional foreign policy priorities, reflecting an acute focus on economic reforms and international economic engagements. Moreover, the formation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) during this period held pivotal significance, particularly in the context of Nigeria's instrumental role in addressing the Liberian conflict that ensued following the overthrow of Samuel Doe. However, Nigeria's international standing suffered a notable decline following the controversial annulment of the June 12 elections, resulting in diplomatic tensions with the United States and the United Kingdom, with both nations threatening sanctions against the country (Kayode, 2016).

The subsequent tenure under Abacha witnessed a series of contentious events that significantly impacted Nigeria's foreign relations. Notably, the execution of nine members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), including prominent activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, elicited widespread international condemnation, prompting the imposition of sanctions by the United States and the United Kingdom. Despite these challenges, Abacha's regime sought to secure legitimacy through active participation in regional peace efforts, notably through Nigeria's intervention in the Sierra Leone conflict under the auspices of ECOMOG. Abacha's demise subsequently led to the drafting of a transition plan towards democratic rule under his successor, signalling a pivotal turning point in Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory.

Upon assuming office, Olusegun Obasanjo's foreign policy objectives were centred on revitalizing Nigeria's global image and re-establishing the country's standing within the international community. Notably, his administration successfully facilitated Nigeria's readmission as a member of the Commonwealth, leading to the removal of earlier sanctions imposed on the country. Additionally, Obasanjo prioritized maintaining peaceful relations with neighbouring countries, exemplified by Nigeria's compliance with the International Court of Justice ruling to cede the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon, underscoring Nigeria's commitment to regional stability and conflict resolution. Furthermore, since the return to democracy, Nigeria has emerged as a staunch advocate for democratic values within the African continent, actively opposing military takeovers and disruptions to democratic processes in various African states. This commitment was notably demonstrated through Nigeria's condemnation of the 2020 military coup in Mali and the proactive engagement of former President Goodluck Jonathan, leading an ECOWAS-led mediation team to address the political situation in the country.

Reviewing Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Throughout its history, Nigeria has consistently prioritized its engagement with the unfolding events and challenges shaping the African continent, deploying significant resources and manpower towards fostering the well-being and progress of various African states. Evidently, this concerted effort has garnered Nigeria substantial respect within the international community, positioning the country as a prominent and

esteemed member among the community of nations. Nevertheless, the tangible benefits of Nigeria's extensive assistance and interventions have not materialized in a manner commensurate with its considerable investments and contributions.

Nigeria's active involvement in peacekeeping missions has entailed substantial financial expenditure and the sacrifice of numerous soldiers deployed in various conflict zones. The financial costs associated with Nigeria's participation in the Liberian Civil War, for instance, were estimated to have amounted to a staggering 8 billion dollars, underscoring the significant commitment of resources that Nigeria has dedicated to preserving regional stability and security (Ade-Ibijola, Aderemi 2013). The imperative for Nigeria's engagement in these operations stemmed from the recognition that threats to regional stability can precipitate far-reaching consequences, with the 1991 Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Cooperation in Africa emphasizing the interconnectedness of the stability and development of each African nation with that of its neighbours (Hamman & Omojuwa, 2013). This underscored the understanding that any unrest in one African country could potentially have a spill-over effect, destabilizing neighbouring states if left unchecked. Notably, Nigeria played a pivotal role in the restoration of democratic governance in Sierra Leone following the 1997 coup, further reinforcing its active role in promoting peace and stability across the African continent.

The Nigerian government finds itself at a crucial juncture, necessitating a thorough reassessment of its engagements within the international arena. Criticisms have surfaced, characterizing Nigeria's role as akin to that of a benevolent "Father Christmas," extending substantial aid to various African countries without leveraging these contributions for reciprocal benefits. Such assertions underscore the imperative for the Nigerian government to reconfigure this aspect of its foreign policy, anchoring assistance to African nations upon tangible and strategic considerations that align with Nigeria's national interests. Thus, a paradigm-shift towards a foreign policy framework driven by economic imperatives becomes imperative, compelling Nigeria to recalibrate its approach to international engagements, ensuring a more strategic and mutually beneficial trajectory for the country.

Amidst its longstanding commitment to supporting other African nations, Nigeria has grappled with a persistent inability to capitalize on the potential dividends stemming from its extensive aid and support efforts. This critical assessment underscores the pressing need to re-evaluate the underlying dynamics and mechanisms governing Nigeria's assistance to other African countries. A fundamental realignment of this policy framework holds the potential to enable Nigeria to harness these opportunities effectively, fostering an environment conducive to national growth and development. Therefore, a comprehensive review aimed at fostering a more strategic alignment of Nigeria's foreign policy with its economic interests emerges as a pivotal step towards maximizing the benefits and opportunities embedded within its engagements with other African nations.

Former Foreign Affairs Minister Bolaji Akinyemi has emphasized the critical principle of reciprocity as a cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy framework. Acknowledging Nigeria's significant responsibilities within the African continent, Akinyemi noted that there are reciprocal obligations that African nations hold toward Nigeria. In echoing this sentiment, he has underscored the necessity for Nigeria to promote and safeguard its own national interests, advocating for the cooperation and support of other African countries in this regard. Thus, while Africa remains central to Nigeria's foreign policy priorities, Akinyemi contends that a symbiotic relationship must be fostered, wherein African nations actively protect and advance

Nigeria's strategic interests in the same manner that Nigeria extends its support to the continent (Akinyemi, 1987)

In a critical assessment, Pine (2011) has raised pertinent questions concerning the effectiveness and tangible benefits derived from Nigeria's extensive involvement in certain peacekeeping missions. Pine has interrogated the specific economic niche that Nigeria has carved for itself in the post-conflict countries where it has deployed peacekeeping efforts, highlighting the imperative for Nigeria to reassess the strategic outcomes and economic dividends resulting from its participation in these endeavours. Drawing attention to China's paradigm of economic diplomacy, Pine has underscored the tangible advantages gained by China through its strategic financial assistance to African countries, resulting in reciprocal access to vital raw materials within these nations. This comparison serves as a compelling call for Nigeria to adopt a more nuanced and strategic approach to its foreign policy, one that not only prioritizes Africa's well-being but also strategically safeguards Nigeria's economic interests within the international arena.

The significant financial resources allocated to peacekeeping endeavours could potentially be redirected towards addressing critical domestic priorities, notably directed at bolstering national development initiatives aimed at enhancing infrastructure and alleviating poverty within Nigeria. Recent statistics from 2018 revealed a stark reality, with Nigeria surpassing India to claim the disconcerting distinction of having the largest population living in extreme poverty, with over 80 million individuals subsisting on less than \$1.90 per day. This distressing socioeconomic backdrop underscores the pressing and compelling imperative for Nigeria to focus inward and concentrate concerted efforts on resolving these pressing domestic challenges before actively engaging in external affairs. The scale and urgency of these internal challenges demand robust policy interventions, as the surge in unemployed youth and the prevailing unfavourable economic climate within Nigeria pose a significant risk, potentially fuelling a rise in criminal activities that the government must confront and address.

A critical re-evaluation of the allocation of financial resources is therefore warranted, advocating for a strategic realignment of priorities that emphasizes the upliftment and welfare of the Nigerian populace. The substantial funds currently channelled towards fulfilling international commitments and obligations could be judiciously reinvested to bolster initiatives designed to uplift the living standards of the Nigerian people, foster sustainable economic growth, and create meaningful avenues for employment and socio-economic advancement. By adopting a more targeted and inward-looking approach, Nigeria can effectively address the multifaceted challenges confronting its populace, steering the country toward a path of inclusive development and sustainable prosperity.

The Nigerian government is confronted with the critical imperative of safeguarding the dignity and rights of its citizens, both within the nation's borders and abroad, underscoring the vital interconnectedness between foreign policy and the country's domestic agenda. Central to this imperative is the recognition that foreign policy is an extension of a country's domestic ethos, necessitating a concerted emphasis on upholding the dignity and sanctity of every Nigerian life. Recent events, notably the widespread protests during the EndSars movement in 2020, laid bare the deep-seated grievances and disillusionment of Nigerians, particularly concerning their treatment by the Nigerian Police. The ensuing unrest highlighted the imperative for the Nigerian government to prioritize the protection and welfare of its citizens, thereby fostering an environment that upholds the inherent dignity and value of human life.

The multifaceted security challenges within Nigeria demand a focused and concerted response, one that acknowledges the impact of these challenges on the livelihoods and well-being of Nigerian citizens. It is untenable for the government to continue deploying troops abroad while the security concerns within the country continue to pose significant threats to the safety and prosperity of its populace. Moreover, the government must address the persistent issues of harassment and violence faced by Nigerian citizens abroad, particularly evident during the xenophobic incidents in South Africa, where Nigerians fell victim to targeted attacks and killings (Idehen & Osaghae 2015). Despite Nigeria's significant contributions to the dismantling of the apartheid regime in South Africa, Nigerian citizens have been subjected to continued hostility and threats to their businesses and well-being, with a glaring disparity in the treatment of South African businesses operating within Nigeria (Ojukwu & Euka, 2020). Proactive diplomatic engagement and strategic economic measures are imperative in signalling the Nigerian government's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights and dignity of its citizens, both within Nigeria and abroad, thereby reaffirming the country's stance as a champion of human rights and dignity within the global community. The African Union presents another pertinent illustration of the need for Nigeria to assert a more equitable representation within the organization, given its historical role in the formation of the precursor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). However, despite Nigeria's significant population, abundant resources, and substantial financial contributions to the African Union, the representation of Nigerian citizens within the Commission (Secretariat) of the African Union remains disproportionate and inadequate. Agubuzu (2009) highlighted the glaring absence of Nigerian representation, particularly within critical departments such as Administration, Finance, Conferences, and Legal, all of which hold pivotal roles in shaping and facilitating the operational functions of the African Union. Notably, the absence of elected officials from Nigeria within the African Union since the Maputo Summit of July 2003 further accentuates the critical need for Nigeria to assert a more robust and inclusive representation within the African Union.

Given Nigeria's active and consistent financial support extended to the African Union, there exists a compelling case for an increased and more equitable representation of Nigerian officials within the African Union's organizational structure. Such representation is critical not only for amplifying Nigeria's influence within the African Union but also for fostering a more inclusive and representative decision-making process that reflects the diverse interests and priorities of the African continent. Nigeria's sustained financial assistance to the African Union underscores the imperative for a more equitable and commensurate representation, aligning with Nigeria's commitment to promoting the collective advancement and welfare of African nations within the broader context of Pan-African cooperation and integration.

Nigeria's role as a pivotal force within the African continent necessitates a strategic and proactive approach that leverages the country's formidable economic strength and expansive population to reinforce its stature as the leading nation and 'big brother' of Africa. Given Nigeria's prominent position as the continent's most populous nation and largest economy, the country is uniquely positioned to wield its influence for the collective benefit and advancement of the African continent. The enduring commitment to prioritize Africa as the central axis of Nigeria's foreign policy is one that successive Nigerian governments continue to endorse and embrace.

Atah's (2011) elucidation of the centrality of Africa within Nigeria's foreign policy framework underscores the foundational premise that Nigeria's participation within the international system is intrinsically tied to

its commitments and actions on the African continent. In this context, the policy makers in Nigeria are tasked with the critical responsibility of astutely evaluating the evolving dynamics of the global political landscape, thereby strategically positioning the country to harness the emerging opportunities and challenges arising from these changes. The imperative for Nigeria to maintain a vigilant and dynamic stance within the international system, one that aligns with the shifting contours of global affairs, demands a nuanced and proactive approach that effectively safeguards Nigeria's national interests while concurrently championing the broader aspirations and development of the African continent. By recalibrating its foreign policy objectives to reflect the dynamism of the international system, Nigeria can effectively secure its position as the cornerstone of African diplomacy, fostering a comprehensive and mutually beneficial approach that propels the country and the continent toward sustained growth and prosperity.

The findings of this study underscore the critical importance of Nigeria's foreign policy in shaping its engagements within the international community, particularly in the context of its relationships with other African nations and global stakeholders. The analysis has revealed a consistent pattern of Nigeria's robust participation in various peacekeeping missions and diplomatic initiatives across the African continent, reflecting the country's enduring commitment to fostering regional stability and solidarity. However, the research has also highlighted the necessity for a more nuanced and strategic approach to Nigeria's foreign policy, one that aligns more closely with the country's economic interests and domestic development priorities.

A key theme that emerged from the examination of Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory is the imperative for the country to reassess its approach to international engagements, placing a renewed emphasis on leveraging its economic strength and resources for strategic advantage. The study has revealed the potential drawbacks associated with Nigeria's traditional posture as a benevolent contributor to the development and stability of other African nations, particularly in light of the pressing economic challenges and internal developmental imperatives facing the country. As such, the research findings emphasize the critical need for Nigeria to recalibrate its foreign policy orientation, ensuring that its diplomatic initiatives and financial commitments yield tangible benefits that contribute directly to the country's economic growth and domestic welfare.

Furthermore, the study has shed light on the importance of Nigeria asserting a more equitable and influential representation within key international organizations, such as the African Union. The research findings have underscored the necessity for Nigeria to secure a more robust and proportional presence within these institutions, enabling the country to actively advocate for its interests and priorities on the continental and global stages. This recognition of the significance of Nigeria's representation within international bodies highlights the intrinsic link between effective foreign policy and the advancement of the country's strategic objectives within the broader context of global governance and diplomacy.

Overall, the findings of this study accentuate the critical role of a well-aligned and strategically grounded foreign policy in propelling Nigeria toward sustainable economic growth, regional stability, and global influence. The study underscores the need for Nigeria to balance its commitments to regional solidarity and development with a more assertive focus on promoting its economic resilience and safeguarding its national interests within the dynamic landscape of international relations.

2. Conclusion

The significance of foreign policy in shaping a state's external relations cannot be understated. It serves as a guiding framework that delineates the trajectory and effectiveness of a nation's engagements within the global arena. For Nigeria, a reevaluation of its foreign policy imperatives emerges as a critical imperative, one that necessitates a renewed focus on safeguarding its economic interests and bolstering its domestic development agenda. The imperative for Nigeria to address its economic challenges is underscored by the profound realization that a nation grappling with economic instability risks falling prey to external pressures and influences, thereby compromising its autonomy and sovereignty within the international system. By prioritizing robust economic policies and initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable development and growth, Nigeria can fortify its position as a self-reliant and assertive global player, thereby mitigating the vulnerabilities associated with overreliance on external assistance and influence. An astute recalibration of Nigeria's foreign policy priorities to foreground its economic resilience and sovereignty holds the key to charting a sustainable and prosperous trajectory within the global community.

Furthermore, the imperative for Nigeria to prioritize its economic stability and independence is rooted in the recognition that a nation's economic resilience serves as the bedrock for asserting its autonomy and preserving its national interests on the global stage. Nigeria's ability to address its economic challenges not only bolsters its capacity to navigate the complexities of the international system on its own terms but also safeguards the country against undue external interference or coercion. By fostering a robust and diversified economic landscape, Nigeria can effectively position itself as a self-reliant and influential actor within the global community, thereby mitigating the risks associated with being beholden to the economic or political agendas of more developed nations. A comprehensive and strategic approach to addressing its economic constraints is, therefore, an indispensable prerequisite for Nigeria to assert its sovereignty and autonomy in its interactions within the international arena, ensuring that its foreign policy initiatives are firmly rooted in the pursuit of its national interests and aspirations.

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