

Mitigating Interventionism for National Peace and Security: Empirical Evaluations from Nigeria

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Abstract

The extent to which there is foreign intervention was studied with an additional objective of proffering solutions to mitigate the menace of interventionism for Nigeria's national peace and security. This was carried out using descriptive survey research design, in a study area spanning the Federal Territory Abuja, Nigeria. The study employed purposive sampling, using its homogeneous sampling aspect that focused on particular sub-groups, from which 150 Respondents were evenly selected from the diplomatic corps, security agencies, and academic. It was found that there are indeed, significantly covert levels of foreign intervention in the country's affairs. Such areas of interference include security, politics/policy, socio-economic (loans), and so on. The study also determined that foreign intervention in Nigeria and Africa in general takes place for a number of reasons including fragile governments, historical acrimonies, exclusionary politics, opposed legitimacy, natural resource rivalry, external political and economic interference, conflicts and terrorist ideologies. It was concluded that Nigeria will likely continue to face significant incidence of foreign interventions (both overt and covert), due to her stance within the West African sub-region and for also being a power block in the continent of African. The study ultimately recommended that, to help mitigate incidence of foreign interventions, political office holders should ensure that strong institutions of democracy and statehood are built properly. Also, the country's leadership should ensure that there are clear and strong policies and that these policies are made clear in their dealings with particularly countries of the West. Additionally, the country's leadership should look inward towards managing and stopping conflicts without taking a beggarly approach to the West.

Keyword: Interventionism, Peace, Security, Security, Politics, Policy, Socio-Economics, Nigeria

Introduction

The history of nations is the history of armed conflict. Indeed, the significance of the state and its ultimate evolution as the sovereign entity of international exchanges can be directly attributed to the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648. It was indeed this treaty that ended the Thirty Years' War, marking effectively the end of the rule of religious authority in the globe (Mingst, Arregu , and Ivan, 2017). Out of this debris emerged the State as the territorial entity with the sovereign power to deal in series of reciprocal rights and obligations with individuals within its confines.

Foreign intervention in the affairs of a state is so important that it can impede world peace. The very failure of the League of Nations, the predecessor he United Nations, is directly traceable to this. The League of Nations was established in 1919, in the aftermath of World War I, under the Treaty of Versailles with the objective of promoting "international cooperation and to achieve peace and security" (United Nations, 2023). In reality, a number of events led to the failure of the League of Nations. But the most significant were accompanied by the world economic depression in the 1930s which made nations become more aggressive towards each other. Fascism became the order of the day in Germany, Italy and Japan, as dictators took power with the only intent of empire-building in blunt defiance of the League. Japan conquered Manchuria in 1932 even with the objection of the League that was powerless to do little in response. With the League's support of China's sovereignty, Japan left the League of Nations in March 1933. Adolf Hitler also too Germany was leaving the League in October

1933. Italy saw current events as an opportunity to take revenge against Ethiopia for its defeat in the First Italo-Abyssinia (1895 to 1896). It therefore invaded Abyssinia in 1935 and started the Second Italo-Abyssinia in 1935. The League was also powerless to stop Germany's during the Sudeten crisis of 1938, as Britain and France were ignored and appeased Hitler. These crises diminished and ultimately destroyed the authority of the League, leading to World War II.

As Downes (2021) noted, large countries may threaten or enact military, economic or political action against smaller nations with the primary justification either that the smaller state was unable to guarantee the safety of its foreign residents (in other words, the citizens of the intervening power), or that the smaller state was unable to govern itself and possibly posed a threat to the region. Such situations may arise from civil war or other disturbances of the peace, economic collapse, or other domestic disorder; and the circumstances for intervention may be engineered, or construed from a very distorted perspective in order to justify aggression and colonization or economic dominance through forced treaties and agreements. The phenomenon of intervention is certainly not new, and sovereignty has never been an absolute, unchanging concept. However, commentators have detected that the international system has entered an 'age of intervention', marked by an increased incidence and legitimacy of forcible interference in the internal affairs of states.

Foreign intervention can also take the form of denial of a country of critical asset by a member of the international community. As an example, the 9/11 terrorist attack on US soil ushered in a strategic new era in world's peace and security. The US used this occasion to articulate and project its new strategic interest around the globe in a move nicknamed "war on terror." While the US invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, were the major targets, a number of what was considered "rogue states" (principally Iran and North Korea), were also targeted. Indeed, Africa was not left out of this plot as there were externally sponsored armed conflicts in the African region. As an example, in January 2007, Ethiopia, with the bidding of the US, invaded Somalia. It attacked the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) led government, and consequently accused it of harbouring anti-American terrorists (Caplan, 2008). It is interesting to note that at the time of this particular invasion, the UIC had reasonably stabilized the country (for the first time in some 15 years). It had also seized the control of much of Somalia from the rebels and had also openly resisted America's political control (Olende, 2009).

On April 15, 2023, armed clashes broke out in Khartoum (which is the capital city of Sudan), arising from escalating tension emanating from proposed transition to democratic governance. It is estimated that since early June, over 2 million people have been displaced including some 500,000 persons who have fled to other countries such as Chad, Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and South Sudan. Additionally, up to 2.5 million more people are expected to be threatened by severe hunger in the coming months, while some 25 million people (more than half of the population), may need humanitarian aid in 2023 (World Vision, 2023). Interestingly, foreign powers have been implicated in the current Sudan crisis. Russia and China are both implicated for their continued role Sudan in particular and Africa in general. The Wagner Group, which is a high-profile group of Russian mercenaries, has come out to deny any involvement in the current events in Sudan, with a post on Telegram: "Due to the large number of inquiries from various foreign media about Sudan, most of which are provocative, we consider it necessary to inform everyone that Wagner staff have not been in Sudan for more than two years" (The Conversation, 2023). It is also instructive to note that China has been contributing to peacekeeping in Sudan for years. Also of concern to many watchers are Beijing's loans for infrastructure and development to Africa, which Sudan benefits, might be "debt-trap diplomacy", a predatory process to acquire key foreign infrastructure such as ports. The US is also concerned of this incursion from both nations for its own strategic national interests.

Another good example on how a country can be denied critical asset was the case of Nigerian and some other African countries, which has been threatened by the West for legalising same sex marriage. International Crisis Group (2006) reported that the US was funding warlord proxies between \$100,000 and \$150,000 monthly in Kenya to purchase arms to destabilise Somalia. This is in breach of the UN arms embargo. No wonder African

leaders, knowing the antecedent of the US bluntly refused the establishment of the US initiative AFRICOM Headquarters on the African continent. The Nigerian Senate had passed the Bill prohibiting same sex marriage and stipulating up to 14-year jail term (with no option of fine) for offenders. The UK government threatened to stop its financial assistance to any country that legislates against gay marriage. Similarly, the US government denied the Goodluck Jonathan's government the much needed military fighters and other hardware needed to fight terrorism in the country (Akogun and Ohia, 2011).

Foreign interventions need not be so overt to be effective and impact negatively on a nation. As Schmidt (2018) noted:

In Nigeria, a conflict in the northeast that was focused on local grievances established links to al-Qaeda when Nigerian insurgents, who had trained in Mali's al-Qaeda camps, returned home with weapons acquired from Libyan stockpiles. As the Nigerian conflict expanded into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, it attracted fighters from Mali, Mauritania, and Algeria—as well as support from the Islamic State. Neighboring countries, attacked by Nigerian insurrectionists and threatened by the influx of refugees, joined forces with the Nigerian military to respond both to regional instability and to the threat from international terrorist movements (Schmidt, 2018; p.293).

A number of scholars have investigated and established the phenomenon of foreign interventionism with particular reference to Africa (See Schmidt, 2018; Finnemore, 2004; Kinzer, 2017; and Fang, Kothari, McLoughlin, and Yenice, 2020. Alhussaini, Iroye and Ibebunjo (2023) investigated causes and consequences of foreign intervention for Africa and Nigeria in particular. However, it is cogent to determine if such interventions are significant enough to impact on the national security of Nigeria and determine how such impact can be mitigated. For these reasons therefore, the under-listed questions are raised:

1. Are there significant cases of interventions by extra-African entities in the study area?
2. How can such foreign interventions be mitigated for Nigeria's national peace and security?

Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse

In the following section, concepts used in the study are explained for clarity sake and to show theoretical relations in the study.

The Concept of Interventionism

As Finnemore (2004) noted, foreign intervention can be defined as the interference in the territory or domestic affairs of another state with military force, typically in a way that compromises a sovereign government's control over its own territory and population. However, reasons and consequences of foreign interventions are often more covert than the generally projective reasons such as to end dictatorship, defeat terrorism, humanitarian abuses and the protection of national sovereignty (in some cases).

As contrasted with simple influence (intercession), Kinzer (2017) posited that intervention is aimed at deciding the domestic or foreign affairs of another country in the interests of the intervening country. Intervention may be overt (armed intervention) or covert, such as: the imposition of an alien political, economic or social system; the organization of conspiracies coups d'etat, and civil wars to achieve such aims; the dispatching of spies, terrorists, and saboteurs; financing and supplying armaments; making loans with strings attached; and the use of radio, television, and press to conduct hostile propaganda. Although intervention is outlawed in numerous international treaties and agreements, including the UN Charter, it is employed by the major industrial powers leading to continual mistrust and covert activities.

However, not all aggressive acts on the part of a government are interventionist. Defensive warfare within a country's own legal jurisdiction is not interventionist in nature, even if it involves employing violence to alter the behaviour of another country. A country needs both to act outside its boundaries and to threaten force in order to be an agent of interventionism. Downes, (2021). Many have debated whether interfering with another country's internal affairs can ever be justified morally. As with any dilemma, that of interventionism also arises from the struggle between two competing principles. According to Henderson (2019) opponents of interventionism argue that interfering with another country's policies and actions can never be right, regardless of the aggressor's motivations, and that a country's imposing its will on another is an unjustifiable act of violence. Conversely, one could also contend that defending the weak against the oppression over of the strong is a moral duty that takes precedence over the right to be left unmolested. Evidently, both positions rest on strong moral arguments, which makes the interventionist debate traditionally passionate and, at times, strongly antagonistic. Furthermore, those who agree on the necessity of intervention may disagree on details such as the origin, magnitude, purpose, and timing of the planned intervention.

Domestic interventions entail restricting the choices of individuals or groups or altering their activities through legislative coercion. Limiting freedom of speech or trade, restricting occupational access to certain religious groups, or enforcing the draft are examples of interventions in the choices of individuals or groups, while increasing beer taxes are examples of altering choices through legislative frameworks; failure to comply may incur penalties (Agrawal, 2016). On the international level, interventionist activities involve threatening, coercing, or forcing another group or nation to alter its behaviour or change its government or policies. International interventionism can incorporate direct activities such as the use or threat of war, as well as indirect activities such as assassination, subversion, and economic embargoes of all descriptions (complete or partial blockades, transport restrictions, etc) (Downes, 2021). General goals of international interventionism include attempting to change: governments (e.g., Iran, 1979); people's expectations of governmental activities; general attitudes of just conduct not held as appropriate in the wider international community (e.g., South African Apartheid). Specific goals can include changing a state apparatus or its personnel (the government), to remove a particular statesperson or group, to change specific or general policies, to alter cultural or political beliefs, or even to alter patterns of economic and population distributions (Agrawal, 2016).

Foreign Intervention

For many outsiders, the word *Africa* conjures up images of a continent in crisis, riddled with war and corruption, imploding from disease and starvation. Africans are regularly blamed for their plight. Finnemore (2004) posited that they are frequently viewed as being intolerant of ethnic and religious differences but accepting of corruption and dictatorship. They are often presumed to be unwilling or unable to govern themselves. This book challenges such popular myths. By examining the historical roots of contemporary problems, the book demonstrates that many of the predicaments that plague the continent today are not solely the result of African decisions but also the consequence of foreign intrusion into African affairs. Focusing on foreign political and military intervention in Africa during the periods of decolonization (1956–75) and the Cold War (1945–91), with reflections on the later periods of state collapse (1991–2001) and the “global war on terror” (2001–10), this book advances four central propositions.

As Malis, Querubin and Satyanath (2021) noted that colonial systems faltered, imperial and Cold War powers vied to control the decolonization process. While imperial powers hoped to transfer the reins of government to neo-colonial regimes that would continue to serve their political and economic interests, Cold War powers strove to shape a new international order that instead catered to their interests. Although independence struggles and their aftermath were dominated by local issues, Cold War intervention rendered the conflicts more lethal and the consequences longer lasting. Second, as the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War ended, African nations were abandoned by their Cold War allies. They were bequeathed a legacy of enormous debt; collapsed states; and, in many cases, deadly competition for the spoils. While indigenous prodemocracy movements challenged

warlords and autocrats, foreign actors both helped and hindered their efforts. Neighbouring states and regional, continental, and transcontinental organizations supported opposing sides in the war-making and peace-building processes. Third, the global war on terror, like its Cold War antecedent, increased foreign military presence on the African continent and generated new external support for repressive governments. Fourth, throughout the periods under consideration, foreign intervention tended to exacerbate rather than alleviate African conflicts and to harm rather than help indigenous populations. Even international humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts were marred by conflicting interests that sometimes hurt the people they were intended to assist (Downes and Monten, 2013).

In the international sphere, legal positivists are commonly non-interventionists. Legal positivists, following Christian Wolff (1679-1754), argue that nation states possess absolute rights to political sovereignty and territorial integrity, which implies that national borders be inviolable. Wolff writes: “Nations are regarded as individual free persons living in a state of nature. For they consist of a multitude of men united into a state. Since states are regarded as individual free persons living in a state of nature, nations must also be regarded in relation to each other as individual free persons living in a state of nature.” The positivist theory of international relations implies that interventions would violate international borders; this position itself resolves into an absolutist doctrine that deems interventions should never be condoned and more pragmatic positions that permit some exceptions to the rule (Pugh, 2012).

A Hobbesian case for interventionism can be maintained by those who consider governments the sole and proper moral and legal authorities. Hobbes claims that individuals give up the rights that they possess in the state of nature (except the right of self-preservation) to the state (the ‘Leviathan’). He argues the State should be obeyed, even it is acting quite tyrannically, for the alternative –and the greater evil– is the state of war in which justice and morality do not hold. However, if a state acts to takes its civilians into the state of nature by governing incompetently or unjustly then the people have a right to form a new state. This allows the legal positivist to condone interventions where governments have obviously failed in their obligations and have brought war to the people through their ineptitude. The third possible justification for the positivist is when a supra-legal body legislates in favour of an intervention. For example, the United Nations has the jurisdiction to pass a resolution of intervention, but it does not condone unilateral interventions. Positivists draw parallels here between governments arbitrating in domestic disputes and a world body acting to dissolve international disputes (Downes and O'Rourke, 2016).

Security and National Security

Imogige (2003: VII) explained that “security has to do with the freedom from danger, fear, anxiety or uncertainty.” He further noted that it is a condition of being protected from, or not being exposed to danger.” In the recent past therefore, the concept of security was mostly centred on the security of the state. In contemporary times, security has been conceptualized to be more humane, without impeding on the security of the state. Consequently, the concept of human security was developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (in 1992), at its Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) – the Rio Earth Summit. The Committee on Human Security (CHS, 2003), explains that human security should not just be the absence of violent conflict, but must encompass human rights, good governance, access to education and health care, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential. It further broadened the conception to mean: freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of the future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human, and therefore national security (Committee on Human Security, 2003; p.4).

The general concept of national security takes a more limited approach from the more advanced concept of security from human security. According to the National Defence College of India (1996), national security is the appropriate and aggressive blend of political resilience and mature human resources, economic structure and

capacity, technological competence, industrial base and availability of natural resources and finally military might. Dogo (2013: 24) explained that national security includes all the measures and activities that are involved in the protection of the country and her citizens. This also refers to the act of ensuring the safety of the country and her citizens from internal and external threats which may be physical attacks by enemies, dysfunctional behaviours' of citizens etc. He further threats to national security to include acts capable of undermining the economic progress, political and social stability and the general well-being of the citizens. It is therefore important for the Nigerian state to have the capacity of a state to promote the pursuit and realisation of the fundamental needs and vital interests of man and society, and to protect them from threats which may be economic, social, environmental, political, military or epidemiological in nature (Onuoha, 2008: 265). As Nwagboso (2012) succinctly put it, the Nigeria's national security policy objectives are simply the preservation of the lives and properties of Nigerians at home and abroad and the promotion of the sovereignty, interest and integrity within the committee of nations. This therefore means that the interest in Nigeria's national security needs to be rekindled and discuss on the subject brought to scholarly fore. One of such notable occasions was during the Olusegun Obasanjo's led government when a Retreat on National Security in August 2001. The concept of "Grand Strategy for National Security" was engendered. During that occasion, President Obasanjo stated:

The concept of National Security which will apply during [his] presidency shall be the aggregation of the security interests of the individuals, political entities, human associations and ethnic groups, which make up the nation [...]. The security interest includes safety of life and property, economic, physiological and mental well-being and the freedom to pursue the attainment of legitimate objectives without hindrance. [The primary objective of national security is] to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interests and objectives, to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth, improve the welfare and well-being and quality of life of every citizen (Obasanjo, 2001; p.1).

An interesting element of the above grand strategy and its outlook was the wholesome attention given to the question of migrants, who were considered the troublemakers. There is no doubt that migration has a huge role to play in trans-national crimes are this constitutes the medium through which such criminal and economically dangerous activities are carried out.

Realism (Power Theory)

This theory is mostly attributed to Hans Morgenthau (1904–1980). It is also known as power that deal with the assumption of the primary role of sovereign states who act rationally to advance their security, power, and wealth in an anarchic international system. This also means that the nation-state (usually abbreviated to 'state') is the principal actor in international relations. Stewart (1989) suggests that with regards to power, all leaders, regardless of their political affiliation recognise this as they attempt to manage their state's affairs in order to survive in a competitive environment. To Hunt (1989), realism frequently draws on examples from the past placing emphasis on the idea that humans are essentially held hostage to repetitive patterns of behaviour determined by their nature. With the organisation of individuals into states, human nature impacts on state behaviour. This is why Niccolò Machiavelli focused on the basic human characteristics influence the security of the state, which led to the state-centric approaches of security.

With regards to impact of realism on Africa and indeed Nigeria, Weber (2005) opined that the impetus for intervention often comes from freelance militarized political groups, notably in Africa, but international intervention mainly arises in the relatively powerful states in the world, or from regional hegemon. In this respect, interventions also reflect the structures of inequality in the international system and intervenors are dealing with the manifestations of problems that arise partly from their dominance of the global economy. It is no coincidence that the 'targets' of intervention, are overwhelmingly from poorer parts of the world, marginalized in, or excluded from, the capitalist world economy and that are now to be rescued or policed by those who organize the intervening. Although a particular intervention may be portrayed as liberating people from oppression, and can

achieve immediate results in this respect, its function is generally to contribute to an international order that maintains a global political economy formed according to the ideologies of the most-wealthy and formative actors (Weber, 1995).

Methodology

The research design used for this study was descriptive survey. Area of the study is Abuja Federal Territory (Nigeria). As there is not list for the population of the study (particularly with the unique nature of the study), non-probability sampling was used. This included purposive sampling, combined with snowball sampling technique. For practicality also, purposive sampling was utilized to enable us choose members of population to participate in the study. This technique also is useful as it usually can help a researcher to obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, saving time and money (Black, 2010). Therefore, of the six categories of purposive sampling (typical, extreme, critical, heterogeneous, homogeneous, and theoretical sampling), homogeneous sampling was chosen as it “focuses on one particular subgroup in which all the sample members are similar, such as a particular occupation or level in an organization’s hierarchy” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

Stemming from the above, appropriate groups by snowballing into others which are diplomats, security agencies and peace ambassadors within the FCT, Abuja. Since the researcher do not have the total number of populations to sample. The sampling was thus carried out with 50 respondents for each category such as diplomats, security agencies, and the academia, making it a total of 150 respondents.

Instrument for data collection was questionnaires and interviews, while the data obtained were analysed quantitatively using Likert scale, with the aid of tables and computations. Using measures of central tendency, a cut-off points of 2.50 was set. Any score less than 2.50 was rejected, while those above was accepted. Similarly, data obtained from interview was analysed using descriptive techniques and triangulated with secondary materials.

Data presentation and Analyses

In the sections below, data gathered from questionnaire and interviews were analysed using Likert Scale and descriptive techniques. From the total number of 150 questionnaire administered to our sub-grouped of respondents, 100 per cent was returned. This was due to the closed nature of the group, it was therefore easy to monitor and get back all responses.

In the section below, causes of foreign intervention in Nigeria was analysed from our questionnaires, and presented in the table below.

Research Question 1: Are there significant cases of interventions by extra-African entities in the study area?

Answers to the above question was analysed from our questionnaire and tabulated below:

Table 1: Significant cases of interventions by extra-African entities in the study area

Cases of interventions	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1. There have been foreign interventions by western nations in Africa and Nigeria affairs	81	84	12	6	2.80	0.746	Agree
2. There has been foreign interference on the issue of Boko haram and other insecurity in Africa and Nigeria	90	56	25	2	2.75	0.708	Agree
3. There has been foreign interference in terms of loans to Nigeria and other African countries.	85	73	15	10	2.66	0.563	Agree
4. There is foreign interest on the emergence of many Nigerian leaders and some African country by western nation	58	82	34	9	2.55	0.458	Agree
					2.65	0.675	Agree

Source: Field survey 2023

As noted above, for measurements of our central tendency, any score below 2.50 is rejected, while those above as accepted. Table 1 shows mean scores of 2.80, 2.75, 2.66 and 2.55 in support of the cases of interventions by extra-African entities in the study area for items 1, 2, 3 and 4. The overall mean scores of 2.65 and a standard deviation of 0.675 respectively to indicate that there have been significant foreign interventions by western nations in Africa and Nigeria affairs. The interventions are the issue of Boko haram and other insecurity in Africa and Nigeria, foreign interference in terms of loans to Nigeria and other African countries and foreign interest on the emergence of many Nigerian leaders and some African country by western nation.

Research Question 2: How can such international intervention be mitigated for national and international security?

Table 2: Mitigation of International intervention for national and international security

Mitigation of intervention	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1. Improved security network	91	74	12	7	2.85	0.646	Agree
2. Employment generation and Sustainable Human Development	90	71	10	2	2.78	0.705	Agree
3. Transparent and accountable leadership.	85	73	20	5	2.75	0.763	Agree
4. Improved economy	72	77	24	9	2.63	0.651	Agree
					2.80	0.871	Agree

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 2 shows mean scores of 2.85, 2.78, 2.75 and 2.63 in support of the Mitigation strategies of International intervention for national and international security for items 1, 2, 3 and 4. The overall mean scores of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 0.871 respectively indicate that international intervention by western nations can be mitigated by improved security network, employment generation and sustainable human development, transparent and accountable leadership as well as improved economy.

Discussions of findings

As noted above, the mean scores of 2.65 and a standard deviation of 0.675 respectively are indicative of significant foreign interventions by Western nations and other non-state actors in the internal security affairs of Nigeria. Such issues of interventions can be exemplified from the Boko Haram insurgency. As Schmidt (2018) noted, the Boko Haram fighters were trained and partially equipped by external forces such as al-Qaeda.

This is instructive also due to the fact that the US even has a 51 page policy on the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (See Campbell, 2014). In that document, Campbell (2014) stated categorically that:

...the United States has an interest in ensuring the stability and democratic future of Nigeria, as both ends in themselves and as a means to blunt the advance of Boko Haram. Unfortunately, Washington's ability to effect change is limited. Abundant oil income means Nigeria is not reliant on U.S. aid, which is in any event modest. In addition, its size and economic strength make it a dominant power in regional institutions, a status that further tends to reduce U.S. leverage (Campbell, 2014).

The above statement alludes to intervention by the US due to their strategic interest in the country, the extent to which may not be really known.

Additionally, Nigeria-France relationship has in the past been one of turmoil and reproach. As Ibebunjo and Udeoji (2019) have noted,

Nigeria stood against the apartheid regime in South Africa on a number of occasions and on July 8, 1986 led 30 out of the 59 members of the Commonwealth of Nations to boycott the 13th edition of the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Scotland. This was in condemnation of the pro-Apartheid actions and statements of the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. It severed diplomatic relations with France in 1961, in protest of French atomic bomb test in the Sahara. Also, the setting up of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its military force the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) (Ibebunjo and Udeoji, 2019; p.166).

Such hegemonic and power-stance from Nigeria sets her up for any form of interference. In line with this, a respondent opined, the contributions of Nigeria in conflict resolution in West Africa has demonstrated that the country has the capacity to build a security network that will tackle insecurity in the country to protect her territorial boundaries. As Akogun and Ohia (2011) similarly noted, intervention can also mean denying a country of critical assets. This was demonstrated by the US government during the Goodluck Jonathan's government when it refused to sell military fighters and other hardware needed to fight terrorism in the country on grounds of human rights violations.

From empirical analyses in the second research question, we find that a number of measures can be taken to mitigate foreign interventions in Nigeria. They include: improved security network, employment generation, improvement in Sustainable Human Development, transparent and accountable leadership, improved economy and general infrastructure of government. This will indeed help to reduce incidence of foreign involvement of the West in Nigeria and indeed Africa, as some of these afore-mentioned factors are reasons for intervention. To support this assertion, Gilpin (2016) and Fang, Kothari, McLoughlin, and Yenice (2020); have linked foreign intervention to Africa's present predicaments, such as fragile governments, historical acrimonies, exclusionary politics, opposed legitimacy, natural resource rivalry, external political and economic interference, conflicts and terrorist ideologies.

In support of the above, a respondent (an academic in relevant field of study), posited that the associated

widespread poverty, unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria are responsible for lack of public support for Nigeria's frequent interventions for peace and security in West Africa. He queries the rationale for Nigeria's frequent interventions to maintain peace and security in the sub-region when Nigeria is enmeshed in insecurity going by cases of seeming intractable sectarian crises, particularly in its northern region. She further noted that, yearly, there is outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts with tragic consequences fueled by huge population of willing, hungry, desperate, unemployed youths seeking avenues for expressing discontentment over under-performing governments at every level. She concluded that the country will be better, when there is improved security and economy that will promote the wellbeing of citizens.

Another respondent in the military service noted that Nigeria has the capacity to secure her citizens without any external interventions. According to him,

It is unfortunate that the leaders are playing politics with the life of citizens. Although insecurity has pervaded to various parts of the country but when there is concerted efforts by leaders, it can be stem out to promote economic growth. He added that "in a situation where a country's foreign vision and assumed roles impact negatively on its domestic affairs, its foreign objectives must be re-examined and refocused because the atmosphere of growing domestic instability and declining economy, Nigeria's frequent interventions to resolve conflicts in West Africa should also be reviewed to reduce foreign intervention (KI Interview, 2023).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that Nigeria will likely continue to face significant incidence of foreign interventions (both overt and covert), due to her stance within the West African sub-region and for also being a power block in the continent of African. It has also been determined that foreign intervention in Nigeria and Africa in general takes place for a number of reasons including fragile governments, historical acrimonies, exclusionary politics, opposed legitimacy, natural resource rivalry, external political and economic interference, conflicts and terrorist ideologies.

Recommendations

Stemming from the above, the under-listed recommendations are given:

- i Political office holders should ensure that strong institutions of democracy and statehood are built. This will ensure that state frailty, a constant excuse for overt and covert interference, is minimized or eliminated,
- ii The country's leadership should ensure that there are clear and strong policies and that these policies are made clear in their dealings with particularly countries of the West,
- iii Nigerian and African leadership should look inward towards managing issues of development without taking a beggarly approach to the West; and
- iv Strong inclinations should be shown towards self-sufficiency in dealing with conflicts such as terrorism and internal armed conflicts will undermine foreign military incursions.

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