

Nigeria's Foreign Policy of Peacekeeping Operations in Africa: The Missing Link

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Abstract

The study demonstrated that Nigeria has been instrumental in bringing about peace in Africa in general and the sub-region in particular and that this has come at great cost to Nigeria both in financial and human resources. The objective of the study is to examine whether or not Nigeria's foreign policy of peacekeeping operations in Africa has translated to economic security and prosperity of the Nigerian State. That is the missing link between Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping in Africa cum economic security and prosperity of the Nigerian State. The central proposition of this study is that for Nigeria's foreign policy of peacekeeping operations to be perceived as legitimate at home, its implementation must be seen by Nigerians to advance the domestic national development agenda. The theoretical explication of the discourse is linkage theory. The utility of the theory to the study is that it emphasizes the interconnection between the domestic economy of any country and its foreign policy thrust. Findings from the study revealed that, the reason Nigerian government does not systematically pursue its national interests through peacekeeping is connected to the authoritarian manner in which decision about Nigeria's participation has been made and her inability to take advantage of the post-conflict reconstruction in the arena it has exerted its military and other resources in peace support operation is however found in the underdeveloped nature of its institution – especially the economic institution. The study recommended, among other things, that though Nigeria should continue to shoulder the bulk of the burden of peacekeeping whenever peace is threatened in Africa, Nigeria should mobilize other African countries in the region in peace support operations rather than acting unilaterally, invest in preventive diplomacy, promotes good governance in the region and that Nigerian governments objectives and preparations for peacekeeping operations in Africa should be reviewed in order to see the extent to which they are designed to fit with Nigeria's national interest.

Keywords: Armoured Personnel Carriers, Contingent Owned Equipment, Economic Security, Foreign Policy, Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, Peace Enforcement and Peace Support Operations.

1. Introduction

A country's foreign policy entails how it perceives its position in the international community; what she consider her national interest to be pursued and what type of posture she would require in order to promote these interest (Piate, 2017). It is that strategy with which institutionally designated decision-makers seek to manipulate the international environment in order to achieve national objectives. It is that instrumentality through which states seek to influence at the international arena in order to attain those objectives that are in consonance with their perceived national interest (Piate, 2022). Foreign policy of peacekeeping refers to nation's use of diplomatic, political and sometimes military means to promote peace and stability in conflict zones around the world. It often involves participating in international peacekeeping operations, providing humanitarian aid, and mediating disputes between warring parties.

Peacekeeping operations are genuinely undertaken under Chapter VI of the United Nation Charter with the consent of all the major parties to a conflict, to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the peace agreements. The United Nation (1991) itself conceptualized peacekeeping as an operation involving military personnel, but without enforcement power, undertaken by the United Nations to help maintain or restore international peace and security in areas

of conflict. Following the conflict that started in Liberia in the 1990s, the Nigerian-led subregional PSO; ECOWAS Ceasefire Mountain Group (ECOMOG) for the first time, altered the principle of the United Nation traditional peacekeeping of consent. This was when the belligerents in the sub-regional conflicts were not prepared to give their consent even as the civil population was indiscriminately attacked, maimed and killed. It was realised that the traditional doctrine had outlived its usefulness as the use of peace enforcement became the only option left for ECOMOG to apply. Despite criticism by some members of the international community against the use of force by ECOMOG in Liberia, NATO and the coalition forces were later compelled by similar circumstances to launch peace enforcement operations in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Africa has a long history of conflict, and the causes are complex and varied. It is important to note that these causes are often interconnected and can reinforce each other. For example, weak governance can lead to corruption, which can exacerbate poverty and inequality. This can create a vicious cycle of conflict and instability. There are also specific factors that can contribute to conflict in particular countries or regions. For example, the discovery of national resources such as oil or diamonds, can lead to conflict as different groups vie for control of these resources. Similarly, political instability or a history of violence can make a country more prone to conflict. Some of the most conflict prone places in Africa include the Sahel, where countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger is facing a rise in violent extremism and intercommunal tensions, Lake Chad Basin where Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger is grappling with the spread of Boko Haram and other armed groups, the Horn of Africa where Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan are dealing with ongoing conflicts often involving various armed groups and government forces, and the Great Lakes region where Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is plagued by longstanding conflicts involving numerous armed groups and often fueled by competition over resources.

State as an actor in the international system, utilize their resources in the pursuit of their national interest through different avenues and one of such is the contribution to PSO which could be by provisions of funds or troops or both. State does this for several reasons, but such actions must be directly related to the pursuit of its national interest. Nigeria upon attainment of independence has been very active in the maintenance of peace and security at the sub-regional, regional and global levels as evidenced by her contribution to peace support operation mounted by the ECOWAS, AU and the UN. The followings are some of the peacekeeping missions with Nigeria's participation (Sanda, 2010).

- UN Operation in Congo (ONUC) 1960 – 1964
- UN Security Force in West New Guinea (UNSF) 1962 – 1983
- UN India-Pakistan Observer Mission (UNIPOM) 1965 – 1966
- UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) 1978 – 1983
- Chad Operation (Operation Harmony I) Bilateral 1979
- OAU Mission Intervention Force in Chad (Operation Harmony II) 1981 – 1982
- UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group 1988 – 1991
- UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM I, II, and III) in 1989 – 1991, 1991 – 1992, 1992 – 1995
- UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia 1989 – 1990
- UN Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) 1991 onwards
- UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) 1991
- UN Interim Mission Kosovo (UNMIK) 1991
- UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) 1992 – 1993
- UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) 1992 – 1995
- UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) 1992 – 1995
- UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Yugoslavia 1992 – 1993
- UN Operation in Mozambique (UNOSOM II) 1992 – 1995
- UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) 1992 onwards
- Organization for African Unity (OAU) Monitoring Group in Rwanda 1992 – 1993
- UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) 1993
- UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) 1993 – 1995
- UN Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) 1993 – 1995
- Nigeria Peacekeeping Force in Tanzania (TAPKM) 1994
- UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) 1994 – 2000

UN Group in the Aouzou Strip, Libya/Chad (UNASOG) 1994
 UN Prevention Deployment in Macedonia (UNPREDEP) 1995 – 2000
 UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slovenia, Baranja, Western Sirmium in Croatia (UNTAES) 1996 – 1998
 UN Observer Mission in Previakia (UNMOP) 1996 – 2000
 UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) July 1997
 ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) Operation Harmony in Liberia 1990 – 1997
 ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) Operation Sandstorm in Sierra Leone 1997 – 2000.
 UN Civilian Police Support Group, Dambe Region, Croatia 1998
 UN Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) 2000 onwards
 UN Transition Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) 2000
 ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) August – October 2003
 UN Mission in Sudan (AMIS) 2004 onwards
 UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) 2004
 UN-African Union Hybrid Operation in Dafur (UNAMID) 2007 onwards
 UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo 2010 onwards
 UN Organization Interim Security Force for Abyei 2011 onwards
 UN Organization in the Republic of South Sudan 2011 onwards
 UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali 2013 onwards
 UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic 2014 onwards (Chigozie & Ituma, 2015)

Its involvement in peacekeeping, especially in Africa, is a Logical Policy Corollary to the commitment of its leaders to African Independence from Colonialism-cum-foreign domination, with determination to keep other nations from exercising strong influence in what it considers its sphere of influence and its consideration of what constitutes its national security interest. Nigeria has not only led initiatives for regional peace and security, but has remained committed to contribution to peace support operation in the region. This is evidenced by its participation in ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It also sends troops to ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB); United Nations Operation in Cote D'Ivoire (UNOCI); and African led international support mission in Mali (AFISMA) which by United Nation Security Council Resolution 2000 of April 25, 2013 was renamed United Nation Mission Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Nigeria has historically been a major financial contributor to peacekeeping missions in Africa, particularly within the ECOWAS sub-region. This has placed a significant strain on the country's resources, often without direct or immediate economic returns. Nigeria has lost soldiers and military equipment in peacekeeping operations; representing a direct lost in human and material resources. While peacekeeping can contribute to regional stability, which can indirectly benefit Nigeria, the country hasn't always seen substantial direct economic gains from its participation.

This has lay credence to the growing contention that Nigeria has not benefitted maximally from her involvement in peacekeeping operations. Some scholars, even question whether or not, Nigeria has a clear understanding of the strategic national interest she is pursuing by participating in peace support operations and by extension, if Nigeria has effectively utilized her sustained contribution to realise such interest. It is within this context that the study examined whether or not Nigeria's foreign policy of peacekeeping operations in Africa has translated to economic security and prosperity of the Nigerian State. The central proposition of this study is that for Nigeria's foreign policy to be perceived as legitimate at home, its implementation of the policy must be seen by Nigerians to advance the domestic national development agenda. In view of these, the study seek to answer this question, to what extent has Nigeria's foreign policy of peacekeeping operations in Africa influenced its domestic development goals.

2. Theoretical Explication of the Discourse

The study adopted the linkage theory in the analysis of the subject matter. Linkage theory in the context of international relations, posits that cooperation or conflict in one issue area can affect interactions in other areas. While there isn't one definitive "linkage theory," the concept revolves around several key assumptions. The first is interconnectedness of issues. This is most fundamental assumption. Linkage theory assumes that issues in international politics are not isolated but rather

interconnected. That is action taken in one area can have consequences for another. Another assumption is strategic behaviour actors (states or international organization) are assumed to behave strategically. They will use linkages to their advantage, offering cooperation in one area to gain concessions in another, or threatening to withhold cooperation to pressure others. Rationality is another assumption of the linkage theory. The theory often assumes that actors are rational. Meaning that they will act in ways that they believe will maximize their interest. This doesn't necessarily mean they always make the best choices, but they are goal-oriented.

The theory helps in understating motivations behind state action. For instance, beyond altruism, states rarely participate in peacekeeping solely out of altruism. Linkage theory helps us see that participation might be tied to other interests. For example, a country might contribute troops to gain favour with a powerful nation, enhance its international standing, or secure access to resources in the conflict zone. Again, on the issue of reciprocity and bargaining, peacekeeping can be a tool for diplomatic bargaining. A state might offer to participate in exchange for support on other issues, such as trade agreements or security alliances. Linkage theory can explain why some states are more active in peacekeeping than others. It is not just about capacity, but also about how peacekeeping participations fit into a state broader foreign policy goal and its relationships with other actors. It can also be linked to regional security concerns. A country might participate to stabilize its neighbourhood, counter a rivals influence, or prevent spillover effects from a conflict.

The utility of the theory to the discourse is that it provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex motivations and dynamics surrounding participation in peacekeeping. It goes beyond simplistic explanations and highlights the interconnectedness of issues, the strategic behaviour of actors, and importance of context in shaping peacekeeping operations. Above all, it emphasizes the interconnection between the domestic economy of any country and its foreign policy thrust.

2.1. Nigeria's Foreign Policy of Peacekeeping Operations in Africa-Cum-Economic Security and Prosperity of the Nigerian State: The Missing Link

There is plethora of literature on reasons for Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping mission in Africa. Salui (2018) posits that one key consideration for Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping is derived from a set of principles and objectives of the country's foreign policy that is the thrust of Africa as the centre piece in the conduct of its foreign policy. For him, the search for global influence, prestige, recognition and the desire to play a big brother role in Africa are further crucial issues that summarises the reason for Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping operations. Becoming independent in 1960 that coincide with the cold war era, its leaders felt that her security would be more guaranteed if she carved out the African Continent as a theatre for playing her leadership role. Thus in a world dominated by a handful of global powers, projecting regional power status was more feasible for Nigeria than claiming world power status. For Galadima (2011), Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping operations is shaped by a number of considerations. Among the variables that help explain Nigeria's willingness to participate in multilateral interventions are geographical proximity, domestic political culture, national interest as well as economic reasons. He posits that in general, geographical proximity – a feature that may have security, economic, political and domestic dimensions has played a crucial role. That is what happens nearby is more likely to endanger nationals, raise significant security concerns and result in creation of refugees, economic disruptions and unwanted political spillovers. This explains Nigeria's intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone among many others. With respect to political culture which is shaped by history, Nigeria feels that it has the capacity to represent Africa as permanent member of the United Nation Security Council and has to demonstrate this to the rest of the world. Thus, a political culture has evolved overtime to permit participation in peacekeeping operations.

Some other scholars argued that the reason why Nigeria participates in peacekeeping mission in Africa is because of the personal interest of Nigeria's rulers, while yet, others, equally point to national interest, humanitarian considerations and regional stability. Okolie (2010), debunked national interest consideration by arguing that Nigeria's interventions through ECOMOG cannot be said to have been solely motivated by the pursuit of national interest. That national interest alone cannot explain the shift from the government opposition to the late Samuel Doe in the Pre-Babangida period

to its support for Doe during Babangida's regime. He equally argued, that it does not explain why Charles Taylor was prevented from taking Monrovia only to later promote a settlement that put him in power years later, thus prolonging the conflict. He concluded by arguing, that it was the personal interest of rulers such as Babangida and Jerry Rawlings friendship with Samuel Doe that was the deciding factor at that time. Apart from the personal interest of the leader's consideration, some other scholars equally opined that some soldiers and commanders were allegedly involved in the illicit diamond trade in Sierra Leone and that ECOMOG deliberately prolong the conflict because of this illicit gain. This same school of thought posits that Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping was a way to keep the military busy, diverting ambitious officers away from plotting coups. This position was corroborated by Hutchful (1999) when he argued that General Abacha was said to have use ECOMOG assignment to rid himself of troublesome units and officers, many of whom subsequently retired at the end of their posting.

Generally, discussion of this nature (i.e. reasons for Nigeria's intervention in peacekeeping) in international relation is subdivided into two main categories: the objective conditions-cum-the subjective conditions. The objective conditions that appear to have influenced Nigeria's decision to intervene in peacekeeping operations include its size, population, resources, size of its military and colonial experience. The subject conditions ranges from Nigerian government's fear of the so-called domino-effect, that is, destabilization spreading from one hot spots to another countries in the sub-region, thereby threatening regimes, concern over the possible influx of refugees and the pressure it would put on resources as well as its political destabilizing effect.

Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping operations in Africa has attracted series of debate; but there seem to be a consensus on the rationale of Nigeria's commitment to peacekeeping operations but disagreement on the extent of Nigeria's realization of her national interest whilst participating in Peace Support Operation (Zabadi and Onuoha, 2012). Nigeria's foreign commitment to peace support operations has boosted the country's military and diplomatic status within the international system. Like Ogaba (2000) argued, it has been through the instrumentality of peacekeeping force that Nigeria has assumed the status of major actors in international conflict management. In fact, it is this commitment in promoting peace and security through such operation in the regional and sub-regional peacekeeping missions, that Nigeria laid claim to a permanent seat in an expanded United Nation Security Council. This too, also had collateral impact on the Nigerian Armed Forces as it has functioned to provide training to them and provide opportunities for more practical experience in soldiering. It has equally exposed her officers and men to latest technology in weaponry and techniques of modern warfare. Her active participation in peace support operations has enhanced her global rating in international affairs as some of her nationals have gone on to become Force Commanders, Deputy Force Commanders and Chief Military Observers of Missions.

Nigerian Chief Military Observes and Force Commanders of Peace-Keeping Missions From 1960 to 2010

S/N	Name	Operation Code/Organization	Country	Period
1.	Maj. Gen. J. Uajuiyu Ironsi	ONUC, UN	Congo	1960 – 1964
2.	Brig. Ademulegun	BILA	Tanzania	1964
3.	Maj. Gen. E. Unima	UNAVEM I. UN	Angola	1991
4.	Maj. Gen. C. A. Garuba	UNAVEM II. UN	Angola	1991 – 1992
5.	Maj. Gen. C. A. Garuba	UNAVEM II. UN	Angola	1992 – 1995
6.	Maj. Gen. E. Opaleye	UNAMIR, UN	Rwanda	1993
7.	Col. L. J. Dogoyaro	Harmony I, Bilateral	Chad	1979
8.	Col. M. Magoro	Harmony I, Bilateral	Chad	1979
9.	Maj. Gen. G. Ejiga	Harmony II OAU	Chad	1981 – 1982
10.	Maj. Gen. J. Dongoyaro	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1990
11.	Maj. Gen. R. Kupolai	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1992
12.	Maj. Gen. I. Bakut	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1993
13.	Maj. Gen. A. Olurin	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1994
14.	Maj. Gen. J. M. Inienger	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1995

15.	Maj. Gen. S. L. Malu	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1996 – 1997
16.	Maj. Gen. T. Shelpidi	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	S/Leone	1998 – 1999
17.	Maj. Gen. F. A. Mujakperuo	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1999
18.	Maj. Gen. G. A. Akpamber	ECOMOG, ECOWAS	Liberia	1999 – 2000
19.	Maj. Gen. S. Ilyia	MONUC, UN	DR Congo	2003 – 2005
20.	Maj. Gen. J. O. Owonibi	UNMIL	Liberia	2003 – 2005
21.	Maj. Gen. F. Okonkwo	AMIS	Sudan	2005 – 2008
22.	Lt. Gen. C. I. Obiakor	UNMIL	Liberia	2006 – 2008
23.	Maj. Gen. C. R. U. Ihekire	AMIS	Sudan	2006 – 2007
24.	Gen. M. I. Agwai	UNAMID	Sudan	2007 – 2009
25.	Maj. Gen. M. B. Obi	UNMIS	Sudan	2010

It has equally provided a platform from which some Nigerians have earned enviable positions in major international organizations such as the United Nations, which has made the organization entrust her with the lead role of chairing, its organization special committee on peacekeeping. It has equally created relatively stable environment for Nigerian investors to make in road into post-conflict economics of some West African States. Banks like United Bank for Africa (UBA), Access Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank and Nigeria's Telecommunication giant-Globacom having investment footprints in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo DR and Cote d'Ivoire (Onuoha, 2021). Nigeria has equally benefited through reimbursement on Personnel and Contingent Owned Equipment (COE). According to Obiakor (2015), Nigeria did earned a total of US\$ 19,206,994 from the reimbursement of COE and provision for self-sustainment for her contributions to UNMIL, UNAMID and MINUSMA in 2014. Participation in PSO can also be used to augment resource-constrained defence budget at home. Other areas as noted earlier, include training support from developed countries and skills acquisition by Troops such as protecting civilians, building rapport and operating alongside foreign militaries.

The negative aspect of it is that the country has loss many of its military personnel in the course of her commitment to peace support operations. Military personnel were wounded and killed in the course of their duties. At least 703 Nigerian peacekeepers were killed in the ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Newswatch, 1997). Ogar (2012) opined that Nigeria has lost over 2000 soldiers between 1960 and 2012 in the course of maintaining global peace. Agande (2013) equally argued that involvement in peace support operation has placed a heavy financial burden on Nigeria. For him, Nigerian government spent over \$80 million in the Chadian crisis, \$8-10 billion during Liberian crisis, committed about 34 million (i.e. 7 billion) towards the deployment of troops and logistics support to Mali as at January 2013, with an additional pledge of N5 million in further assistance. Gregors Walinski former polish Ambassador to Nigeria cited in Agbakwuru (2013) argued that Nigeria has spent \$13 billion on peace support operations since 1960 with little to show for the sacrifice. He lamented that despite the numerous contributions of the country in peace operation, it was assumed that the country had not taken full advantage of its active participation in the numerous peace operations around the world by not getting commensurate economic, military and political remunerations for its participation. The polish Ambassador point at Ghana that has generated huge funds from the United Nations Peace Support Operation and used them judiciously to defray the costs of sustaining her military. It appears that Nigeria has not leveraged such an opportunity to effectively equip her troops or execute any national projects from monies derived from peace support operation, to be sure, that states engage in peace support operation in pursuit of their national interest.

Although, economically, Nigeria's commitment to peace support operation has brought the Nation some foreign exchange earnings, the negative aspect of this commitment is always applicable in the case of regional and sub-regional operations. Nigeria's huge expenditure on such operations has had some adverse effects on her economy. Nigeria is said to have spent a whopping amount of US \$13 billion on ECOMOG operations alone in West Africa (Oyebanjo, 2001). Nigeria may have spent more than this as it was difficult to determine how the country spent to support ECOMOG operations due to improper records and secrecy. Nigeria has made enormous financial and material sacrifices in the sub-regional operations to the detriment of her economy. These resources could have been used to improve the socio-economic status of Nigerian citizens.

Many critics of Nigeria's foreign policies have focused on what they regard as Nigeria's inability or unwillingness to leverage its peacekeeping role in relations with the country's national interest. Some scholars liken Nigeria's enormous peacekeeping sacrifices to Santa Claus (Father Christmas) gifts given as pure charity, without expectation of returns and blame the country for not having a strategy and follow-up actions. That the Nigerian government does not systematically pursue its national interest through peacekeeping may be connected to the authoritarian manner in which decisions about Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping/peacemaking have been made (Okolie, 2010; Onuoha, 2021; Piate, S.M. and Eminice, E.O., 2022). The consensus among these scholars is that, in none of these cases was Nigeria's participation subjected to public debate and scrutiny, neither was it subjected debate within institutions of democracy such as the parliament. Funding for missions has likewise not been subjected to debate or public scrutiny. Operations have not been funded by taxation but by oil rents from which the people are alienated. Thus key decisions were made within military circles. In this context, it appears that Nigerian government would likely pursue the ad hoc personnel and political interests of those in power rather than articulate and pursue the key national interest.

While Nigeria's contribution have to a large extent, been well received externally, on the domestic front, apart from the fact that Nigeria is facing a lot of security challenges at present, there has been growing criticisms or questioning of the rational for such extraordinary human and material investment, particularly when the benefit accruable do not seem commensurate with the investment. Moreover, there is a perception that Nigeria's generosity is increasingly been taken for granted. Existing literature consists largely of personal account of individual peacekeeper (Ayuba, 2006); academic perspective on the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) (Vogt, 1993); historical accounts and military perspective dealing with operational matters (Oni, 2002; Ogomudia, 2007; Jonah and Zabidi, 2009); and others raising policy matters (Alli, 2009; Iliya, 2009). One common thread in the literature is a querying of the national or strategic interest served by pursuing an active peacekeeping role globally. Nigeria's engagement in ECOMOG received vociferous criticism, given the magnitude of resources expended. Although actual financial expenditure in ECOMOG is controversial, the then president – Obasanjo suggested a figure of approximately US \$8 billion (Oluyemi – Kusa, 2007), while Brigadier General Sani, the then director of peace-keeping operations, Army Headquarters, and put it at US \$ 10 billion (Sani, 2009).

Nigeria, the backbone of the operation that lasted over a decade, provided 1 combat battalions, and air squadron. Apart from the loss of lives of officers and soldiers and equipment, it is estimated that over 800 soldiers lost their lives in that operation and were said to have been brought back and buried in the night to avoid public mockery and panic (Malu quoted in Oluyemi – Kusa, 2007). Abubakar (2009) admitted that over 70% of ECOMOG troops and 80% of funds were provided by Nigeria and that Nigeria lost economically by this. Agwai (2020) sum it up thus. In spite of over long years of participation in peacekeeping, experience has shown that Nigeria has not capitalized on human and material contribution to the UN. Even though economic consideration has not been the motivation behind Nigeria's contribution, nothing stops her from benefiting from such efforts as some countries are known to be doing. In order to achieve these goals, Nigeria has to her ability to take part in peace support operation (PSO) both in quality and level of operation.

In the words of ILiya (2009):

Nigeria is known for its robust peacekeeping capacity operations and its preparedness to sacrifice for Africa. We should not continue to partake in peace operations as we have in the past and are still doing without pausing to go into self-introspection in order to come up with firm standards, principles or procedures that would guide us in choosing to participate or not in future PSOs based on our beliefs, cultures, political expediency, our foreign policy thrust and our national and security interest and even our economic standing.

One glaring area in which Nigeria has failed to maximize the gains of the PSO is in the area of logistics, specifically contingent owned equipment (COE) holdings. The United Nation reimburses contributing countries for providing equipment according to a specific table of equipment. Agwai argues that:

If Nigeria has 10APCs and they stay in Darfur for one month that is US \$ 60,000 multiplied by one year, you get a total of US \$ 730,000 on the 10APC (Armsured Personnel Carriers) alone when it comes to this, you are actually making money. I have evidence to prove that there are countries today that are virtually running their military, particularly the army based

on their investment in the United Nation. All what you need to do is invest, if a battalion is equipped to meet UN standards, each battalion will fetch you a minimum of US \$1.2 million a month. But if you do not invest, you cannot get anything. And this is the problem we are having in the world, particularly in Nigeria.

While Nigeria has played a vital role in international peacekeeping, both under the auspices of United Nation, as well as ECOWAS, Nigeria itself has been immersed in conflict, either at the level of intra-elite struggles for power or conflict within the context of its troubled federal experiment. Thus while Nigeria possess the necessary potential as well as institutional structures needed for formulating a vibrant foreign policy, its constraints lie in domestic factors – namely the nature of the foreign policy elite and Nigeria's economic dependence and vulnerability.

It appears that the Federal military government under the then General Babangida and Abacha administration did not have a clear cut idea of the nature of the national interest in its decision to intervene in Liberia Sierra Leone. This is because like Musa (2010), rightly noted, state becomes involved in peacekeeping not out of some idea of global good citizenship, but rather out of concern for furthering particular state interest. For instance, Nigeria has been a party to many peacekeeping operations at the sub-regional, regional and global levels, with so many sacrifices, yet no explicit or implicit post policy dividend has even been derived from such military exertions. When the United States of America led its "Coalition of the willing" to invade Iraq and topple Saddam Hussein, American Companies like Halliburton and the entire defence sector were positioned for the post conflict reconstructions in that country. In the case of Nigeria in Liberia and Sierra Leone under the ECOMOG, no such post conflict reconstruction engagement ensued to the benefit of the Nigerian State, the private sector or any segment of the civil society. This is a clear example of the fruitlessness of the Nigeria's Foreign Policy within the context of the national interest. Agwu (2009) maintains that, Nigeria's inability to take advantage of the post-conflict reconstruction in the arena it has exerted its military and other resources in peace support operations is however, found in the underdeveloped nature of its institution – especially the economic institutions as compared to the United States that possesses vibrant economy. The Nigerian economy at both the public and the private sectors is completely bereft of such without the appropriation platforms to harness the post-conflict reconstruction; Nigeria is completely excluded, leaving the field to the developed and independent economies, which have the where withal. This suggests that our national interest may not be exclusively located abroad, but is rather primarily at home. Nigeria has not gotten from Africa in general and the sub-region in particular, the recognition, political attention and strategic rewards she deserves, as a result of such sacrifices, losses and leadership roles in peace support operation. Such strategic rewards include winning reconstruction contracts in post-conflict countries, securing lucrative business opportunities for her firms, and getting some countries to support her candidacy for strategic positions in multilateral organizations like the United Nations and others.

3. Conclusion

The paper demonstrated that Nigeria has been instrumental in bringing about peace in Africa in general and the sub-region in particular and that this has come at great cost to Nigeria, both in financial and human resources. It appears that the search for global influence, prestige, recognition and the desire to play a big brother role in Africa rather than economic prosperity of the Nigerian States are crucial issues in understanding Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping operations in Africa. That is, there is a missing link between Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping in Africa cum economic prosperity/security of the Nigerian State. This is why scholars sometime question whether or not, Nigeria has a clear understanding of the strategic national interest she is pursuing by participating in Peace Support Operation in Africa and by extension, if she has effectively utilized her sustained contribution to realize such interest? That the reason Nigerian government does not systematically pursue its national interest through peacekeeping is connected to the authoritarian manner in which decisions about Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping operations has been made and her inability to take advantage of the post-conflict reconstruction in the arena it has exerted its military and other resources in peace support operations is however, found in the underdeveloped nature of its institution – especially the economic institutions. Finally, though Nigeria should continue to shoulder the bulk of the burden of peacekeeping whenever peace is threatened in Africa, there is need for Nigeria to mobilize other African countries in the region in support of peace support

operations rather than acting unilaterally and above all Nigeria should invest in preventive diplomacy and promotion of good governance in the region.

The way forward is that Nigerian government's objectives and preparations for peacekeeping operations in Africa should be reviewed in order to see the extent to which they are designed to fit with Nigeria's national interest. This is because the confusion over what constitutes Nigeria's national interest and the procedure for its realization vividly explains why Nigeria's foreign policy since independence, has witnessed enormous cost without any corresponding dividends.

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