

## **Nigeria's Hegemony in West Africa – Counting the Cost**

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### *Abstract*

*The aim of this study is to examine Nigeria's hegemony in West Africa and its implications on Nigeria's national core development programmes. This is done via critical examination of some selected regional and national development indicators with a view to find ways of improving the overall national performance as significant contribution to regional development. On political impact, the study found that successive Nigerian governments were engrossed in unprecedented national corruption than development, diverting billions of dollars meant for national development in the guise of national security, regional peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention and socio-economic development of the sub region. The consequences of such political ineptitude were widespread: failed leadership, clientelism, rentierism, political apathy, escalating national insecurity, wide-spread poverty and unemployment and poor macroeconomic development. Overall, the study opines that Nigeria should shore up greater commitment and responsibility towards her national and human capital development, massively improve the infrastructure, reorientate both military and political elites to ensure integral national growth, overhaul her regional and foreign policy goals to meet her national interest goals as true catalyst for regional development.*

**Keywords:** *Hegemonism, national security, regionalism, poverty and national development.*

### **Introduction**

The struggle for African Unity and self-determination championed by pan-Africanists in the post-World War II period was, among other factors, to control and contain ravaging insurgencies and colonialism in Africa. In the 1950s through the 1960s it intensely became a dynamic, focused and targeted political struggle for African politico-economic emancipation and led to the political independence of more than half of the 54 African states. To consolidate these struggles continentally, the Heads of State and Government of independent states of Africa formed an all-African Continental Organization – the African Union in Addis Ababa from 23-26 May, 1963. The African Union (2001) as a Pan-African initiative expresses the determined efforts of the Authority of African Heads of State and Government to unite and liberate Africa and its peoples from all forms of neocolonialism. Nigeria championed and endorsed the swing vote for the formation of sub regional organizations to effectively and

expeditiously implement and deliver the continental policies of the AU in the regions. Some of these regional organizations include: East African Community (EAC established 1967 but collapsed 1977 and reestablished 2000), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS 1975), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS, 1983), Arab Maghreb Union (UMA, 1989), Southern African Development Community (SADC, 1992), The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA, 1994), and Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD, 1998).<sup>1</sup> The struggles gradually transmuted into internal regional and sub regional leadership race precipitating the rise and fall of 'hegemonies' in the regions and sub regions.

Nigeria in the 2015 portends the history of a 55-year polity unevenly torn, pressurized, politically and economically contested among the superpower nations, the regions and her nationalities. It is cultural mix of multiple inter-arching variables: a) There is the dominant influence of over three decades of deviant militarized past in the present; b) the continual struggle of about two decades of nascent democratic dispensation (1979-1983, 1999-2015) to wrestle itself from the compelling unsavory mix of foreign interference, military and civilian interventions; c) There is also the burgeoning influence of the ECOWAS sub region and, d) the overbearing question of Nigeria's capability to shoulder regional affairs alongside its exacerbating monolithic economic problems. The precipice of these inter-intra political struggles reflects the gigantic cost of Nigeria's regional hegemony and the abysmally failed domestic leadership, imploding national security, unabating political corruption and nationwide misgivings for burgeoning political apathy consequent upon years of non-delivery of political goods and dividends to the people. However, the current support of Multinational alliance force, the ECOWAS, AU, EU, China, Japan, Israel, USA and the international community (UN) at this critical time of Nigeria's political process, shows that Nigeria's efforts and investments in Africa and sub region and indeed international community, despite its monumental challenges, are not in vain after all. This article examines the implications of Nigeria's strategic posture as an acclaimed regional peacekeeper, economic and political enabler and stabilizer in (West) Africa.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theory is defined as hypothetical set of facts, principles usually derived from the study of a body of knowledge relating to it. It is a scientifically acceptable general principle or body of assumptions offered to explain phenomena. Ben Rosamond argues that "the process of theorizing is, to a very large extent, a mechanism for the generation and organization of disagreement. Put more positively, being theoretically conscious sharpens the sense in which analysts are aware of their own assumptions about the way in which the world works" (Rosamond, 2000). Gerry Stoker opines that theoretical perspective "helps us to see the wood from the trees. Good theories select out certain factors as the most important.... Without such a sifting process no effective observation can take place.... Theories are of value precisely because they structure all observations" (Stoker, 1995).

As a historical antecedent, Nigeria in the 1990s down to the new millennium was described by the CIA World Fact Book as “a regional power with a growing sense of self-assurance and a developing capability to demonstrate it. In the three decades since independence... [Nigeria] sought and played various roles as regional leader, peacekeeper, mediator, and arbiter.”<sup>2</sup> The World Fact Book argues that despite the onerous challenges of the past five decades of Nigeria’s independence, some fundamental factors boosted Nigeria’s capability as regional hegemon in West Africa. They include, size, demography, economic strength, military capabilities and experience, lack of regional rivals, smaller and weaker neighbours set it apart as the dominant regional power.<sup>3</sup> Theorizing in such a manner gives the subject matter its substantive definitional character since “...we are all informed by theoretical perspectives, even if we adopt an avowedly non-theoretical posture.”(Axford, Browning, Huggin, Rosamond, & Turner , 1997).

### **Hegemonism**

According to Collins American English Dictionary (updated 2015), hegemonism is simply defined as “the policy or practice of a nation in aggressively expanding its influence over other countries”. For Gramsci, hegemony means “the ideological predominance of bourgeois values and norms over the subordinate classes” (Carnoy, 1984). While Robert Cox insists that the triumph of hegemony lies essentially when the “consensual aspect of power is in the forefront”.<sup>4</sup> Thomas J. McCormick and scholars of Systemic School of thought of Hegemonic Stability theory perceive hegemony “as a single power’s possession of simultaneous superior economic efficiency in production, trade and finance.” Implicitly, hegemony’s superior position is considered the logical consequence of its superior geography, technological innovation, ideology, superior resources, and other factors (McCormick, 1990). The “theory of hegemonic stability” then as was first mentioned by Robert Keohane (Gilpin, 1987) argues that the international system would most probably be stable when a hegemon or nation-state is the dominant world power (Goldstein, 2005). It refers to a state’s ability to “single-handedly dominate the rules and arrangements ... [of] international political and economic relations” (Goldstein, 2005).

Hegemonism is an age-long, historical phenomenon. International relations at all times and ages witnessed the continued rise and fall of world and regional powers in Global Economic politics. As Robert Gilpin puts it: “The conclusion of one hegemonic war is the beginning of another cycle of growth, expansion, and eventual decline. The law of uneven growth continues to redistribute power, thus undermining the status quo established by the last hegemonic struggle. It has always been thus and always will be, until men either destroy themselves or learn to develop an effective mechanism of peaceful change” (Gilpin, 1981). In the aftermath of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, America assumed the role of the leading world power ‘vetoing’ into national and international policies of nations. As French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine observed in a speech in Paris in early 1999 “The United States of America today predominates on the economic level, the monetary

level, on the technological level, and in the cultural area in the broadest sense of the word; it is not comparable, in terms of power and influence, to anything known in modern history” (Ikenberry, 2001). In Southeast Asia, with the apparent sliding of Japan, China became the dominant power in the region with a clear and dogged pursuit of becoming a world hegemon. In Southwest Asia, the presence of India on the regional stage appears indomitable while in the Middle East, there is the competing struggle of Iran and Israel on the regional scale especially with the fall of Syria and Iraq. In Africa the grandstanding of Nigeria and South Africa over the years is typical. Though the current designation of Nigeria as the biggest and largest economic power in the continent was not well received by South Africa, it appears to douse regional hegemonic stability tensions across the continent. South Africa still dominates the Southern African region and Nigeria in the Sub Sahara Africa. As such, the presence of regional and continental hegemonies in the international system demands critical theoretical examination with the ever challenging intricacies of globalization of technologies, cultures, peoples and nations. Charles P. Kindleberger, a frontline theorist of Hegemonism in his 1973 book *The World in Depression: 1929-1939*, argues that the Great Depression which precipitated the economic quagmire between the two world wars could be significantly linked to the absence of a dominant economic world leader at the time.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, the fall of a hegemon or non existence of hegemony strongly impinges on the stability of international or regional system. For instance, Immanuel Wallerstein opines that the decline of U.S. hegemony in the years ahead is irreversible with unavoidable consequences including: i) The gradual and eventual inability of the U.S. to control and stabilize the global economic politics; ii) The end of the U.S. dollar as the international currency of last resort. iii) It will further lead to serious decline “in the relative standard of living of U.S. citizens and residents. The political consequences of this latter development... will not be insubstantial” (Wallerstein, 2013). The question is: if hegemony is necessary to stabilize international or regional system, does Nigeria have the capability to lead the comity of West African nations given its historic politico-economic conundrum?

### **Regionalism**

Regionalism studies according to Nathan Gills are “those studies that focus on the middle layer of governance, between the state and the global, that emerge out of concerted processes of regional integration like the EU, the Arab League, NAFTA, CARICOM, and ASEAN.”<sup>6</sup> These studies have been founded on theories of different schools of thought.

### **New and Old Regionalism**

De Lombarede argues that in the late 1980s, a new wave of politics started capturing the middle layer of politics between the state and the global. This reverberating changes and challenges in Eastern Europe signaled the end of Cold War and the dawn of a new political order.<sup>7</sup> As the new thinking swerve through political and economic activities of the time

and characteristically in a new dimension, new kind of regionalism that is distinct from the traditional system is believed to be emerging. Regionalists christened and distinguished these waves of critical thinking as 'Closed and Open'; Old and New Regionalisms- clearly distinguishing their historical backgrounds. While making a case for transition from the old and 'closed' regionalism to 'open' and the more multilateral and market-oriented new regionalism in the Latin America and the Caribbean, Reynolds, Thoumi and Wettmann argued that open regionalism represents a "group of dynamic markets fully integrated into the international economy by means of the progressive elimination of trade barriers in conjunction with vigorous measures oriented towards increasing of social access to the market" (Reynolds et al., 1993). In contrast to 'closed' regionalism (import-substitution and protectionist industrial strategy), "open regionalism represents a set of policies driven by the search to harmonize the interdependence generated by preferential agreements, and the flows of trade resulting from the general tariff liberalization"<sup>8</sup>. It is the harmonization of the multilateral regional trade agreements compatible with WTO standards that differentiates the 'open' from the 'closed' system among others. Bergsten defines it as a means of achieving "compatibility between the explosion of regional trading arrangements" (Bergsten, 1997). While Bulmer-Thomas describes it as a set of policy agreements undertaken by states to enhance industrial competitiveness.<sup>9</sup> Reacting to the new world order occasioned by the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Bipolarism which continually triggered and vibrated changes in the international system, Rosecrance argues that "an end to the bipolar cleavage [has led] to a restoration of regional sovereignty" and to the establishment of "several regional powers dominating their geographical areas" (Rosecrance, 1991). Regionalism gained unprecedented momentum across continental divides especially with the increased global reforms brought about by the new dispensation. 'Open' regionalism soon transmuted to a new concept of "New Regionalism". According to Primo and Palacios, the New Regionalism represents "a system of measures that combines the liberalization of goods, services, capital and labor, with the harmonization of trade regimes among the member countries (Primo, 1994; Palacios, 1995). Herman further argues that these policy measures "include specific initiatives, such as the enlargement of agreements, the convergence among the regional and hemispheric initiatives, and the implementation of North-South agreements linking developing countries to industrialized nations."<sup>10</sup>

The transformative transition from old to new regionalism is perceived by analysts as characterizing the changing wave of the international system from shallow to deep integration, old trade theory to new trade theory. While old trade theory which is substantive old regionalism focuses on commodity trade and prices based on Heckscher-Ohlin-Samuelson (HOS) and Viner-Meade theoretical models, "provided a powerful set of tools for analyzing issues arising from both global trade liberalization and the formation of regional trade agreements involving liberalizing commodity trade within the RTA (e.g., a customs union or free trade agreement)"<sup>11</sup>; the New trade theory on the other hand, which is also substantive new regionalism considers "trade-productivity links (i.e. new growth theory)", imperfect competition, and rent-seeking behavior, especially in considering the issue of regionalism versus multilateralism."<sup>12</sup> As perspectives on the new regionalism are

diverse and emerging, the features and characteristics also abound in most literature on regionalism. We present the overview of the general features of the new regionalism as: a) there is increased technology and knowledge transfers from developed to developing countries within and outside the region to boost industrial capability in efficiency and production; b) there is expanded tradable zone of income due to improved comparative advantage, knowledge adaptability and economy of scale; c) there is obvious elimination of wasteful bureaucracy and rentierism giving room to maximum proficiency through trade liberalization; d) there is also remarkable pro-competitive gains due to import competition making room for favourable exploitation of actual and potential economic of scale in regional productivity; e) there is increased foreign direct investment with advanced new technologies and practical techniques leading to increased regional economic average; f) change-challenge response enhances knowledge efficiency and competitiveness in the multilateral global markets; g) there is increased geographical diversification of productivity, expertise and competitiveness through expanded economic zones and tradability;<sup>13</sup> h) regional economic relations are largely regional geographically with the high potential of increasing intraregional trade and competitiveness through the implementation of targeted reforms; i) New regionalism involves ‘deep’ integration process that encourages the elimination of trade barriers, implementation and harmonization of agreeable reform policies; j) the new regionalism involves the linking up of small countries with a large country; for instance in ECOWAS as well as AU, Togo, Benin, Ghana are small in comparison to Nigeria while Botswana and Namibia are comparatively smaller than South Africa but are all linked together in an Economic Community to boost each state’s and regional capability and competitiveness in the international system. <sup>14</sup> Nigeria-ECOWAS relationship in this connection is not only bilateral between a state and its organization but multilateral, that is between Nigeria and states in the ECOWAS organization and beyond, given ECOWAS interregional connections and affiliations to other regional communities like EU, AU, ASEAN inter alia. The discourse on Nigeria’s hegemony in West Africa considered as Nigeria’s regional interventions is the test of capability, integrity and political will.

## **Nigeria’s Strategic Interventions in West Africa**

### **Nigeria-ECOWAS Relations**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a 15-state regional economic organization with a geographical area measuring about 3.8 million square miles which averages about 17% of the African continent. The Treaty of Lagos otherwise known as the ECOWAS Treaty signed by member states on the 28 of May, 1975 at Lagos, Nigeria established the Community. Member states of the Community are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.<sup>15</sup> The main objective of the organization is to promote regional economic integration in “all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce,

monetary and financial questions, social and cultural matters ....”<sup>16</sup> Major organizational institutions that pilot and promote the Community mission include, The Commission, the Community Parliament, the Community Court of Justice and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) among others.<sup>17</sup>

The relationship between Nigeria and ECOWAS is deeper than the mutual relationship between a member and the organization. ECOWAS provides the organizational platform for Nigeria to fully act out the duties of its membership. President Ibrahim Babangida underlined the need for Nigeria to ensure the survival of ECOWAS as a sub-regional economic community: “ECOWAS remains the most important sub-regional experiment at economic integration in the African continent, a fact which bestows on us a heavy responsibility to see it survive and grow as a part of our contribution to the attainment of African economic community.”<sup>18</sup> Ipso facto, Nigeria exercises a deep commitment in the community because of its a) strategic position at the heart of Africa, b) population and size, c) resource endowment; d) military posture- Nigeria has the greatest military power in the sub region. Additionally, Nigeria’s hegemony in West Africa is not only on the scores of the above factors but largely because of the multiplicity, complicity, lethality and regional destabilization of Africa’s predatory war business. More specifically, the nature of West African conflicts has become increasingly intra-state rather than inter-state providing serious cause for concern on the nature of intervention in a nation’s internal affairs. Although these conflicts are intra-state, their impact in terms of deepening humanitarian crises- refugees and internally displaced persons, child soldiers, small arms proliferation, annihilation of human and personal effects, poverty and destitution are borderless. The problem is: should sovereignty be respected under all conditions or are there instances in which intervention in a state’s domestic affairs becomes not only popular right but also international/regional duty? What could be done to minimize domestically and externally undermined threats to national, ipso facto regional security? How could national security be redefined in terms of regional defence?<sup>19</sup> Nigeria-ECOWAS relations in the sub region is not only very strong, mutually reinforcing, inseparable but aimed toward total emancipation of Africa and its peoples.

### **Nigeria’s Peacekeeping Involvement**

The history of Nigeria’s participation in peacekeeping operations dates back to 1960 in Congo just a few days after her independence, wherein she not only contributed troops, but also commanded the UN operation in Congo [UNOC]. Nigeria has ever been actively involved in many UN peacekeeping operations around the world. In fact, since the inception of Peace Support Operations (PSOs) by the UN in 1948, Nigeria has participated in forty (40) out of a total of fifty-five (55) PSOs sponsored by the UN around the world.<sup>20</sup> The UN Peacekeeping Fact Sheet 2015 reveals the immense contribution and participation of Nigeria international peacekeeping operations around the world including: United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), April 1991, United Nations Interim

Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in Abyei, Sudan, June 2011, United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), July 2011, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), April 2013, inter alia.<sup>21</sup> Grezgorz Walinski argues that “Having been involved in 40 of the 55 peacekeeping missions of the UN, Nigeria has now participated in 73 percent of all UN peacekeeping operations. Four of these missions have been commanded by Nigerian senior military officers. Nigeria currently has about 6,000 peacekeepers in various flashpoints, 4,000 of whom are in Darfur, Sudan,”<sup>22</sup> He reiterated that many potential conflicts at regional and international levels were effectively deterred and prevented due to Nigerian diplomacy. He further stressed that Nigeria’s direct involvement as chief mediator in a number of territorial disputes and crises consequently eliminated further deterioration, escalation and development of threats into full-scale conflicts or crises situations.<sup>23</sup>

In 2002, rebels held siege the cities of Bouake and Korbogo in the Ivory Coast, killing hundreds of people and destroying thousands of properties. Nigeria deployed troops and war planes to the area under ECOMOG to quell the crisis. This was done according to Dubeon Onyia because “ECOWAS has decided that any government that has to be changed must be changed through the ballot box.”<sup>24</sup> In 2004, Nigeria performed a leading role in the UN, African Union and ECOWAS efforts to restore peace to Darfur in Sudan. Fourteen of its soldiers died in the operation, which was, until late 2009, commanded by General Luther Martins Agwai of the Nigeria Armed Forces.<sup>25</sup> Former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Air Chief Marshal Paul Dike, speaking while presenting a paper entitled, “An Overview of the Nigerian Armed Forces’ Participation in Peace Support Operations” at an international seminar on PSO in Abuja recounted that Nigeria has gallantly and successfully participated in major large-scale UN peacekeeping missions around the world. He stated that considering the meagre resources available to Nigeria when compared with the rich nations of the world, “it is not an overstatement to posit that no nation has contributed more to the attainment of the noble ideals of the UNO...Nigeria is the fourth largest Troop Contributing Country to UN peace support operations – surpassed only by Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. In addition, the country has lost over 2000 men and expended over 10 billion dollars in the last 5 decades of her active pursuit of global peace.”<sup>26</sup> The CDS admitted that Nigeria has two contingents in Liberia (UNMIL) and Darfur (UNAMID) respectively, adding that in UNAMID, Nigeria is the highest Troop Contributing Country (TCC) with over 3,300 troops deployed; made up of 4 battalions and a Level 11 Hospital which is expected to increase to 3600 with the induction of the Sector Reserve Infantry and Recce Companies.<sup>27</sup> During the stakeholders’ dinner reception for the 2014 Nigeria Security Exhibition and Conference (NISEC), homeland security show at the FCT Abuja, Grezgorz Walinski said that Nigeria has spent about \$13 billion on peacekeeping operations since 1960 and has also sent over 250,000 members of the Nigerian armed forces to the United Nation’s sponsored missions worldwide. He noted that despite the numerous contributions of Nigeria to UN PSOs around the world, it did not derive commensurate economic, military and political remunerations for active sacrifices for World peace.<sup>28</sup>

### **Regional Achievements**

As Chair of the UN Security Council at various times, as well as in other specialized organs of the UN System availed Nigeria the opportunity not only to build, maintain, mediate, enforce, support peace, but also to push for positions favourable for Africa. Nigeria intervened and resolved the conflict between Togo and Republic of Benin which was contentiously perceived as ideological differences between Presidents Kerekou of Benin and General Eyadema of Togo. Peaceful resolution of the conflict was facilitated through the use of Good offices and the influence of its higher economic capability.<sup>29</sup> As a member of the AU Good Offices Committee, Nigeria played a successful mediatory role in the peaceful settlement of Ethiopia-Somali disputes over the Ogaden region through the clarification of the OAU Charter on the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.<sup>30</sup> Bolaji Akinyemi during the Nigeria's Presidency of ECOWAS restored effective communications between Nigeria and the ECOWAS Member States by lifting the boundary closures of 1984 and 1985; he effectively mediated and resolved the Burkina Faso-Mali boundary conflict of 1986, restoring peace in the region.<sup>31</sup> Nigeria in response to France, Sudan and under Chad's invitation, undertook a peace-support initiative to resolve the Chadian crises despite the protracted effort of the OAU Ad hoc Committee to resolve the crises. It sponsored a six-month conference on Chad between March and August, 1979 which ended with the formation of the Government of National Unity and Transition [GUNT].<sup>32</sup>

### **Effort towards Regional Democracy and Good Governance**

As provided in the protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, ECOWAS and Nigeria insist that every accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections. This is one of principal reasons for Nigeria's intervention in Liberia where Nigerian troops under the ECOMOG contained the conflict, disarmed the rebels, monitored and conducted credible elections and restored democracy to the war-torn country. Nigeria under ECOMOG has contributed immensely in restoring democratic governance across West Africa. Pursuant to this protocol, Nigeria maintains zero tolerance for power obtained unconstitutionally either by coup d'états, guerrilla wars, or other unconstitutional means that cause humanitarian crisis.<sup>33</sup> Nigeria is also reforming her political institutions (via series of coordinated constitutional amendments) to promote consistent democracy and good governance in the country since it cannot build democracy and good governance in the region without being democratic itself. Remarkably, it has sustained and conducted successful and peaceful civilian-civilian elections since 1999-2015- a sure commitment of Nigeria to maintaining democratic values in the region.

### **Nigeria's Technical and Financial Assistance to Member States**

Nigeria gave aid and technical assistance to several African states, through the African Development Bank or other means diplomatically agreed. In 1987, Nigeria established the

Technical Aid Corps (TAC) in line with the ECOWAS mutual assistance to member states. Through the Corps, Nigerian professionals are deployed in other African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries where their expertise and experiences are most needed. Professor Edosa Omoregie, highlighting the invaluable benefits of TAC as effective instrument of Nigeria's foreign policy informs: "By 2010, more than 30 recipient nations, including Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Malawi, Gambia and Botswana, have benefited from the Technical Assistance Corps scheme. About 2,000 volunteers in the areas of medicine, nursing, law, education, engineering, agriculture, accountancy, and other related fields have contributed their expertise knowledge to the recipient countries."<sup>34</sup>

### **Nigeria's Development Assistance to ECOWAS Member States**

Nigeria's commitment to Africa's development was demonstrated with the establishment of a Nigerian Trust Fund [NTF] within the African Development Bank (AfDB). The Fund, which was created in 1976 with an initial capital outlay of US\$80 million, was increased in 1981 to US\$88 million. From inception in 1976 to December 1990, the Nigerian Trust Fund has creditably financed 43 development projects in 27 African countries with a total range value of US\$240,764,220 [1US\$1.314 per 1 special unit of account]. These projects range from rice irrigation, rural electrification, and water supply projects to construction of dams, ports roads, Airports and Telecommunications. To carry out its commitment to Africa's economic development, Nigeria maintains the single largest shareholding in the AfDB established since 1964 with a share capital of nine percent.<sup>35</sup> The AfDB funded the construction of Nigeria-Cameroon highway as part of the Trans-African Highway conceived over 30 years ago as a transcontinental link from Lagos to Mombasa. The highway stretches 6,300 km, traversing Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Kenya. The bank stated the total cost of the project at appraisal as USD 423 million, of which AfDB provided a USD 288 million loan and a grant of USD 25 million. The balance was financed by the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Governments of Nigeria and Cameroon and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Importantly, between 2009 and 2012, AfDB funded many development projects across Africa including the rehabilitation of more than 12,000 km of main roads and 15,000 km of feeder roads, providing over 12 million people with quality access to transport, jobs and businesses across the region. The project apart from being environmentally sustainable, provided lots of benefits to the region including reduction in business costs, transport costs, poverty levels, improved household income levels, standard of living, created and attracted lots of jobs, schools, markets and SMEs along the economic corridor.<sup>36</sup> It also provided support in building nomadic education centres in Kaduna state of Nigeria and across other African countries with nomadic peoples (pastoralists, migrant fishing folks and farmers, that is, people common with wandering lifestyles), who constitute about six per cent of the total African population or about 50 million peoples.<sup>37</sup> According to West African Mid-Term Review and Regional Portfolio Performance Review Paper 2011 – 2015, AfDB declared Nigeria as the West Africa's largest market and economic power

continentally, has the greatest potential of being the main driver of regional integration based on its population, thriving economy, services and manufacturing sectors. According to the report Nigeria attracted half of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) coming into the region with about 45 per cent in 2012. It noted that informal trade for agricultural goods, petroleum products and re-export trade were significantly larger while on regional investment, it stressed that “the role of Nigeria is certainly more prominent, with various Nigerian companies having significant impact in the regional market particularly banking services.”<sup>38</sup>

Nigeria's sustained advocacy for economic reliance propelled several bilateral and multilateral joint ventures around the sub region including Nigeria-Benin-Guinea joint venture for uranium mining, cement production, sugar refining; Nigeria-Rwanda-Burundi multinational agreement for road networks and telecommunications. Nigeria in September 2010 gave US\$5 Million to support the activity in Lake Chad. Multilateral arrangement with ECOWAS brings together the sixteen countries of West Africa into mutual economic cooperation.<sup>39</sup> According to the Speaker of ECOWAS Parliament Senator Ike Ekweremadu, Nigeria has approved and disbursed the sum of US\$6 million to build a new office for the ECOWAS Parliament: “the Federal Government had already paid the money into the account of the ECOWAS Parliament...We have notified the President of the Commission of the release of the sum as well as the intention of the parliament to apply it to the purpose for which it was secured.”<sup>40</sup> In July 1974, Nigeria granted oil subsidies to African countries during the 1970s' oil crisis on condition that they should build their own refineries and would not re-export to third countries. Such great gesture enhanced Nigeria's influence in Africa.<sup>41</sup>

### **Nigeria's Humanitarian Interventions in West Africa**

At all times and in many troubled regions of Africa and beyond, Nigeria has shown solidarity to the problems of refugees, displaced and homeless. In 1981 and 1984, the Nigerian government made a subscription of US\$3 million given at the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa [ICARA 1]. At ICARA 11, the government also made substantial non-cash donations to promote joint project financing through the Nigeria's technical assistance programme with African states. It also made a donation of US\$50 million credited to the African Fund. It gave the sum of US\$53,000 [Naira 500,000.00] for project assistance to refugees in Malawi through the Lagos representative of the UNHCR. As at 1991, Nigeria Refugees support amounted to US\$64 million.<sup>42</sup>

On the Administrative level, Nigerian Ambassadors at different chairmanship of the OAU Commission of Fifteen on Refugees in 1984, 1988 and 1990 respectively submitted a viable recommendation to the OAU Council of Ministers [no. 68] that led to the creation of the Special Refugee Contingency Fund with effect from 1984/1985 financial year. The fund increased from one percent to two percent of the total of the OAU Administrative

budget since 1989 through resolution CM/RES.1241[L] adopted by the Fiftieth Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers and the 25<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Also a Special Emergency Assistance Fund for drought and Famine in Africa was established by Resolution AHG/RES.133 [XX] of the twentieth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to cater for emergency situations in Africa. Nigeria gave US\$5 million to the Fund which has since inception in 1986 sponsored over forty-four (44) projects worth US\$19,245,430.00 in twenty-one member states including Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Uganda inter alia. In 1987/88, Nigeria led the OAU Commission of Fifteen on Refugees to about twenty-nine countries in the West and North Africa including Kenya in East Africa for fact finding mission on the situation of refugees and difficulties encountered by host countries. The result of the mission provided relevant information for the preparation of several International Conferences on the Plight of African Refugees, Returnees, and Displaced persons in the Southern Africa in particular. In 1989, in the tenure of Nigeria's chairmanship of the Commission of Fifteen under Ambassador Segun Olusola, Nigeria promoted and enhanced greater international awareness toward international support for African Refugees and displaced persons.<sup>43</sup> On bilateral level for instance, Nigeria gave assistance to Mozambican children, displaced persons resident in Malawi, US\$100,000 was donated to UNHCR in aid to the African refugees; while NGN3million was spent on relief materials given to thousands of Namibian refugees. Nigeria also spent huge amount of money on the maintenance of sub-regional refugees residing in Nigeria from Niger, Chad, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Darfur regions.<sup>44</sup> Having expatiated basic Nigeria's humanitarian regional interventions, it is crucial to find out how Nigeria has consolidated its critical sectors to avoid itself being a case for regional intervention as it is currently (2014-2015).

### **Cost and Effects of Nigeria's Regional Hegemony on National Development**

From the various issues examined above, it is obvious that Nigeria invested massively in Africa, from Southern Africa, Northern Africa, and Central Africa down to the Western Africa despite the enormous problems of obtaining security fact sheets from the government. It is very critical to assess Nigeria's basic socioeconomic indicators on merits and demerits to form the cost and discourse of Nigeria's regional hegemony in West Africa.

### **National Core Welfare - Poverty Profile**

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) of Nigeria, Relative poverty is defined by reference to the living standards of the majority of the people in a given society which distinguishes the poor from the non-poor. NBS classifies "Households with expenditure greater than two-thirds of the total household per capita expenditure are non-poor whereas

those below it are poor. Further desegregation showed that households with less than one-third of total household per capita expenditure are core-poor (extreme poor) while those households greater than one-third of total expenditure but less than two-thirds of the total expenditure are moderate poor.”<sup>45</sup>

According to NBS Poverty profile Report on Nigeria, relative poverty measurement stood at 54.4% in 2004, but increased to 69% in 2010. This implies that about 112,518,507 Nigerians were considered poor in 2010. The highest poverty incidence rates in 2010 were in North-West and North-East geo-political zones with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively; while the South-West geo-political zone recorded the lowest at 59.1%. At State level, Sokoto had the highest poverty rate at 86.4% while Niger had the lowest at 43.6% in 2010.<sup>46</sup>

Using the US\$1 poverty line approach, people are counted as poor when their measured standard of living falls below a minimum acceptable standard/threshold of US\$1 per day. Applying this benchmark, 51.6% of Nigerians were living below US\$1 per day in 2004, while in 2010 poverty line increased to 61.2%. The North-West geo-political zone recorded the highest percentage at 70.4%, while the South-West geo-political zone had the least at 50.1%. Sokoto had the highest rate among States at 81.9%, while Niger had the least at 33.9%.<sup>47</sup>

According to the Nigeria Economic Report (NER) as released by the World Bank on July 22, 2014, Nigeria macroeconomic outlook improved significantly, with increased federal revenues, foreign reserve stability, increased Excess Crude Account and overall stronger economic prospects for the 2014.<sup>48</sup> The report which includes critical evaluation of Nigeria's poverty and living standard based on panel survey of 5,000 households that was carried out in 2010/2011 and 2012/2013 as part of the General Household Survey (GHS) reveals that Nigeria per capita poverty rate is significantly lower than earlier estimates. It highlights that only about 33.1% of the Nigeria population in 2012/2013 lived below the poverty line. The report states that the urban poverty reduction is quite stronger with 12.6% than in the rural areas with 44.9%. It further states that:<sup>49</sup>

While the South of Nigeria has relatively low poverty rates, ranging from 16% in the South West to 28.8% in the South East, poverty rates in the North West and North East are 45.9% and 50.2%, respectively. While the South of Nigeria (especially the South West) has experienced a strong positive dynamic in poverty reduction in recent years, the poverty rate in the North West has remained stagnant, while poverty has actually increased in the North East. Thus, disparities between the North (North West, North East) and South of Nigeria in poverty and living standards have increased. This is no doubt related to the recent security challenges in the Northern part of Nigeria.<sup>50</sup>

John Litwack, Lead Economist and Acting Country Manager of the World Bank for Nigeria rather infers that “The combination of the new GDP and poverty estimates is valuable in

giving us what we believe to be a clearer picture of development and poverty reduction in Nigeria,...Both sets of numbers indicate the prime importance of urban areas for growth and poverty reduction.”<sup>51</sup>

### **Corruption in Nigeria**

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in collaboration with other security agencies (like the Nigeria Police Force, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), et cetera) are the prime anti-corruption Commissions in Nigeria. The resolve to fight and win the war against corruption in Nigeria led to the promulgation of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act of year 2000 and the EFCC Act of 2002/4 charged to combat financial and economic crimes, prevent, investigate, prosecute and penalize economic and financial crimes. These Acts bring under purview all persons in Nigeria, in the private and public sectors and even those public officers with constitutional immunity.<sup>52</sup> Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, the founding Chairman of EFCC (2002-8) stated in his presentation to the United States Congressional House Committee on International Development that:<sup>53</sup>

The history of corruption in Nigeria is strongly rooted in the over 29 years of military rule, out of 46 years of her statehood since 1960. Successive Military regimes subdued the Rule of law, facilitated the wanton looting of the public treasury, decapitated public institutions and free speech and instituted a secret and opaque culture in the running of government business. The result was total insecurity, poor economic management, abuse of human rights, ethnic conflicts and capital flight.

Nuhu Ribadu further argued that Nigeria’s corruption in the past four decades of independence recorded over US\$400 billion or Euro 220 billion equivalent of Naira 65 trillion stolen or misused by Nigerian leaders and public officers which is equivalent to the total Western Aid to Africa in the last 40 years.<sup>54</sup> The decades under review show that the motives of successive Nigerian military governments regional interventions at the time were at the expense of national development and far from being patriotic than selfish and corrupt. Farida Waziri of EFCC stresses that the key reasons why corruption thrives in Nigeria is due to weak enforcement of proactive mechanisms; and the fact that government does not subsume itself entirely under the law and be subject to it. She argues that where these conditions are positively enabled “the law becomes the supreme arbiter of not only social conduct but also a social enabler for business and good governance.”<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the Chairman of ICPC Hon. Justice Ayoola argues that corruption in Nigeria undermines democratic institutions, retards economic development, perverts the rule of law, contributes to government instability, negates efforts towards national security, destroys ethical and cultural values and creates bureaucratic quagmires whose only reason

for existence is the soliciting of bribes.<sup>56</sup> He further argues that “corruption brought gains to a few people over a short time but impacted negatively on the vast majority of Nigerians who have been reduced to living deaths and beggars”.<sup>57</sup> The paper discovered that despite the gains of the anti-graft campaign, there are serious challenges to combating corruption in Nigeria which include gross lack of political will, political impunity and plea bargain, national apathy, slow judicial system, circumvention of the criminal law, persistent lack of advanced technological systems to promptly detect and fight cyber crimes, lack of capacity and investigation tools, financial transactions software, the availability of safe havens for corrupt political officials, reversing the bad perception of the country, lack of cooperation from some oversea collaborators.

### **Impact on National Security**

In many ways, at different historical times, the meaning or definition of security as national, international, regional or global is substantially variegated. As a social phenomenon, some understand the term necessarily from the standpoint of insecurity as a social factor, some others perceive it as consisting of economic, political, social, religious, and cultural factors. In contemporary times, the concept of security transcends the traditional notion of territorial security, with an ever changing and challenging perspectives. It goes beyond borders to encompass the totality of human needs across time, space, and intercontinental geographies. Security *in se* and as human good – nationally and globally is notionally fluidal. Segun Osisanya argues that “Because of its seeming lack of conceptual boundary, security, as a concept, is used to entice and whip up patronage for many political projects both at the state and international levels of politicking.”<sup>58</sup> Paul D. Williams argues that “security is therefore a powerful political tool in claiming attention for priority items in the competition for government attention”.<sup>59</sup> Samuel Makinda defines security as “the preservation of the norms, rules, institutions and values of society”.<sup>60</sup> He opines that beside the preservation of the societal norms and values, the people and state are to be preserved and protected from what he refers to as “military and non-military threats”.<sup>61</sup> Referring to the current challenges to Nigeria’s national security, General Abdulrahman Dambazau of the Nigerian Army apart from defining security simply as “freedom from danger, fear or anxiety”,<sup>62</sup> strongly argues that security encompasses “threats that may impact on our physical body as individuals or groups; psychological thoughts or behaviour; our properties; means of livelihood; socio-economic needs...state, region or even the world as a whole.”<sup>63</sup> National security is as such understood in this paper as the capability of a state to defend its territorial integrity, national interests, and deter threats to national sovereignty including such other threats as economic, political, social, religious or terrorism. It includes the capacity of a state to defend and deter, preserve and protect its people, culture and environment from internal and external aggression or any forms of threats thereto. Therefore security is not only a public good but inevitably a national, regional and intercontinental need but how has Nigeria prioritized, contained and scaled its security threats?

### **National Security and Boko Haram Insurgency**

In Nigeria, the *Jama`atAhl al-Sunna li al-Da`wawa al-Jihad* known as Boko Haram is an Islamic salafist jihadist organisation that operationally constitutes an active threat to Nigeria's national unity and sovereign integrity. The aim of the terrorist organization is "to expel the prevailing political establishment, remove all Western influences, and eventually overthrow the national government and establish an Islamic state in its place."<sup>64</sup> It started its deadly operations in 2009. By 2010, it went viral across northern states of Nigeria, mostly Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Yobe, Bauchi, Katsina, Nassarawa among others, destroying churches, theatres, market places, police formations, public places and utilities, and political targeted gatherings. In 2011 through 2012, Boko Haram carried out series of coordinated attacks on government establishments through the use of bombs, wield shootings of people and burning down of buildings and properties including the United Nations building and Police Force Headquarters in the FCT Abuja. These attacks took the lives of hundreds of peoples in the northern Nigeria and the nation's capital. In 2013 through 2015, there was notable change of tactics. Boko Haram went fully political, killing anybody or groups of people and destroying institutions considered inimical to its political agenda. In April 2014, the kidnap of about 270 schoolgirls from Chibok in northern Nigeria largely generated the local and international calls for intervention in the clandestine activities of the sect. In the aftermath of the rising incidence of kidnappings, killing and abductions of innocent citizens, the Nigerian Government solicited the assistance of the international community and allies to rescue Chibok girls and control the lethal and obnoxious operations of the organization.<sup>65</sup>At this point, the onslaught of Boko Haram could not be considered only religiously motivated, but politically and internationally linked to other jihadist terror organizations especially Al-Qaida and ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Muslims, Christians, the poor, the rich, religious clerics, business moguls, politicians, security agents, police and members of the armed forces were terrorized and killed in thousands and hundreds. Women, children, boys and girls were forcefully abducted, killed or gang-raped. This reign of terror spread through major northern state capitals and hinterlands, the Federal Capital Territory and among terrorist strongholds in Nigeria. Ely Karmon observed that: "Boko Haram targets include police stations, government buildings, churches, politicians, newspapers, banks, and schools. Tactics include drive-by shootings on motorcycles, the use of improvised explosive devices, and starting in 2010, suicide bombings."<sup>66</sup> However, the spirited and concerted efforts of Nigerian and regional governments to rid Nigeria and its neighbours of all forms of Boko Haram terror activities and deadly insurgency started to yield positive gains with the overwhelming recapture of thirty-six Boko Haram strongholds, Local Government Areas, towns and cities. Mike Omeri, the national security spokesman states that "36 towns had been retaken from Boko Haram since the start of a four-nation military offensive, voicing hope that the operation could lead to the group's "total defeat".<sup>67</sup> At the moment, there is no known town or city in Nigeria under the control of the sect. Rather, reports from the Nigerian Army Public Relations Acting Director, Colonel Sani Usman indicate that the massive investment in military hardware including drones by the government paid off as the Special Forces have rescued 293 abductees, comprising 200 girls and 93 women,

from Sambisa forest stronghold of Boko Haram making the total of 553 rescued abductees including women, girls and children while the BBC reports that about 700 women have been rescued from Boko Haram Sambisa stronghold as the JTF onslaught rages.<sup>68</sup>

### **National Security and Defence Budget**

An overview of Security (Defence allocation and military expenses) expenses in Nigeria argues for a complete evaluation and monitoring of security expenses in the country. Recognizably, security world-wide is capital intensive business but considering the strategic capability of Nigeria to defend and protect its territorial integrity and perhaps that of the sub region, especially in the light of the current insurgency ravaging Nigerian people and region, the past and current leadership of Nigeria could hardly pass the integrity test when compared with the enormous defence budget and security expenses. According to a study conducted by Anyanwu Sarah et al., on the analysis of the trend and structure of military expenditure in Nigeria from the 1980 to 2010, it was observed that:<sup>69</sup>

Buhari/Idiagbon in 1984 also allocated 38.68 per cent and 61.32 per cent for capital milex and recurrent respectively. They spent approximately 16 months. The Ibrahim Babangida regime (1985-1993) spent 19.58 per cent on capital milex and 80.42 per cent on recurrent milex. Abacha/Shonekan/Abdulsalam (1993-1999) regime expended 24.10 per cent on capital milex and 75.9 per cent on recurrent milex. The civilian administration of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) for a period of eight years, spent 17.44 per cent of her total milexon capital milex and 82.56 per cent on recurrent milex. Yar'adua/Jonathan (2008-2010) had so far spent 34.67 per cent on capital milex and 65.33 per cent on recurrent.

With an ever increasing Federal government budgetary allocation on National Defence and security votes with minimal impact on national security in the country, the case of corruption becomes compelling. Kingsley Ighomwenghian et al., argue that the review of the annual budget shows that between 2012 and 2014, the Federal Government has voted N2.558 trillion for Defence out of which the Police was allocated N1.55 trillion while the military got N1.006 trillion. They further argue that in 2014 National Defence budget, government allocated N340.3 billion for Ministry of Defence out of which a meager sum of N34.2 billion was allotted to capital expenditure and N306 billion for recurrent expenditure. In the current budget, defence and security got N914.408 billion which covers procurement of defence equipment and ammunition, provision of military uniforms, salaries, and sundry utilities for the armed forces.<sup>70</sup> What then is the continued relevance of Nigeria as regional actor when its homeland security is in turmoil, when it lacks the capability to ably manage and secure its internal security even at the huge expense of its capital expenditure? All these further cast aspersion on the integrity and capability of Nigeria to proactively protect and defend the region as hegemon from internal and external threats. A check on the merits and demerits of ECOWAS regionalism will buttress more facts.

### **Merits of West African Regionalism on Nigeria**

West African regionalism affected Nigerian nations in divergent ways. Nigeria gained and as well lost and sacrificed greater deal to regionalism in West Africa. First, Nigeria's dominant strategic role in the sub-region has at different times supported her membership of the United Nations Security Council, African Union Security Council and the ECOWAS Monitoring and Observer Mission (ECOMOG) among other international and regional security outfits. Second, there is undeniably greater expertise and experience in capacity building of the Nigerian Armed Forces in regional peace security. Nigerian soldiers that constitute over seventy (70) per cent of the entire ECOMOG force are continually and increasingly gaining strategic and invaluable experiences on international peacekeeping, peace-building, peace-enforcement, peace-support operations, regional arbitration processes and now counterinsurgency. Routine training and experience of Nigerian armed forces are very good for professionalism, competence and strategic deterrence needed to maintain peace across intercontinental geographies, politics and cultures. They are professional and international peace-makers, mediators and conciliators.

Third, one of the dominant and prominent objectives of Nigerian foreign policy is the promotion of African regionalism pursued in terms of peace initiatives, good governance, humanitarian intervention, promotion of national and regional democracies, promotion of greater respect for independent African states, economic growth and cultural unity of the nations and peoples of Africa. Nigeria regional foreign policy could be adjudged to have creditably pursued and realized some of these ends. Nigeria has assisted and promoted a lot of democracies, even at a time it was decades away from democracy. National democracies like South Africa, Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Sudan were consolidated through the good efforts and supreme sacrifices of Nigeria's economy and Armed forces.

Fourth, Nigerian government and peoples have contributed strongly towards and have gained immensely from regional macroeconomic convergence. Nigerian public and private investments and initiatives in the sub-region expanded from conventional trading to bilateral and multilateral conglomerates through building of economic synergies. Nigeria dominates the intra and interregional trade in goods, human capital, transfer of expertise and management of public good. Nigerian businesses are widespread in almost all the states of the region either on government to government businesses, public-private partnerships, or private businesses. This is very good for Nigerian national economy. By large, Nigeria has expanded her tradable zones of income. In this vein, Nigerian government and peoples are distinguished good developers and openers of economies of nations for mutual benefits. Fifth, socio-culturally, good number of Nigerians and peoples of Nigerian descent are citizens and residents of many states in the region. By marriage and enculturation, Nigerians have improved and blended lots of cultural heritage in the region. There are growing Nigerian communities – English, French, Portuguese, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa and Africana in the various regions and sub-regions of Africa. They have also exported Nigerian cultures,

customs and languages internationally and regionally. Sixth, apart from the multiplicity of Nigeria's regional contributions, the overriding import is Nigeria's significant contribution to regional political stability and good governance. For over four decades, nations of Africa and West African sub region in particular were greatly torn apart by genocides, wars, internecine violence, natural disasters, economic and political backwardness, intraregional conflicts and theatres of simulated, artificial and natural diseases. Nigeria's emergence as regional hegemon remarkably brought the needed political stability and economic growth generally across the sub region and beyond. Seventh, since the essence of regionalism is macroeconomic convergence and expansion, Nigeria consistently recorded the highest GDP contribution and relative sound growth rates especially in the wake of millennial challenges across the globe. This means that without Nigerian GDP of about 60% of regional GDP, there would be sharp collapse of regional economy of scale and macroeconomic stability relatively achieved. Eight, there is no doubt in the international community that Nigeria paid heroic sacrifice for regional growth than any other state in the continent. This distinction is positive for Nigeria as regional hegemon. Questions and issues concerning Africa cannot be effectively managed and effected without Nigeria. That means that thinking and acting in terms of Africa and West African sub region is clearly issues pertaining to Nigerian foreign policy. Nigeria and international community have benefited immensely from this positive national contribution to humanity. However, with the so much given, so much is also 'lost'. Some of these somewhat national 'losses' are designated as the demerits and/or alternative cost of Nigeria's Hegemonism in West Africa.

### **Demerits of West African Regionalism on Nigeria**

The progressive pace of West African regionalism is not without some supreme sacrifices of Nigerian veterans and overall national development. Nigeria has lost over 2000 soldiers to regional peacekeeping and conflict resolution initiatives in Africa in the past fifty-four years (1960-2014). The loss of these veterans is heroic sacrifice and has brought untold hardship to hundreds of families, dependants and entire Nigerian nations. Also some of these veterans are no longer in serviceable or employable human conditions due to war accidents, permanent disability, psychological disorder or depression. There is also the national problem of very poor veteran welfare and retirement benefits which has invariably impacted negatively on the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among citizens. Second, there is huge economic loss in the national funding of the ECOMOG contingent. Capital that would have provided core national development is thus diverted toward the maintenance of regional peace and stability. Looting and abuse of national treasury including security votes in the guise of regional security became the order and delight of successive governments. It is strongly argued that given Nigeria's capability, it could have maintained the economic leadership of the region without intervening and interfering in regional affairs at such great national cost. Third, there are also the social and health risk factors. Soldiering in Africa could be quite adventurous and highly demanding. This could explain the reticence of the western nations to intervene in African conflicts. The state and condition of some of the

warring areas are humanly intolerable and often prone to not only social health risks but environmental and psycho-cultural risks. This has put some of Nigerian veterans infested with some types of ailments or diseases in socially high risk conditions- accidental marriages and pregnancies, victims of HIV/AIDS, and to the entire Nigeria citizens upon return from such missions without relevant practical provisions for rehabilitation and reintegration. Fourth, there is the problem of huge annual defence budgets allocated from tax-payers money to fund regional security when national security is extremely threatened. This fund could have assisted and promoted lots of development projects and improved the living standard of the citizenry. The question of Nigeria works, dies and restores peace in the region and some other entities and countries now invest and reap the fruits of such supreme endeavour is least desirable. Nigeria's minimal and/or non intervention could have also minimized avenues and incidence of corruption in the country given the abuse of security votes and defence budgets. Fifth, Nigerian regional intervention was the result of prolonged militarization of Nigerian politics. Since the military are not trained to rule than to defend, successive Nigerian military governments found importance and profitability in strategic engagement in regional military operations than building sustainable nationhood since there are no immediate homegrown threats to national security. The results are obviously civil decadence, poor governance and human right protection, poor execution of national development planning and poor assessment of Nigeria's national security. Overtime, Nigeria in West Africa became quite different – responsible, peace loving, conciliatory, diplomatic, entrepreneurial, mediatory and regionally stable while Nigerian polity imploded with inefficient command and control grand strategy, corruption and increased socio-economic frustrations across nationalities. Such was the conflicting duality that existed in Nigeria for over forty years of national life and history.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the historic irony of Nigeria's hegemony is that while Nigeria is in the region fighting for peace, its homeland was embarrassingly conflictual and pillaged by insurgencies, insurrections, military mutinies and national rift; while it is consolidating nascent democracies and ousting unpopular regimes, the nation was ridden in despotism, political impunity, growing nationally and globally unpopular and undemocratic (1980s – 1990s). While it engages in regional fund spree, its citizens are ravaged in poverty, unemployment, restiveness. While it is consolidating and growing regional economies, its economy is steeply and continually bugged by rentierism, collapse of basic infrastructure, lopsided monolithic economy. And, while it is regionally securing states and building bridges across political divides, the Nigerian nation itself was at the verge of total collapse with declaration of state of emergency in some areas and the collapse of some critical sectors - power, health, education inter alia. Such was the regional hegemony wittingly and unwittingly proffered by the Nigerian polity from the 1960 to the new millennium. It will definitely take years to rebuild the battered foundations of Nigerian political economy and the foundations of the state.

The study concludes that Nigeria should prioritize internal security and national development, while maximizing and optimizing the values and benefits of her ECOWAS regionalism. Nigeria-ECOWAS regionalism and/or hegemony should not be at the cost of nation building or loss of sovereignty because a failed Nigeria is inevitably a failed ECOWAS. The paper advocates for balance of interests, spanning development from homeland to the region. Regional hegemony is about capability, integrity and dynamism in leadership, as such, to define and understand Nigeria in terms of West African regionalism presupposes the encapsulation and externalization of Nigerian domestic capability en route West Africa. A united Nigeria is a united West Africa while dysfunctional, broken or non-existent Nigeria is an irreparable loss to the spirit of Africanity. It is all about enthroning and ensuring responsible and accountable leadership in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and extending to West Africa.

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