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The Hegemon's Role: Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Its Impact on West African Regional Security and Cooperation

Eziho Promise Ogele

Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Correspondence: E-mail: eziho.ogele1@ust.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The paper examines Nigeria's foreign policy and its impact on West African regional security and cooperation. As a regional hegemon, Nigeria has played a crucial role in shaping the security and cooperation landscape in West Africa. The country has been at the forefront of advancing the strategic interests of the region, both at the continental and global levels. Nigeria's leadership role in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been instrumental in promoting regional cooperation and security. However, Nigeria's regional hegemonic aspiration has been a subject of criticism. This study aims to provide an analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy and its efforts on West African regional security and cooperation. The paper relied on a secondary method of data gathering technique. The paper unravelled that Nigeria remains committed to ECOWAS and its goals. The country maintained leadership roles in promoting regional integration and development, and its economic and military contributions remain essential to the West African success. The paper concluded that Nigeria's leadership and commitment will be crucial in achieving her hegemon in West-Africa subregion.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, Nigeria's foreign policy objectives underwent a new shift toward the emerging regional challenges of terrorism, piracy, and climate change. It is terrorism that has now gained grounds as a serious issue, particularly now that these insurgences of Boko Haram provoke effects beyond Nigeria to its entire region (Lenshie et al., 2024), particularly the Lake Chad region (Ikenberry, 2024). This has necessitated collaboration by Nigeria with regional and other international partners in the fight against terrorism. Nigeria has also had to deal with the other issue of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, which poses a threat to maritime security in the region (Akinyemi et al., 2024; Orhero, 2023). The third area in which Nigeria's foreign policy is evolving is climate change because Nigeria is actively engaging itself internationally to combat climate change since this area impacts how African countries are (Akinyemi et al., 2024). Moreover, Nigeria is working on advancing regional cooperation regarding climate change through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The internal security situation, being one of the factors under which Nigeria's circumstances as a regional hegemon stand challenged, has been greatly under threat; Boko Haram and other militant groups have destabilized the nation and posed a threat to its internal security (Duramany-Lakkoh, Jalloh and Jalloh, 2022; Molla, 2023). The activities of Boko Haram have inflicted 2 million civilian displacements, with hundreds of thousands fleeing into Cameroon and Niger, two of Nigeria's neighboring countries. Economic losses as a product of Boko Haram's terror activities have been highly felt in the northeast region, where the economy has suffered devastation (Nyadera, 2022). On another hand, Boko Haram is feared to be a destabilizing force in the region due to its international terrorist linkages with groups like al-Qaeda (Duramany-Lakkoh, Jalloh and Jalloh, 2022). The Nigerian government continues to fight against these insurgent groups, but the challenge remains, and this places the nation under threat from said internal security challenges.

Another area of challenge is the Nigerian economy, which is greatly affected by falling oil prices on the international market and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Mou, 2023). The economic situation of Nigeria is being heavily affected by the decline in global oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic. Their economy, which holds on oil exports, has also been on the recovery path from the shock of the pandemic (Ozili, 2021). The pandemic presented a scenario that contracted economic activity, as businesses were obligated to shut down or reduce operations from lockdown measures. For example, the contraction in the Canadian manufacturing sector in the first quarter of 2021 was 21.89%, while the contraction in the transportation sector was 21.89% during the same period (Ozili, 2021).

However, the economy has begun to show signs of recovery. Thus, the agricultural sector resisted the downturn and recorded an increase of 2.28% in the first quarter of 2021. The same can be said about the ICT sector with about 6.47% growth in the same period (Ozili, 2021). In general, Nigeria still faces a difficult economic situation, but signs of recovery exist. The mix of government diversification efforts and fiscal and monetary policies in place is anticipated to ameliorate the effects brought forth by the pandemic and the oil price plunge. Given the above-presented, the paper examines the roles of

Nigeria as a regional hegemon in West Africa, taking a historical context, foreign policy goals, and current challenges.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Hegemony

Hegemony In international relations, hegemony is that period of dominance of one state or a few states over the others through a combination of means economic, military and cultural. This has been a central theme in international relations theory along with realism, liberalism and critical theory. It was first introduced by Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist who insisted coercive power involves consent of the population to its operation and the shaping of cultural and ideological norms by hegemony (Aksakal, 2022). In Gramsci method of emphasizing cultural legitimacy through which social consent would be created and therefore deny it a primacy over force in social relationships. Gramsci thus developed a different view about power that moved beyond the notions of coercion or domination, acknowledging that hegemonic positions can be acquired as forms of contested socio-political mediations. The concept of hegemony has been extended in international relations to externalized dominance exercised by one state or group of states over others. In his writings, realist theorists, like Robert Gilpin, has postulated how hegemony would importantly be a necessary condition for any society stability and order (Garba, 2023). The hegemonic power, as a result, grants a kind of public good, order and stability, and in return is manifested by a certain degree of influence and authority.

Liberal theorists on the other part said that hegemony could cause instability and conflict within a system, especially if the hegemonic power uses its available leverages to exploit or dominate others (Akran and Udeagbala, 2022). In this perspective, most ways by which stability and cooperation can be done have to do with the institutions or international norms that restrict dominance by any one state. Critical theorists like Robert Cox would go further to state that hegemony is not simply defined in terms of state power, but rather a more complicated process of social and economic relations (Ahmad, Uddin and shah, 2022). Such an approach defines hegemony as existing through the construction of a dominant ideology or culture, which in turn shapes the interest and identities of states and other actors. More recently, the concept of hegemony has been applied to numerous empirical cases, including the ascent of the United States to global hegemony in the twentieth century (Ikenberry, 2024), the decline of the British Empire (Khudaykulova, 2023), and the developing prospect that China is emerging as a potential hegemon in the twenty-first century (Agupusi, 2021).

2.2. Regional Security

Regional Security is that dimension which refers to harmony in a region; it is one of the things with which a region is secured. Such regions are often geographically determined, with interrelated cultures, political histories, or even economies. Besides, it has inefficacy of holding up its citizens against various dangers, such as terrorism, conflict, crime, and natural catastrophes. Overall, the West African region comprises 16 countries, which face numerous security challenges detrimental to the states' stability

and prosperity. Rising trends of terrorist attacks, increasing piracy, and transnational organized crime have been recorded in this region making it an increasingly dangerous territory, undermining the regional security and cooperation.

However, an alarming security threat, including terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), is taking place in West Africa. These groups perform many attacks against civilians, military personnel, and infrastructure and are responsible for high human suffering and economic losses (Nwaoboli, 2023). The growing spread of terrorism in West Africa has also touched poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and poor governance conditions that have in many ways encouraged the careful ground for such extremist ideologies. Another grave character of a security challenge affecting West Africa is piracy and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. Attacks by pirates on oil tankers, cargo ships, and even fishing vessels have added to the high loss of economic value and linked to the regional energy security (Oluwasanmi et al., 2022).

Many of the West African countries depend highly on these routes for the heavy inbound and outbound maritime trade. Hence, securing the region becomes functional to regional economic development. The threat of transnational organized crime constitutes yet another element that is highly compromising the West African security environment. This has resulted in the human trafficking cases, arms smuggling, and narcotics trafficking that have destabilized regions, corrupted governments, and instigated violence (Ojolo and Singh, 2025). Porous borders coupled with inefficacy in law enforcement in many West African countries have further created a conducive environment for organized crimes.

In response to the emerging security threats, West African countries have established various regional organizations and initiatives. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed an architecture of regional security, which comprises a peacekeeping force, a mediation and Security Council, and a counter-terrorism strategy (Akran and Udeagbala, 2022). The West African Regional Security System aims at improving regional security cooperation, information sharing, and capacity building to the benefit of West African states (Calvert and Kaarbo, 2025).

2.3. Regional Cooperation

Most of the "regional cooperation" means states working in tandem within a given geographic region to achieve common aspirations and stimulate economic growth and to address shared problems (Hesketh, 2025). The spectrum of cooperation may include elements such as economic integration (regional trade agreements), security cooperation (regional security organizations), environmental cooperation, etc. (Camara, 2020). For example, the G5 Sahel is a regional security initiative geared toward promoting security cooperation and coordination between the Sahel countries, namely; Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger (Camara, 2020). These regional initiatives have supported the promotion of security cooperation and coordination among West African countries.

The study adopted neorealism theory as its theoretical construct. Neorealism dates from the 1970s and 1980s as a theoretical approach in international relations. The first articulation of neorealism was in Kenneth Waltz's 1979 book, "Theory of International

Politics." (Zilincik, 2025) claimed that the architecture of the international system is self-help where states rely more on their own capabilities for guaranteeing security. The theory reduces the international system to anarchy - where no central authority enforces laws or keeps order. The securing of position in the international hierarchy becomes a constant tussle within states. Given, therefore, the underpinnings of such a structure, the states have been led primarily by self-interest and security concerns, ultimately leading to a constant tussle for power and survival. One of the features or schools in neorealism is called the "security dilemma", which is best defined as a situation in which the quest for security by one state creates insecurity for other states. If one state increases its military power, other states may perceive this as a threat against themselves and respond with military buildup, thus creating a competition cycle among states, where each one attempts to maintain security in a very turbulent environment.

Neorealism has greatly affected international relations in terms of security studies and international conflict. For example, the neorealist analysis of the Ukraine conflict will emphasize Russian and Ukrainian security interests and the influence of NATO expansion on Russian security perceptions, on the one hand, and the struggle for power and influence in the region, on the other.

There is a relationship between this theory of neorealism and Nigeria's foreign policy toward West Africa. It reflects that the country's activities are actuated by self-interest and security concerns, leading to a constant tussle for power and survival (Ninyio, 2025). Nigeria's ambition for regional hegemony is further driven by the need for stability and security in West Africa, given that it is the largest economy and most populous country in the region. Nigeria's foreign policy is marked by "pro-African" attitudes with a focus on integration and cooperation at the regional level, meant to preserve its status on the hierarchy. This thinking is in tune with neorealist theory that holds that motivations for state action can be as simple as survival and security.

Nigeria's foreign policy, therefore, has a great deal of weight concerning security and cooperation at the West African level. The country's economic and military dominance in the region bequeaths it enormous power over regional organizations and initiatives like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) whose objectives are to promote regional integration and cooperation. Nonetheless, the pursuit of regional hegemony by Nigeria raises fears of exploitation and domination by big states among the smaller ones in the region. Neorealist theory would argue that it is not altruistic motives that drive Nigeria to act that way but self-preserving and security needs through which it pursues its own interest.

3. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on a conceptual and policy-oriented analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy and its implications for regional security and cooperation in West Africa. Given the complex and dynamic nature of international relations within the subregion, the qualitative method enables a nuanced understanding of political behavior, institutional frameworks, and strategic interactions among states. The research is exploratory and analytical in nature, aiming to interpret

patterns of behavior and the underlying motivations behind Nigeria's foreign policy choices.

The theoretical foundation of this study is rooted in neorealism, a structural theory of international relations that emphasizes the anarchic nature of the international system and the centrality of state power. Neorealism posits that states act primarily in pursuit of their national interest, particularly security and survival, and that the distribution of power significantly shapes international outcomes. This framework is particularly relevant to the study of Nigeria's hegemonic aspirations and its behavior within the West African region. By applying neorealism, the study critically assesses Nigeria's leadership posture and its strategic calculations in fostering regional stability, peacekeeping, and integration under organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Data for this study were gathered through secondary sources. The method of data collection was based on extensive library research, which included academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, policy papers, reports from international organizations (such as ECOWAS, the African Union, and the United Nations), government documents, and credible media sources. These materials provided both historical context and contemporary insights into Nigeria's foreign policy actions, regional engagements, and peacekeeping interventions.

The analysis focused on key case studies and historical instances where Nigeria played a significant role in regional security efforts, particularly its involvement in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars, its mediation in political crises within the region, and its influence within ECOWAS. These cases serve as practical illustrations of the country's foreign policy objectives, strategies, and regional responses. Through a descriptive-analytical technique, the study evaluated how Nigeria balances its national interest with regional expectations, the effectiveness of its leadership in promoting cooperation, and the limitations or criticisms of its hegemonic stance.

In interpreting the data, the study also considered internal variables—such as Nigeria's political stability, economic capacity, and institutional strength—that shape and constrain its foreign policy. The qualitative analysis enables a critical and contextual assessment of Nigeria's dual role as both a regional stabilizer and a potential source of friction within the West African geopolitical landscape.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Evolution of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence in 1960

Nigeria's foreign policy foundation could be viewed as having undergone two distinct turns in history—the colonial and the post-colonial. British colonialism lasted from 1914 to 1960, which was the time when geographical Nigeria was consolidated into a political entity (Angell et al., 2022). The colonial period was characterized by British colonialism, from which Nigeria was to gain independence in 1960, but during which its foreign policy was largely determined from British interests.

Importantly, through the colonial era, the British did link the diplomatic representation of those in her interests to Her Majesty's government in Great Britain (Cingari, 2021). As indicated the interests of Commonwealth member states were

protected by Her Majesty's Ambassador or Minister for the United Kingdom. This meant that Nigeria's foreign policy before independence was essentially controlled by the British to serve their interests (Muhammad and Babatunde, 2024). The Governor-General of British Nigeria exercised considerable power over the outside affairs of the country, which were to be reserved only for the Governor-General as the representative of the interests of the Queen in Nigeria. The first-ever Nigeria's foreign policy paper was published in 1956, which joint cooperation between the Governor-General, Chief Secretary, and the British Colonial and Commonwealth Relations Offices. Such historical factors have shaped Nigeria's foreign policy, under which the country continues to seek navigations between itself, the United Kingdom, and the rest of the world. Grasping the complexities of foreign policy adopted by Nigeria requires understanding this colonial legacy.

4.2. Nigeria's role in regional organizations - ECOWAS and the African Union

Nigeria is a key member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that spearheads regional integration and development due to its considerable economic, political, and military might. As a founding member, Nigeria has been at the fore in cultivating the ECOWAS with policies and programs (Johnson, Babanmma and Luka, 2023).

1) Leadership and Economic Contributions

There is no question about Nigeria's leadership in the ECOWAS. The organization has received its strategic guidance and directions from Nigeria in relation to its policies and programs. The Nigerian leadership has further contributed to facilitating regional integration, and peace, and security efforts in West Africa. For example, Nigeria was instrumental in the creation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), a regional peacekeeping force that has successfully stabilized several West African countries, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau (Johnson, Babanmma and Luka, 2023).

Apart from leadership, the economic contributions of Nigeria have aided considerably in sustaining ECOWAS. As the largest economy in West Africa, Nigeria accounts for about 70% of the region's GDP. Its economic power enables Nigeria to finance ECOWAS programs and projects greatly. For instance, Nigeria has made substantial contributions to the ECOWAS Community Levy, which is a funding mechanism that is used to support the operations and programs of the organization (Abdulkarim et al., 2021). Nigeria has also contributed greatly toward promoting trade and investment regionally in West Africa. Nigeria has been a major promoter of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) that seeks to advance free trade and economic integration amongst ECOWAS member States. The country has made itself a destination for foreign investment, majorly owing to its market size and potential, and has accounted for a significant share of foreign direct investment (FDI) in West Africa (Njoku et al., 2025).

2) Regional Security and Peacekeeping

Nigeria has been a major contributor to ECOWAS peacekeeping efforts in the region. The country has provided troops, logistics, and financial support to various ECOWAS peacekeeping missions, including the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Crawford, 2025). Nigeria's contributions to ECOWAS peacekeeping have been instrumental in stabilizing the region and promoting peace and security. The ECOMOG experience is a notable example of Nigeria's contributions to ECOWAS peacekeeping. ECOMOG was established in 1990 to intervene in the Liberian civil war. Nigeria provided the bulk of the troops and logistics for the mission, which was mandated to restore peace and stability in Liberia (Nasidi, 2024). The ECOMOG experience demonstrated Nigeria's commitment to regional security and peacekeeping, and it marked a significant milestone in the development of ECOWAS's peacekeeping capabilities.

3) Nigeria's role in regional organization-AU

From inception, Nigeria has been one of the proud and active members of the African Union (AU), exercising great influence over the policies and programs of the organization. Nigeria's involvement in AU is fulfilling Nigeria's strategic foreign policy objectives on behalf of African unity, solidarity, and cooperation (Lawal et al. 2022). In a number of ways, Nigeria has been active in the AU, especially concerning peace and security, economic development, and human rights. The country has been active in promoting peace in Africa through several peacekeeping matters in the AU, one example being the AU peacekeeping mission in Somalia (Yeros, 2024). Nigeria has endowed the AU strength by supporting it financially and logistically, including hosting many of its summits and meetings (Ngara, 2022). Nigeria has taken on positions of leadership at the AU level and provided direction concerning some critical issues facing the continent. Nigeria has put great efforts in the direction of African unity and solidarity for the interest of African countries in international for a (Dukiya and Benjamine, 2021). Nigeria unflinching commitment to AU leadership is infused with a concern for African development and a desire to empower peace and stability across the continent.

4.3. The impact of Nigeria's foreign policy on regional security

Nigeria's foreign policy constitutes an important pillar of that country's national security strategy, particularly in respect of regional security. In West Africa, Nigeria by its stature in the sub-region has consistently sought to promote regional stability, security, and cooperation. Nigeria's foreign policy objectives are determined by the national interests of the country, which includes promoting regional security, stability, and cooperation. Nigeria seeks good neighborly relations, economic integration, and a good international reputation. Nigeria's foreign policy has a certain degree of influence in promoting African unity and solidarity, as attested by its own active participation in the AU and ECOWAS (Njoku et al., 2025). For instance, Nigeria employed a range of strategies to achieve its foreign policy objectives in Liberia such as diplomatic engagement through mediating conflicts and facilitating dialogue between warring factions. Another one was military intervention in Liberia's civil war, which includes provision troops and logistical support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping mission (Eugene and Abdussalam, 2022).

Nevertheless, the Nigeria's foreign policy objectives in Liberia was driven by a desire to promote regional stability and security. The country was able to achieve this objective through a combination of diplomatic, economic, and military means (Ninyio, 2025). Nigeria's intervention in Liberia's civil war in the 1990s, for example, was motivated by a desire to restore stability and security in the country (Angell et al., 2022). The outcomes of Nigeria's foreign policy in Liberia have been significant. The country's intervention in Liberia's civil war helped to restore stability and security, paving the way for the country's transition to democracy (Dukiya and Benjamine, 2021). Nigeria's economic assistance has also helped to promote economic development in Liberia, including the rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure (Zilincik, 2025).

Second, Nigeria's intervention in Sierra Leone's civil war in the 1990s, for example, was motivated by a desire to restore stability and security in the country (Moussavi, 2024). The outcome of Nigeria's foreign policy in Sierra Leone was significant. The country's intervention in Sierra Leone's civil war helped to restore stability and security, paving the way for the country's transition to democracy (Aksakal, 2022). Nigeria's economic assistance has also helped to promote economic development in Sierra Leone, including the rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure (Zilincik, 2025).

Third, Nigeria's foreign policy objectives in The Gambia was driven by a desire to promote democratic governance, human rights, and regional stability. Nigeria's support for the ECOWAS intervention in The Gambia in 2017, for example, was motivated by a desire to restore democratic governance and stability in the country. The result of Nigeria's foreign policy in The Gambia was massive. Nigeria's support for the ECOWAS intervention in 2017 helped to restore democratic governance and stability in The Gambia (Hesketh, 2025). Nigeria's economic assistance has also helped to promote economic development in The Gambia, including the rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure (Hesketh, 2025).

Despite Nigeria's efforts to promote regional security, the country faces several challenges in the region. These challenges include terrorism, insurgency, piracy, and transnational organized crime (Eugene and Abdussalam, 2022). The Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria has been a major security concern, with the group's activities spilling over into neighboring countries. Nigeria has also been affected by piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, which has threatened the country's maritime security and economic interests (Nyadera, 2022). Nevertheless, Nigeria has responded to regional security challenges through a combination of bilateral and multilateral efforts. The country has strengthened its bilateral relations with neighboring countries, including Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, to enhance cooperation on security and defense issues (Gawi and Abdullahi, 2024). Nigeria has also played a key role in regional organizations, such as ECOWAS and the AU, to promote regional security and cooperation (Hesketh, 2025).

4.4. Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Regional Cooperation

Nigeria, as the largest economy in Africa, has played a pivotal role in promoting regional cooperation, economic integration, and trade within the West African sub-region. The country's foreign policy has been instrumental in shaping the regional landscape, fostering cooperation, and driving economic growth. Nigeria's foreign policy

has historically been driven by a desire to promote regional stability, security, and cooperation. The country's Afrocentric foreign and security policy, as enunciated by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, emphasizes the importance of African solidarity and cooperation (Ninyio, 2025). This policy framework has guided Nigeria's engagement with regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

ECOWAS, established in 1975, aims to promote economic integration, cooperation, and development among its member states. Nigeria has played a leading role in ECOWAS, providing significant financial and logistical support to the organization (Johnson, Babanmma and Luka, 2023). The country's leadership role in ECOWAS has been instrumental in promoting regional cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade and economic integration.

One of the key initiatives driven by Nigeria's foreign policy is the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS). The ETLS aims to promote intra-regional trade by reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers among member states (Johnson, Babanmma and Luka, 2023). Nigeria has been a strong advocate for the ETLS, recognizing the potential benefits of increased trade and economic integration for the region. Also, the ETLS, Nigeria has also played a key role in promoting regional infrastructure development. The country has invested heavily in the development of regional transportation networks, including roads, railways, and ports (Gawi and Abdullahi, 2024). These investments have improved the efficiency and competitiveness of regional trade, facilitating the movement of goods and services across borders.

Nigeria's foreign policy has also prioritized regional security and stability, recognizing the interconnectedness of security and economic development. The country has played a leading role in regional peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts, including the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) and the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) (Eugene and Abdussalam, 2022) environment, conducive to trade and economic integration.

Despite these efforts, there are challenges that must be addressed to further promote regional cooperation and economic integration. One of the key challenges is the need to improve regional infrastructure, including transportation networks, energy systems, and telecommunications (Moussavi, 2024). Nigeria's foreign policy can play a key role in addressing these challenges, by promoting regional cooperation and investment in infrastructure development.

5. CONCLUSION

The paper examined Nigeria's foreign policy influence on West African regional security and cooperation, given its position as a regional hegemon. The country's Afrocentric foreign and security policy has focused on promoting regional stability, security, and cooperation, with a strong emphasis on African solidarity and cooperation. Nigeria has played a crucial role in shaping the security and cooperation landscape in West Africa through its leadership in regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The country's economic and military contributions have been instrumental in promoting regional integration and

development. However, Nigeria's regional hegemonic aspirations have also raised concerns about its impact on the sovereignty and autonomy of other West African states. The country's dominance in the region has led to accusations of hegemony, with some countries viewing Nigeria's involvement in regional security initiatives as self-serving. Despite these challenges, Nigeria's foreign policy has contributed significantly to regional security and cooperation.

The country's intervention in regional conflicts, such as the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars, has helped to establish and project its image as a regional leader. To maintain its leadership role in West Africa, Nigeria must balance its national interests with regional imperatives. By adopting a more inclusive and collaborative approach to regional leadership, Nigeria can consolidate its position as a regional leader and drive sustainable peace, security, and cooperation in West Africa. The country's current and next administrations should prioritize regional cooperation and integration, while also addressing domestic challenges such as insecurity and corruption.

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