

## **THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS: SOME LESSONS FOR NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria, in her bid to promote international peace and security took a bold step in using military strategy in advancing her foreign policy objectives. Since independence, Nigeria has maintained a landmark achievement in the area of contributing to international peace support operations. Nigeria has been part of virtually every peace support mission embarked upon by the UN and OAU (now AU) since 1960. Nigeria is also the largest contributor in finance, equipment and personnel to ECOWAS peace support force (ECOMOG). There have also been peace support missions on bilateral arrangements between Nigeria and other world nations. In this paper we examined the political economy of Nigeria's peace-keeping military operations. How much resources were expended? And how much lives were lost? This research makes it clear that Nigeria's experiences in peace support operations has shown that national resources (human and material) have been expended without commensurate returns even in terms of her national interest needs. This tally well with the foreign policy making of developing states which are largely based on moral suasions rather than objective cost-benefit analysis as those of the developed nations who rather make huge profit and incur no human cost by supplying the equipment and weapons of the peace support forces. This study using the engagement cost value theory and documentary evidence situated in content analysis method draws heavily from earlier works on Nigeria peace support military exploits. The focus here is at stimulating policy makers to study and learn from the achievements and mistakes of past events and plan adequately for future military engagements so as to achieve Nigeria's national interest rather than mere empty fame-seeking. For clarity and easy comprehension, the work is departmentalized into eight sections:-introduction, theoretical framework, the concept-peace support operations, background of Nigeria peace support operations, financial and human costs of Nigeria peace support operations, the nexus between Nigeria's experience in foreign policy and international political economy of PSOs, lessons to learn, and conclusions.

**Key Words: Military, Nigeria, Peace Support, Foreign Policy, Security.**

## **Introduction**

Peace support operation is a capital –intensive project. Understandably, cost of peace support operations organized by the UN is almost entirely borne by the world body, but ECOMOG, and AU operations and other peace support missions under bilateral arrangement constitute a great burden on Nigeria’s dwindling economy. No doubt Nigeria and other member nations have committed huge resources to the operations of ECOMOG in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. These resources expended on peace-keeping in foreign lands place tremendous financial burden on the donor nations, especially as the donor nations are also facing serious economic recession and crisis of legitimacy back home. Hutchful (Hutchful 1999) once observed that the sustenance of the ECOMOG stay in Liberia and Sierra Leone even despite economic and fiscal difficulty at home could only be explained by the existence of authoritarian political structures in the donor nations.

Even the return of democratic governance in Nigeria has not changed the course of history in this regard. However, as important as the economic and social implications of peace support missions are to the contributing nations, enough attention has not been accorded the vital statistics of this phenomenon in Nigeria. Of course some aspects of military history are always contentious, it’s rather depressing that more basic facts like how many lives were lost? And how much resources were expended? - can be, remarkably hard to pin down (Hayes 2002). Nigeria’s expedition in ECOMOG, the number of soldiers lost in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the aggregate financial cost of the operation and the attendant effect they beset on the Nation’s economy remains largely speculative.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted in this work is the engagement cost value theory propounded by Isaac Richard, Joshua Owen, and Gerald Thompson (Joshua Owen: 1983). Their main focus is that every endeavour or venture engaged by people must be properly costed (i.e. both finance and human costs) or accounted for as doing this we help the policy makers to plan better in the future. To them this will also make other people or nations appreciate the sacrifice they put in. This theory came into effect after the 1982 Falkland war between Britain and Argentina.

Having taken account of the Falkland war (both finance and human) they arrive at the conclusion that it was a pyrrhic victory for Britain i.e. though the British won but it was a costly one. They proudly claim that with their findings and analysis, Britain will now learn how not to engage in a costly victory. They equally believe that the Falkland natives will now appreciate the British the more having seen the huge sacrifices they made on their behalf.

They also maintain that accounting for engagements by nation(s) helps the nation(s) to know whether they are meeting their national interest through such venture and at what cost. Using this theoretical extrapolation, our work aim to articulate the economic cost (i.e. both finance and human) of our peace support operations in order to give room to our

policy makers to be better positioned in future policy making especially as regards to our peace support missions and for Nigerians and the outside world to appreciate the inestimable sacrifices made by Nigeria for global peace.

### **The Concept: Peace support operations**

Peace support operations, as defined by the United Nations, are ways to keep countries torn by conflict create conditions for sustainable peace. Peace support operations are intended to create stable, peaceful relations by civil and military means (Eric: 2010). They are generally based on UN mandate, and as a rule guided by the following principle: impartiality, the consent of the conflicting parties to the deployment of the peace supporting troops, minimal use of force.

In addition, peace support operations refer to activities that tend to create conditions that favour lasting peace. United Nations peace support operations was initially developed during the cold war as a means of resolving conflicts between states by deploying unarmed or lightly armed military personnel from a number of countries, under UN command, to areas where warring parties were in need of a neutral party to observe the peace process.

UN peace support-soldiers and military officers, civilian police officers and civilian personnel from many countries-monitors and observe peace processes that emerge in post-conflict situations and assist ex-combatants in implementing the peace agreements they have signed. Such assistance comes in many forms, including confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, and economic and social development.

The Charter of the United Nations gives the Security Council the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security. For this reason, the international community usually looks to the Security Council to authorize peace support operations. Most of these operations are established and implemented by the United Nations itself with troops serving under UN operational commands. In other cases, where direct UN involvement is not considered appropriate or feasible, the Council authorizes regional organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Economic Community of West African States or coalitions of willing countries to implement certain peace support or peace enforcement functions.

### **Background of Nigeria Peace Support Operations**

On the aggregate, Nigeria has participated in more than 32 peace support operations under the UN, OAU/AU and ECOWAS. Table A presents details of the location, code name and period of Nigeria's participation in peace support operations. Nigeria's contribution to peace efforts globally cannot be overestimated. Beginning from Congo (now DRC) in 1960-1964, to the more recent missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Sudan, and Mali Nigeria has gloriously displayed her peace support prowess. Nigerian soldiers have demonstrated high competence in peace-keeping, peace enforcement as well as peace building in a post conflict society.

Table A: Periods of Nigeria's participation in peace-keeping missions.

S/N	Area	Code	Period
1	Congo	ONUC, MONUC	1960-1964, 1999
2	Indo-Pakistan	UNIPOM	1965-1966
3	Western N/Guinea	UNSF	1962-1963
4	Lebanon	UNIFIL	1978-1983
5	Iraq-Kuwait	UNIMOG	1988-1991
6	Iraq-Kuwait	UNIKOM	1991- Present
7	Angola	UNAVEM I, II, III.	1991-1998
8	Namibia	UNTAG	1989-1990
9	Western Sahara	MINURSO	1991-Present
10	Cambodia	UNTAC	1992-1993
11	Somalia	UNOSOM	1992-1994
12	Bosnia-Herzgovina	UNMIH	1995-1999
13	Mozambique	UNOMOZ	1992-1994
14	Rwanda	UNAMIR	1994-Present
15	Auozou Strip	UNASOG	1994
16	Israel	UNTSO	1995
17	Yugoslavia	UNPROFOR	1992-1995
18	Croatia	UNCRO	1995-1996
19	Macedonia	UNPREDEP	1995-Present
20	Kosovo	UNMIK	1999
21	East Timor	UNTAET	1999
22	Ethiopia and Eritrea	UNMEE	2000
23	Liberia	UNMIL	2003-2004
24	Chad	HARMONY II	1981-1982
25	Liberia	ECOMOG	1990-1997
26	Comoros	OMIC	1997
27	Sierra Leone	ECOMOG	1998-2000
28	Guinea Bissau	ECOMOG	1999
29	Tanzania	-	1964
30	Chad	HARMONY I	1979
31	Sierra Leone	NATAG	1991-1995
32	Gambia	NATAG	1993

Note: Serial numbers 1-23 were carried out under the UN. Serial number 24 under OAU (now AU). Serial numbers 25-28 under ECOWAS, while 29-32 were effected under bilateral arrangements.

Source: Nwolise, O.B.C. The Nigeria Police in International Peace-keeping under the United Nations, Ibadan: Spectrum books Publishers, 2004 p57 and SIPRI Year book, 2002.

### **Financial and human costs of Nigeria peace support operations**

Globally, the cost of peace-keeping operations to the UN has assumed a general rising trend from 1948 to date with occasional drops in-between. Basically, the UN finances its peace support operations through dues paid by member nations. Annual costs of UN peace support operations reached its peak from 1993-1995 at over 3.3 billion dollar. By 1998, costs had dropped to less than 1 billion dollar (Richard: 2011), but with the escalation of civil wars at the turn of this decade, costs of peace support operations to the UN continued to increase to date.

Having discussed the global trend, we now throw some light on the costs of peace support operations to Nigeria. It is rather depressing that after many years of Nigeria's expedition in ECOMOG, the actual cost of the operations in finance and human resources remains largely speculative. In the course of this work, several conflicting figures were obtained from several sources while official sources were not accessible. A source quoted the Nigerian president as saying that his country had spent about \$13 billion on peace support operations over 12 years (BBC New: 2012). Another source quoted the president as claiming that Nigeria spent an average of \$1 million daily in ECOMOG operations (Aboagye: 1999). By this estimate, Nigeria would have spent about \$4.3 billion in 12 years. Yet another source claimed that Nigeria spent over \$12 billion during the 12 year ECOMOG operations (Nwolise: 2004). A Nigerian military officer who has carried out a similar work claimed that though figures were not accessible between 1990-2000, official records show that Nigeria spent some 4.7 billion Naira, 2.1 billion Naira and 2.2 billion Naira in 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively (Ezeodum: 2004). Citing overhead costs such as refurbishing damaged weapons, purchasing new ones, as well as servicing and maintaining troops as cost factors, the work concludes that at a yearly average of \$3 billion, the country would have spent about \$36 billion in 12 years (Ezeodum: 2004). As good as this estimate looks; the unstable exchange rate of the nation's currency from 1990 to date constitutes a great problem in adopting an extrapolation formula based on the ascertained 3 year figures given above. Another major flaw to this estimate is that the number of troops deployed to ECOMOG was not constant all year round. Thus total allowances and troop's emolument may not be easily ascertainable. However, giving the high standard deviation of the various figures obtained from all sources during the course of this work, this paper decided to adopt the modal score of \$12 billion as the cost of ECOMOG operations to the Nigeria government.

There appears to be a general agreement among scholars on the number of Nigerian soldiers lost in peace support operations. Though these figures are not official, yet they tend to be largely reliable due to their small sample variance. A total of 41 soldiers were lost in Lebanon out of which three came from the Nigerian contingent (Olurin: 1979). Similarly, Nigeria lost six soldiers in Somalia, who erroneously were quietly buried by the government instead of being celebrated as world heroes who made the supreme sacrifice in the process of saving mankind from the scourge of war (Nwolise: 2004). The crisis in Liberia and Sierra Leone claimed about 660 Nigerian soldiers (Guardian Newspaper: 2004). This figure excludes some 800 dead soldiers who were buried secretly to avoid public outcry (Guardian Newspaper: 2004). This unpardonable act should be condemned because the life of a soldier lost in battle is worth treating as a national loss.

Fairness was not also accorded some 59 Nigerian soldiers who were wounded in Sierra Leone and flown to Egypt for medical attention in year 2000. The wounded soldiers protested publicly over unpaid allowances while in Egypt.

### **The nexus between Nigeria's experience in foreign policy and international political economy of PSOs**

In the field of peace support operations, there is no problem with UN sponsored missions since the UN reimburses all expenses made by contingent contributing member states. The only problem that arise here is when and where out of omission or commission Nigeria's agents fail to do proper and adequate calculations. The area of problem therefore is with non-UN peace missions- ECOWAS, African Union, and Bilateral arrangement peace operations and Nigeria has participated in quite a number of these. For example, the Chad mission Harmony 1 of 1979 (Bilateral); the OAU sponsored peace-keeping in Chad, Harmony 2 of 1981-1982, whose bills the organization could not pay, and had to be written off by Nigeria; the ECOWAS mission (ECOMOG) in Liberia 1990-1997; and to Sierra Leone 1998 to 2002; etc (Abel, 2004).

In these and other similar peace missions, Nigeria virtually bore the financial expenses, supplied the fuel and other logistical support, lost the lives of her military personnel etc. Yet, at the end, no tangible returns to assist the nation or cushion the impact of such huge losses and sacrifices (Ibid, 2004)

By the time Nigeria was spending 3 billion dollars in Liberia in 1996, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was on strike in Nigeria for six months demanding just a mere 3 billion Naira from the Federal Government to get Nigerian Universities to a minimum level necessary to support meaningful learning and teaching (Bridget, 2000). The ASUU never got the money whereas their country had spent 3 billion dollars in another country on peace support operations as at 1996.

Then at the end of the PSOs in Liberia, Nigerian troops led the ECOMOG to supervise a presidential election from which their sworn "enemy", Charles Taylor became president of Liberia, and he threw Nigeria out of Liberia. The reconstructions and resources of Liberia were handed over to Western nations and their allies that looked the other way when Liberia was burning. Thus, Nigeria goes into a nation on fire, spend her resources, lose her personnel, burn her fuel, and waste her equipment to put out the fire, and then she withdraws or gets pushed out by ungrateful political rulers, leaving the fruits of Nigeria's labour to be enjoyed by other nations (Beatrice, 2005)

This is not diplomacy or foreign policy; neither does it demonstrate strategic thinking. Where is Grand strategy in Nigeria's participation in PSOs? The job of peace support operations Nigeria led other ECOWAS members to do in Liberia and Sierra Leone is UN job. Yet, not only did Nigeria not get reimbursement from the UN, the country is not even being considered for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council on her "personal" recognition and in appreciation of her pains, sacrifices, and losses, and the contributions to world peace and security. Also, other countries and regions get more attention and budget than Nigeria and Africa from the European Union, US, GB, UK, France, Nordic countries, etc (Adamu, 2006), in the area of funding and logistical support for peace support operations. Much of what Nigeria gets is training assistance, but the real area where she needs support is funding, and logistical support eg to acquire capacities for airlift and sealift.

The very crucial question at this stage of this discourse is why has Nigeria's experience being this sad and unencouraging? The problems are within, and once these problems are solved, the external world will definitely respond more positively to Nigeria's needs and show greater practical appreciation for the nation's sacrifices, pains and losses in PSOs.

The first problem is that Nigeria's leaders have created the impression to the outside world that the country's problem is not money but how to spend it. With Nigeria's extravagant expenditures especially since the oil boom era of the mid-1970s, and the large quantum of looted national wealth outside, the world feels Nigeria is so rich that she does not know what to do with her wealth. So who bothers outside if Nigeria spends trillions of dollars on PSOs? If Nigeria did not care to mobilize OAU (AU) member states or ECOWAS, or the United Nations to pool resources for the PSOs in Liberia, it means she had the resources to spend. When South Africa was approached to contribute troops for Rwanda peace-missions, she first demanded to know how the peace support operations would be funded (Obed, 2007)

The second problem is that Nigerian leaders have not seen, and do not see need to utilize foreign policy as a strategic instrument of national economic development, and social well-being of her citizens as done in the USA, UK, France, Russia, Italy, and China. This is a strategy known by the patriotic leaders of Indonesia as far back as the 1960s, especially under president Suharto.

The third problem is that Nigerian leaders have not been able to see through and reject Western machinations that drag Nigeria into wasteful expenditures (David,2008) For example, the Chad mission of 1981-1982, the West, especially France and US so badly wanted Gaddafi's Libyan troops out of Chad that the OAU was tricked by them into sending a peace support force to Chad. The Western nations promised financial and logistics support for the PSOs and gave an initial take-off support. But no sooner did OAU troops enter Chad did the Western nations wash-off their hands from the peace mission as long as Libyan forces had left Chad. Thus, the OAU peace mission became a disaster, as the OAU on its own did not plan it. Nigeria had to underwrite her expenditures that ran into 107 million dollars. The United States was the major power enjoying the resources in Liberia before the civil war of 1990. But when Liberia got engulfed by war in 1990, she abandoned the citizens. Nigeria went in, leading ECOWAS members to restore peace in the country. When peace returned, we vacated the scene for the West to continue their enjoyment (Ahmed, 2005).

The fourth problem creating the situation where Nigeria goes on peace support missions and return empty handed is that there is no coordinated action among government bodies (Segun, 2008). Each ministry does what it likes. There is no synergy. For example, it has happened in is country before where the government sent out air force on mission before the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) got to know of it. Even if the constitution states that the Chief Executive can talk to each service of the military, the CDS should be informed even if after the order has been given or the mission has taken off. But the normal thing in civilized societies is that the CDS should be held in confidence even before the order is given. Again, the government sent out a Nigerian commercial plane to evacuate Nigerians from Liberia. This job is supposed to be done by the Nigerian military due to the security implications. When the plane got to Liberia, the Liberians insisted that if the plane does not carry them, no Nigerian would be evacuated. The result was that the plane ended up carrying home Liberians some of whom came in with guns. Some Nigerians

also sold their spaces in the plane. All these could not have happened if a military plane was sent to evacuate our citizens from Liberia.

The fifth problem is that there is no national policy on peace support operations or if there is it is not well implemented to guide action establishing goals, and show direction. Finally, the National Defence Council often did not meet before the nation sent out her personnel on peace missions. Such a meeting was necessary to set the aims and gains of such mission based on our national interests, foreign policy, and Grand strategy. The absence or lack of implementation of a national policy on PSOs and National Defence Council meeting prior to each mission made PSOs leakage pipes for Nigeria's economy and finances.

### **Lessons to learn**

- Formulation or implementation of a national policy on peace support operations to identify the aims, strategies, and expected benefits is a prerequisite.
- Before Nigerian troops are sent to any peace support mission, the National Defence Council (NDC) should meet and deliberate on vital issues, stating in clear terms what the aims are, the strategies, and expected benefits.
- There should be equality in funding future PSOs under the ECOWAS and AU.
- Our political leaders should use Nigeria's foreign policy as a strategic instrument of national (economic) development. In this direction, any foreign policy action that thwarts this goal must be resisted, whether pressure comes from East or West.
- The country needs to fashion out ways and means of bringing the professional gains of her personnel from PSOs to bear on their domestic duties. For example, the Nigerian police quelled riots with only teargas and batons in the Congo mission of 1960-64, but at home they used and still use life bullets to quell riots.
- All experiences and lessons learnt from each PSO should be used to fine tune our policy, efficiency in PSO, troops administration, logistical competence, and personnel welfare at home and abroad.

### **Conclusion**

We must state here that this work have not said that Nigerians should be mercenaries over the issues of PSOs. No. The research has also not said that Nigeria has not benefited from the peace, stability, and security restored in the West African Sub-region due to the country's PSOs efforts. The work is only expressing the view that we should find legitimate ways of cushioning the financial burden and equipment wastages of the country's efforts in PSOs. While we should be guided by the past, our foreign policy should reflect our changing national circumstances as well as adapt to the realities of a rapidly changing international environment. It is certainly not without justification that issues of international economic cooperation and development had featured prominently on the global agenda. Today, politics and economics have become so interwoven that it is very difficult to separate them. Indeed, some analysts are of the opinion that relations among nations, by and large, are determined by economic considerations. The power and influence wielded by the industrialized countries derived from their economic strength, and technological know-how. In addition, the pursuits of their economic interests, to a certain extent, determine their strategic and diplomatic priorities in the world.

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