

GREAT POWER COMPETITION VERSUS GEOPOLITICAL CHANGE
IN NIGERIA AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE
FUTURE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

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General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

GREAT POWER COMPETITION VERSUS GEOPOLITICAL CHANGE IN NIGERIA AND THE IMPLICATIONS ON THE FUTURE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, by Major Andrew W. Bisset, 108 pages.

Great power competition between the United States, Russia, and China is no more apparent than in the country of Nigeria, a nation facing immense geopolitical change in the 21st Century. Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation, has its largest economy, is natural resource-rich, faces evolving internal conflicts, and is home to some of the most aggressive violent extremist organizations across the globe. Additionally, Nigeria is projected to become the world's third most populous nation by the year 2050, increasing its need for legitimate governance, a strong economy, and security. Since 2012, Russia and China have increased activities in Nigeria, creating a more competitive environment for the United States to achieve its goals. This research explores the strategic objectives of the United States, Russia, and China in Nigeria. It determines if there are implications on the strategic objectives of the United States based on its current amount of activity versus its competitors and the increasing needs of Nigeria.

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ACRONYMS

APC	All Progressives Congress
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin
JP	Joint Publication
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Company
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PMESII	Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure
USAFRICOM	United States Africa Command
VEO	Violent Extremist Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Africa is key terrain for competition with China and Russia, and our support to C-VEO operations is necessary. While we can and will grow more efficient to contribute to higher NDS priorities, if the U.S. steps back from Africa too far, China and Russia will fill the void to our detriment. Violent extremist organizations will be able to grow unchecked, some will ultimately threaten the homeland, and we will lose opportunities for increased trade and investments with some of the fastest growing economies in the world.

—General Stephen J. Townsend, *2020 USAFRICOM Posture Statement*

Great Power Competition between the United States, Russia, and China spans globally, but there is no more apparent evidence of this than on the African Continent. While their activities in Africa spread throughout the continent, each great power varies in their interests. The United States seeks to improve partner capacity while protecting its interests. Russian strategy in Africa is militaristic and political with the objectives of: gain political support and influence, gain control of energy resources, lead the mining and metal industry, and provide weapons industry sales.¹ China's strategy in Africa can be summarized as economic focused with four overarching objectives: support for its foreign policy agendas in multinational forums, natural resource and market growth, the security of its investments and personnel, and support to politically matching ideologies.²

¹ Janos Besenyo, "The Africa Policy of Russia," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31, no. 1 (2019): 144, accessed September 15, 2019, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2018.1555976>.

² Yun Sun, *Africa in China's Foreign Policy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, April 2014), 1, accessed September 1, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Africa-in-China-web_CMG7.pdf.

Though the interests, means, and locations to achieve the objectives may vary, Nigeria is a common ground for activities of the great powers.

The African nation of Nigeria is one of the most strategically important countries on the continent. This importance is because Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, the sixth most populous in the world, and is projected to maintain significant growth making it the fourth most populous by 2050. It is composed of over 250 ethnic groups and an approximate 50 percent split between Islam and Christianity. Nigeria also has the largest economy in Africa. This large and young population combined with economic potential, natural resource abundance, and ethnic diversity makes Nigeria a perfect location to be at the center of the great power competition.³

The United States involvement in Nigeria has three overarching themes. First, military assistance to enable the defeat of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs). Second, a political partnership to promote effective governance, improve the rule of law, and develop institutions. Third, economic development. United States relations with Nigeria dates to 1960 after Nigeria's independence from the United Kingdom. During that time, the United States focused on diplomacy as Nigeria went through multiple governmental changes, military coups, and civil war. Since 1999, the two nations have

³ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "Nigeria," *The World Factbook*, 2020, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>.

had a positive relationship focused on strengthening democratic institutions, promoting good governance, countering corruption, and improving security.⁴

Russian involvement in Nigeria follows two general themes. First, develop oil and natural gas commodities through Nigeria's assets in the Gulf of Guinea. Second, build military cooperation through the sharing of technology and arms sales with the aim of what Russia claims to be the destruction of Boko Haram.⁵ Russian involvement in Nigeria dates to pre-1990's when the Soviet Union maintained political and military relations with the Nigerian government as it went through a civil war and changes in leadership. After a period of decline, Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev revitalized a return to the scene around 2009.⁶ Russia's performance is due to a recovery of the Russian economy and a search by Russian companies for new sources of oil, gas, and raw materials to augment Russia's natural resource base.⁷ Though its current presence is modest compared to others, Russia presents an option to counterbalance Western and Chinese interests across economic benefits and military resourcing.

⁴ U.S. Department of State (DOS), "U.S. Relations with Nigeria," last updated December 4, 2018, accessed March 9, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-nigeria/>.

⁵ Tom Balmforth, "Nigeria looks to sign military cooperation deal with Russia this month," *Reuters*, October 11, 2019, accessed October 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-nigeria-military/nigeria-looks-to-sign-military-cooperation-deal-with-russia-this-month-idUSKBN1WQ20W>.

⁶ Nikolas K. Gvosdev and Christopher Marsh, *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors* (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2014), 369.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 371.

China's specific themes in Nigeria are complicated to determine. Across the African continent, Chinese objectives are to oppose democratization through support to autocratic forms of government, development of bilateral agreements that ignore abuses of Chinese business partners, and limited military exchange and arms sales.⁸ China's presence across the African continent has continuously built for decades but has seen a significant rise since President Xi Jinping took office in March 2013.

With all this external influence, what does Nigeria want? Nigeria has consistently focused on improvement but faces significant issues from corruption, lack of accountability, and a comparatively weak economy. The past decade has shown some positive signs with a peaceful transition of power to an opposition party in 2015 and their subsequent reelection in 2019. Nigeria's objectives focus on economic improvement, reduction of corruption, and making Nigeria more secure.⁹

This thesis attempts to fill a gap in the scholarly literature by analyzing the strategies and activities of the three great powers in Nigeria in one document. Currently, there are no documents that look at all sides. During the research for this thesis, it became apparent when talking about the great powers in Africa; there has been significantly more focus on China in Africa than the United States or Russia. By quickly looking at the amount of literature, one could assume there is no real great power competition in Africa

⁸ Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 181-182.

⁹ P. M. News, "President Buhari sets agenda for ministers," August 21, 2019, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/08/21/president-buhari-sets-agenda-for-ministers/>.

because China has been highly active. This research purposely looks at all three nations, the United States, Russia, and China, to help build a perspective on what great power competition is in Africa.

Additionally, there is limited literature with a focus on Nigeria. Instead, scholars, authors, journalists, and governments, focus on Africa as a whole, treating everyone the same. Last, there is limited literature of fewer than two years old. By analyzing strategic objectives with actions on the ground, this research will help shape an understanding of the current operational environment.

Primary Research Question

The presence of external actors in Africa has increased and will continue over the next decade. The most visible examples have been the Chinese increase of financing, access to natural resources, and access to markets, and a Russian militaristic approach combined with access to natural resources.¹⁰ In an era of great power competition, the United States, Russia, and China coexist, compete, and cooperate in Nigeria. The primary research question seeks a deeper understanding of the implications of external actor's increasing activities in one of the regions facing the most geopolitical change in the 21st Century. Taking this into consideration, Nigeria finds itself in a period of significant geopolitical change combined with increased external influence. The primary research question is, what are the implications on the strategic objectives of the United States?

¹⁰ Commander, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), *Statement of General Thomas D. Waldhauser, United States Marine Corps Commander United States Africa Command Before the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, February 7, 2019, 8-9, accessed September 1, 2019, <https://www.africom.mil/about-the-command/2019-posture-statement-to-congress>.

Secondary Research Questions

To fully understand the operational environment and answer the primary research question, several secondary research questions must be addressed. Analyzing the answers to these questions will lead to an understanding of how each nation prioritizes its efforts in Nigeria and how geopolitical change will influence future strategic objectives.

1. What are the United States' strategic objectives in Nigeria?
2. What are Russia's strategic objectives in Nigeria?
3. What are China's strategic objectives in Nigeria?
4. What is Nigeria's policy towards external influence?
5. How will the geopolitical structure change in Nigeria?

Research focuses on four areas to answer these questions, the strategic objectives of all four nations, actions the United States, Russia, and China are taking in Nigeria, describing the current and future operational environment in Nigeria, and defining the problem that exists in Nigeria for the United States to achieve its strategic goals.

Definitions and Terms

This section will explain key definitions and organizations of significant importance referenced throughout the research.

Foreign Direct Investment: “an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business located in another country.”¹¹

¹¹ James Chen, “Foreign Direct Investment (FDI),” Investopedia, February 24, 2020, accessed March 18, 2020, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fdi.asp>.

Geopolitics: “the study of the way a country’s size, position, etc. influence its power and its relationship with other countries.”¹² For this research, Nigerian geopolitics was analyzed through operational variables, history, and geography.

Great Power Competition: Competition amongst global powers to establish dominance, control, and security. For this research, the term consists of the nations of the United States, Russia, and China. While there are other nations with significant influence in Nigeria, these nations represent three fundamental global perspectives of the 21st Century.

Operational Variables: The six variables of political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure (PMESII) identify systems and relationships of relevant actors in an operational environment.¹³

United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM): one of six United States Defense Departments geographic combatant commands. Responsible for military relations with African nations, the African Union, and African regional security organizations since October 1, 2007. Responsible for all Department of Defense (DoD) operations, exercises,

¹² Cambridge Dictionary, “Geopolitics,” accessed January 23, 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/geopolitics>.

¹³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 21, 2014), III-39 to III-40, accessed September 1, 2019, https://cgsc.blackboard.com/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=_10430_1&content_id=_938365_1.

and security cooperation on the African continent, island nations, and surrounding waters.¹⁴

Violent Extremist Organization (VEO): A group with radical ideologies focused on cultivating an environment to undermine governments and enable the expansion of their ideology. As laid out by USAFRICOM, VEOs specific to the West Africa region are Boko Haram, the al-Qaeda branch Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-Greater Sahara, and ISIS-West Africa.¹⁵

Assumptions

Assumptions are the concepts and ideas believed to be true to help guide research and answer the research question. The assumptions below give perspective and depth into the researcher's approach.

First, this study assumes the United States, Russia, and China will continue to seek influence in Nigeria. While the level of involvement in Nigeria may fluctuate from year to year, the general idea is Nigeria is a vital interest to the region that each great power will remain involved in some form or fashion.

The second assumption is all three nations are aware of the future geopolitical change in Nigeria. It is important to note the assumption is they are aware of the coming change. Whether the great powers care about future change is an assumption and decision, this research cannot address.

¹⁴ U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), "About the Command," accessed October 27, 2019, <https://www.africom.mil/about-the-command>.

¹⁵ Commander, AFRICOM, *Statement of General Thomas D. Waldhauser*, 7, 16.

The third assumption is the Nigerian government is welcoming of influence from all three great powers but strives to one day be a stable and prosperous nation that can be self-supportive. This is an assumption because if Nigeria wanted, it could resist external influence, looking to exist on its own. This assumption explicitly states the Nigerian government because the attitude towards external influence could vary in different regions and factions of the nation, such as Boko Haram openly against involvement from any western civilization. With this, the conclusions and recommendations from this research assume Nigeria will continue supporting influence, and the great powers will continue pursuing it.

Limitations and Delimitations

The principal limitation of this research is access to the most up to date information on operations, events, data, and policies. The first limitation is limited access to USAFRICOM, Department of State, and other United States Government personnel conducting current operations in Nigeria. Additionally, this research has only unclassified material. This limitation is due to having no access to classified information but also needing to ensure the widest dissemination of the study. While the data from these two limitations would help develop a picture of ongoing United States and foreign security and development missions, it is not essential for understanding the strategic framework.

Other limitations focus on limited access and ability to analyze primary source documents from the Governments of Russia, China, and Nigeria. The researcher does not speak Russian or Chinese / Mandarin and does not have access to many websites found on Russian or Chinese servers. Translated copies of documents, secondary source

documents summarizing those critical documents, and translated speeches of leaders across the other governments help fill any gaps created by these limitations.

The delimitations are self-imposed limitations for this research. This research specifically focuses on the great powers of the United States, Russia, and China. While there are other critical external influencers in Nigeria, they were omitted to reduce the scope. Additionally, this research focuses on three out of the six operational variables, political, military, and economic. This delimitation was chosen to enable the research to focus on the variables which best correspond with the United States' strategic objectives. The methodology discussed in Chapter 3 highlights the systems and subsystems analysis format depicted in Joint Publication (JP) 2-01.3 was used as a guide for defining the environment through the operational variables. The research focuses on specific subsystems. Overall, this delimitation helps nest the research with the three strategic themes of the United States.

This research focuses on current events and the future. Current events will look back to 2012 as it marks a transition of leadership in Russia and China following in 2013. Some information before 2012 is presented to help build context. Finally, data and information up to March 1, 2020, were used. Any content or developments after then do not factor in the research and recommendations.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the strategic objectives of the United States, Russia, and China. It also provided an overview of the broad geopolitical conditions and future conditions of Nigeria. The chapter introduced the problem, research questions, key terms, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter 2 addresses the literature

review and how the literature enables the methodology to develop findings and recommendations.

Throughout this thesis, the researcher will attempt to dissect the strategic objectives and actions of the great powers while tying those in with how the conditions in Nigeria are projected to change. The United States has a long history of influence in Nigeria. With more global powers seeking areas to increase influence, it is no longer the only key player in the region.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research focuses on the geopolitical change in Nigeria and the increased external influence. The primary research question of this thesis is, what are the implications on the strategic objectives of the United States? Answering this question requires a thorough literature review aligned with the secondary research questions of strategic objectives combined with the geopolitical change occurring in Nigeria. To maintain consistency with the research methodology, this literature review is broken down into each secondary question. Each section will cover the relevant literature covering the topics of history and the operational variables of political, military, and economic.

Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the leading nations of the developing world. As shown in Chapter 1 and thus far in the literature review, Nigeria has historically attracted powers outside of Africa wanting to establish influence on the continent due to its geopolitical leadership, access to natural resources, and relative strength. While Nigeria is a powerful African nation, it has significant corruption, security, and economic issues, which prevent it from prospering. Since 2009, a consistent theme, when discussing Nigeria, is the prevalence of the VEO Boko Haram.¹⁶ The article, “Border Prosperity and

¹⁶ James Okolie-Osemene and Benjamin Adeniran Aluko, “Border Prosperity and counterinsurgency in Nigeria,” in *African Borders, Conflict, Regional and Continental Integration*, ed. Inocent Mayo and Christopher Changwe Nshimbi (New York: Routledge, 2019), 64.

counterinsurgency in Nigeria,” argues Boko Haram and other VEOs will continue to prosper in the Nigeria and Lake Chad Basin areas until proper management of borders is instituted.¹⁷ This fact and the decade long prosperity of Boko Haram are essential to consider when analyzing great power objectives and actions in Nigeria.

The Council on Foreign Relations Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Security Tracker projects illustrate the security situation in Nigeria. Overall, from 2012 to April 2019, the period of primary focus in this research, Nigeria, has led the African continent in deaths by political violence.¹⁸ Further details are provided in the Nigeria Security Tracker, which “is a project of the Council on Foreign Relations’ Africa Program, documents and maps violence in Nigeria that is motivated by political, economic, or social grievances.”¹⁹ This data shows since 2012, Boko Haram and State Actors have led to the overwhelming majority of deaths in Nigeria, attributed to 19,039 of the 30,171.²⁰

The “Nigeria Country Assessment,” published by *Janes Sentinel Security Assessment – West Africa*, provides an in-depth assessment of the current and future geopolitical structure in Nigeria. Overall, conditions in Nigeria are dynamic. Last year, 2019, saw the reelection of President Muhammadu Buhari, an evolving internal security

¹⁷ Okolie-Osemene and Aluko, “Border Prosperity and counterinsurgency in Nigeria,” 66.

¹⁸ Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), “Sub-Saharan Security Tracker,” accessed February 2, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/africa-sub-saharan/sub-saharan-security-tracker/p37884>.

¹⁹ Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), “Nigeria Security Tracker,” accessed February 2, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483>.

²⁰ Ibid.

situation with Boko Haram and new attacks on locals by the Fulani herders, increased criminal activity in the Gulf of Guinea, and a border closing with neighbors in an attempt to curtail smuggling.²¹

The next item to cover is Nigeria's policy towards external influence. During this research, no official Nigerian policy was found regarding this subject. However, recent remarks from senior Nigerian officials lead to the conclusion Nigeria is open to the assistance of all three great powers. After a February 2020 meeting with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Nigerian Foreign Minister Onyeama remarked Nigeria values the cooperation between the two nations and looks forward to the results from a continued emphasis on the binational commission.²² Nigerian President Buhari's remarks with Russian President Putin at the October 2019 Russia-Africa Summit provide support to Russia's involvement with Nigeria. In his speech, President Buhari stated relations with Russia have been cordial and mutually beneficial in past years and Nigeria can learn from Russia on how to transition from being an oil export-dependent economy.²³ The same Nigerian support to the United States and Russia is seen with China. During joint remarks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in 2017, Nigerian Foreign Minister Onyeama

²¹ Jane's IHS, "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - West Africa," 1-2, accessed February 2, 2020, <https://janes-ihs-com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/Janes/Display/nigs010-CAF>.

²² Michael R. Pompeo, "Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Statements to the Press with Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama," U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Nigeria, February 4, 2020, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://ng.usembassy.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-statements-to-the-press-with-nigerian-foreign-minister-geoffrey-onyeama/>.

²³ Office of the President of Russia, "Meeting with President of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari," October 23, 2019, accessed January 7, 2020, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61888>.

stated appreciation for the continued Chinese support and Nigeria is willing to enhance exchanges and cooperation further.²⁴

Overall, literature regarding Nigeria geopolitics and role in great power competition is underdeveloped. There is significant writing on the extensive threats Nigeria faces internally and the continuous government corruption issues the nation faces. Remarks of the United States, Russian, and Chinese senior leaders clearly state each country's dedication to improving Nigeria.

United States

Strategic documents of the United States and associated leadership testimonies provide the most explicit depiction of national strategy and foreign policy across all operational variables for the current and future operating environments. The following documents offer context as historical references of the national strategic and military strategy of President Barack Obama's administration.

In the *National Security Strategy*, 2010, President Obama established priorities in Africa of political, security, and economic cooperation focused on access to open markets, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and protection of the environment. The document also placed a high priority on infrastructure development, access to power, trade, and investment, and support to multinational organizations such

²⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples Republic of China (MFA PRC), "Wang Yi Holds Talks with Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama of Nigeria," January 12, 2017, accessed March 10, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zzjg_663340/fzs_663828/xwlb_663830/t1430301.shtml.

as the United Nations and African Union.²⁵ *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership*, assigned priorities to build partner capacity and counter violent extremism in Africa.²⁶ In the 2012 defense strategy titled, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, the DoD did not mention Africa. This document highlighted a shift in focus to the Asia-Pacific region. The other focus was for the United States to be the global partner of choice.²⁷

In the *National Security Strategy*, 2015, President Obama addressed a shift in focus to two regions, Asia-Pacific and Africa. Through the use of multiple initiatives, the United States would focus on access to power, increased trade and business focused on African export-driven growth, support to United States companies investing in Africa, strengthening of civilian and military institutions, and support to the overall health of Africans.²⁸ The other change from the 2010 document was an increased focus on China's

²⁵ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010), 45-46, accessed February 23, 2020, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

²⁶ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 12.

²⁷ U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012, 2-3, accessed February 23, 2020, <http://www.acqnotes.com/Attachments/2012%20National%20Defense%20Strategy.pdf>.

²⁸ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 26-27, accessed February 23, 2020, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf.

rise and Russian aggression.²⁹ *The United States Military's Contribution to National Security*, dated in 2015, The Joint Chiefs of Staff issued three objectives in Africa; strengthen institutions, build peacekeeping capacity, and counter-extremism.³⁰ Overall, during the second half of President Obama's administration, there was a visible increase in the strategic importance of Africa. These strategic documents had four main objectives: support to the United Nations and African Union leading African development, support for anti-corruption and legitimate governance, economic development, and support to the health of the African people.

With a historical context set, it is now essential to review the current strategic documents guiding current policies in Africa under President Trump's administration. In the *National Security Strategy*, 2017, President Trump discusses how the United States will approach great power competition and its approach in Africa. This strategy acknowledges Africa as having growing economies, which present opportunities for goods and services of the United States. It also addresses corruption and weak governance in African nations, VEOs, and Chinese economic and military expansion. President Trump acknowledged three priorities in Africa. First, partner politically to increase the capacity of governments, civil societies, and regional organizations. Second,

²⁹ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy*, 2015, 8.

³⁰ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *The United States Military's Contribution to National Security* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2015), 9.

partner economically to expand trade. The third priority is for the military and security to improve partner capacity to combat terrorism, human trafficking, and illegal trade.³¹

Political objectives of the United States can be further understood from analyzing the Congressional Research Service February 2019 report, *Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*. This report provides a summary of the current geopolitical status of Nigeria across subjects of politics, social and security concerns, reform, and economy. It finishes by addressing that the current United States policy towards Nigeria follows President Obama’s administration with an acknowledgment of the significant importance of Nigeria, high priority for support, and concern for corruption and governance.³²

In the *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis issued guidance on how the DoD plans to implement President Trump’s National Security Strategy. For Africa, this document prioritizes partnership building to counter threats and “limit the malign influence of non-African powers.”³³ The last note on strategic documents is that the Joint Chiefs of Staff has not released unclassified summaries of the National Military Strategy since 2015.

³¹ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2017), 52-53, accessed September 1, 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

³² Lauren P. Blanchard and Tomas F. Husted, *Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, February 2019), 19.

³³ U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America 2018*, 10, accessed September 1, 2019, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

Now having reviewed the current and previous national-level strategic guidance, it is important to summarize the differences to highlight what direction the United States has taken. The most obvious difference is the acknowledgment of great power competition and the arrival of China in Africa and to counter the influence of non-African powers. This difference implies a shift in focus from directly on Africans to now split between Africans and countering powers outside of Africa. Additionally, current guidance is significantly more focused on security and countering VEOs and terrorism. Even though there are differences, the documents similarly emphasize economic development and political support to combat corruption and increase the legitimacy of African national governments.

In the *Statement of General Thomas D. Waldhauser, United States Marine Corps, Commander United States Africa Command, Before the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, General Waldhauser provides the 2019 update on operations at the Combatant Command level across Africa and Nigeria. This testimony established military priorities in Nigeria as support to counter VEO operations and support to increase Nigerian military capacity.³⁴

In the *Statement of General Stephen J. Townsend, United States Army, Commander United States Africa Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 30 January 2020, General Townsend provides the most current update to military operations across Africa and Nigeria. Relevant to this research is that this posture statement does not mention Nigeria. Comparatively, the 2019 posture statement refers to

³⁴ Commander, AFRICOM, *Statement of General Thomas D. Waldhauser*, 16, 30.

Nigeria 16 times. To help clarify what the interests of the United States in Africa are, General Townsend states the security of the United States depends on open and secure air and sea lines of communication around Africa.³⁵

Additionally, General Townsend spends a significant amount of time addressing competition with Russia and China, which, he terms as global power competition. His view of this competition is two-fold. China has outpaced its competitors in Africa as it has increased the priority of the continent. Russia sees the opportunities on the continent and is beginning to expand its actions.³⁶

Overall, AFRICOM has four priorities of the safety of American personnel and interests in Africa, global power competition, counter-VEO, and building partner capacity. While Nigeria is not referenced, the summary for West Africa provides that regional VEOs pose a significant threat, and there needs to be better synchronization to control the threat. Finally, General Townsend closes with two warnings, stating that too much reduction in Africa will allow China and Russia to fill the void and allow VEOs to grow unchecked.³⁷

There is no published strategic document for the United States Department of State (DoS) in Nigeria. In February 2020, Secretary Michael R. Pompeo hosted the U.S. – Nigeria Binational Commission and outlined three focus areas during a joint speech

³⁵ Commander, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), *Statement of General Stephen J. Townsend, United States Army Commander United States Africa Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, January 30, 2020, accessed February 24, 2020, <https://www.africom.mil/about-the-command/2020-posture-statement-to-congress>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-17.

with Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Geoffrey Onyeama. First, economic cooperation focused on trade, job creation, and infrastructure investment. The second focus area is a political partnership to decrease corruption. Third, security cooperation focused on increasing Nigerian capacity to combat terrorism, specifically Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa.³⁸

In summary, there is significant depth in the literature regarding U.S. strategic objectives across the African continent. The United States Government and security apparatus publish consistent guidance, which helps illustrate the United States' approach across Africa over time. Starting with the 2017 National Security Strategy, current strategic guidance follows three themes in Africa: a political partnership to reduce corruption and strengthen institutions, security cooperation to increase partner capacity and limit the expansion of VEOs and economic collaboration. In terms of great power competition, current guidance addresses this topic more than ever. While China is presented as the primary concern, both China and Russia are discussed throughout literature, and guidance is worded to counter any great power influence.

Russia

The Russian government rarely publishes official reports and publications stating their national-level strategies. When determining Russian strategic objectives in Nigeria, this research focused on analyzing limited transcripts of Russian leadership speeches and testimonies, peer-reviewed journal articles, news reports, multinational organization

³⁸ Pompeo, “Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Statements to the Press with Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama.”

reports, and numerical data from research institutes. To begin, Sharkdam Wapmut, a research fellow at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, published an article in the *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* titled, “Trade and Investment Relations between Nigeria and Russia.” This article from 2014 helps provide context to the history of Russian-Nigerian bilateral relations dating back to November 25, 1960, with the formal establishment between Nigeria and the Soviet Union.³⁹ Additional historical information is provided in *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors*, which links Russia’s resurgence in Africa with economic and investment projects.⁴⁰

Unlike the United States, which regularly publishes official strategic documents, Russia does so only on a limited basis. However, “The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation,” is located on the website of The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. President Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy, signed on November 30, 2016, stresses support to the United Nations and other legitimate multinational organizations as the means for enforcing international law and order.⁴¹ The policy does not directly cite Nigeria. Instead, it provides one paragraph for its approach in Africa:

Russia will expand multidimensional interaction with African States both in bilateral and multilateral settings by improving political dialogue and

³⁹ Sharkdam Wapmut, “Trade and Investment Relations between Nigeria and Russia,” *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 2 (2014): 75, accessed January 6, 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26664025?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

⁴⁰ Gvosdev and Marsh, *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors*, 369-371.

⁴¹ The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, “The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation,” November 30, 2016, accessed January 5, 2020, https://www.rusemb.org.uk/rp_insight/.

promoting mutually beneficial trade and economic ties, stepping up comprehensive cooperation that serves common interests, contribute to preventing regional conflicts and crisis situations, as well as facilitate post-conflict settlement in Africa. Promoting partnership ties with the African Union and sub-regional organizations is an important element of this policy.⁴²

Peer-reviewed journals and scholarly publications provide a set of contexts on Russian strategy and operations in Africa. In *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Janos Besenyo's 2019 article, "The Africa Policy of Russia," provides an assessment of Russia's actions in Africa along the lines of politics, economics, defense, education, and aid. Mr. Besenyo concludes Russian focus across Africa is on gaining political support and influence, control of energy resources, leadership in mining and metal industries, and the sale of Russian weapons.⁴³ In *Late to the Party: Russia's Return to Africa*, Paul Stronski provides another current assessment of Russian efforts in Africa. This report, published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, covers Russian operations across all operational variables. It concludes that Russian policy in Africa focuses on exploiting new commercial opportunities and securing diplomatic support for its position in multinational institutions.⁴⁴

In October 2019, Russia hosted the first-ever Russia-Africa Summit. The key outcome from this summit specific to this research was formal and non-formal

⁴² The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation."

⁴³ Besenyo, "The Africa Policy of Russia," 144.

⁴⁴ Paul Stronski, *Late to the Party: Russia's Return to Africa* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019), 3, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/16/late-to-party-russia-s-return-to-africa-pub-80056>.

agreements between President Vladimir Putin and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. Based on the arrangements from this meeting, Russia has four strategic objectives with Nigeria. First, economic cooperation to increase trade. Second, infrastructure development focused on the energy and transportation sectors. Third, security cooperation focused on building military capacity to combat Boko Haram and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Fourth, a political partnership to strengthen positions in multinational institutions.⁴⁵ Chapter 4 of this thesis reviews these objectives in more depth.

Overall, literature remains consistent with the idea that Russian strategic objectives in Africa center on the prosperity of itself. This focus is on independent Russian prosperity through natural resource development, political, and military support, and through support on the multinational forum. Literature also supports the claim Russia is in a resurgence phase in Africa. Chapter 4 presents further data reinforcing these objectives and strategies.

China

Overall, the Chinese government publishes more official documents disclosing strategic intent than Russia. However, when compared to the United States, determining the actions of the Chinese government is still more complicated and secretive. For that reason, speeches from Chinese leadership and analysis from experts provide context to analyze strategy. The first place to begin when analyzing Chinese strategy is *The Governance of China*, an official strategic document published by the Chinese

⁴⁵ Omololu Ogunmade, “Buhari, Putin Sign Pact on Military Cooperation,” *This Day*, October 24, 2019, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/10/24/buhari-putin-sign-pact-on-military-cooperation/>.

government. These two volumes highlight Chinese strategy directly from President Xi Jinping. Neither volume directly references Nigeria. Instead, both volumes present one speech each by President Jinping, who references Africa as a continent and no specific nations.

Volume one presents a transcript of President Jinping's speech at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Center in Tanzania in 2013 titled, "Be Trustworthy Friends and Sincere Partners Forever."⁴⁶ From this speech, the Africa policy for China rested on four objectives. The first objective is to treat each other with mutual respect, focusing on development and prosperity. The second objective is to produce more outcomes through faster growth and increased relations that are mutually beneficial. This objective stressed expanding economic investment and financial cooperation, development of infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing, and resources, and a program to capitalize on talent in Africa. The third objective is to build a friendship through a focus on people-oriented growth. The last objective is to maintain good faith as China wants Africa to succeed if Africa assists in Chinese success.⁴⁷

Volume two presents part of President Jinping's speech at the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2015 titled, "A New Era of China-Africa Cooperation and Common Development." In two years, the verbal relationship between China and Africa changed from being at a starting point to one of

⁴⁶ Xi Jinping, "Be Trustworthy Friends and Sincere Partners Forever," in *The Governance of China*, vol. 1 (Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Pres Co., 2018), 333.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 337-340.

“comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership,”⁴⁸ with five strategic objectives. First, partner politically to build equality and mutual trust. Second, mutually beneficial economic cooperation focused on industrial capacity, development of high-speed railways, expressway, and regional civil aviation, and industrialization. Third, cultural exchanges will build collective progress and lasting friendship. Fourth, increase security cooperation with the goal of China helping Africa to solve issues the African way. Fifth, solidarity and coordination in international affairs with China supporting expanded African roles in multinational organizations like the UN.⁴⁹

While China has focused economically in Africa, the past couple of years has seen an increase in military activity on the continent. The 2019 Chinese military strategy titled, *China’s National Defense in the New Era*, addresses the concept behind this military activity increase. Overall, China added a new goal of strengthening military exchanges through personnel training, officer exchanges, and assistance in military development and defense capabilities.⁵⁰ This effort formally began with the China-Africa Defense and Security Forum hosted by China.

Due to the difficulty accessing Chinese government documents through language issues or official release, it has created numerous highly respected books and scholarly

⁴⁸ Xi Jinping, “A New Era of China-Africa Cooperation and Common Development,” in *The Governance of China*, vol. 2 (Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Pres Co., 2017), 496.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 496-497.

⁵⁰ The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China. *China’s National Defense in the New Era*, white paper (Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press Co. Ltd., July 2019), 33, accessed January 28, 2020, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/whitepaperonnationaldefenseinnewera.doc>.

works to be published. Though it is six years old, Yun Sun's, *Africa in China's Foreign Policy*, published as a part of the Brookings Institution's John L. Thornton China Center and Africa Growth Initiative, provides a comprehensive summary of China's strategic objectives in Africa. In 2014, during the rise of Xi Jinping's Presidency, Yun Sun assessed China's intentions in Africa to be: support of the "One China" policy, source of natural resources and market opportunities, the safety of investments and personnel, and political ideology support.⁵¹

In *Rebranding China: Contested Status Signaling in the Changing Global Order*, Xiaoyu Pu analyzes reports, speeches, publications, and actions taken by China shows there is a changing dynamic in the way China presents itself on the international stage. Specifically, Pu argues China is playing a game claiming to be a developing country still, but also, according to President Jinping, is now a great and strong power.⁵² For Africa, Pu discusses the view that China-Africa relations are of developing countries in the sense China claims to be "the worlds largest developing country, and Africa has the world's largest number of developing countries."⁵³

On the note about China being great and strong, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, addresses the idea of a strategic policy of playing the long game. In this book, Michael Pillsbury presents the marathon concept that arose with then General Secretary of the Communist

⁵¹ Sun, *Africa in China's Foreign Policy*, 1.

⁵² Xiaoyu Pu, *Rebranding China: Contested Status Signaling in the Changing Global Order* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019), 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 45.

Party of China and now President Jinping of a Chinese, “strong nation dream.” The idea is this dream will be realized by 2049, one hundred years since the formation of the Chinese communist state, making it a marathon to success, not a sprint.⁵⁴

John M. Friend and Bradley A. Thayer’s 2018 book, *How China Sees the World: Han-Centrism and the Balance of Power in International Politics*, provides another assessment of Chinese strategy. The authors determine China has two main objectives in Africa to, “secure the continent’s resources, especially energy resources,” and, “offset or replace U.S. and European power in the region over the longer term, as well as to use its presence in the region to advance its interests.”⁵⁵ Additional highlights from this book are Africa is seen as one of the two attractive regions in the World for China to focus on as Africa has a significant voice in multinational organizations and has strategic geographic locations. Finally, the authors discuss the view that China is seen in Africa as a new colonial power, focusing its efforts on itself.⁵⁶

Kenneth King’s 2013 book, *China’s Aid & Soft Power in Africa: the Case of Education and Training*, presents an in-depth study of Chinese soft power activities in Africa over the past 60 years. While significant data in this study focuses on the social operational variable, its information reinforces the political, economic, and infrastructure

⁵⁴ Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon*, 26-27.

⁵⁵ John. M. Friend and Bradley A. Thayer, *How China Sees the World: Han-Centrism and the Balance of Power in International Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 103.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

aims of China. Historically, an essential objective of China has been on human resource development.⁵⁷

China Safari: On the Trail of Beijing's Expansion in Africa, by Serge Michel and Michel Beuret, provides a perspective to China's rise to dominance across Africa. This book from 2009, summarizes China's focus in Nigeria with the title of Chapter 2, "How the Chinese Found Their Wild West and Called it Nigeria."⁵⁸ This chapter helps depict the importance China has placed in Nigeria in the early 21st Century with actions such as the development of free trade zones, infrastructure investment, and opening of a flight route to Lagos, Nigeria, the first African destination for a Chinese airline.⁵⁹

Government reports, professional documents, monographs, and thesis' provide additional literature for this topic. The DoD report, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2019*, states the key takeaways of China's current foreign policy are they will seek to enhance multinational institutions to further their interests and create a "community of common human destiny."⁶⁰ This DoD report is unique from all other literature as it highlights the recent increase in military activities by China, a change from decades of pure economic focus.

⁵⁷ Kenneth King, *China's Aid & Soft Power in Africa: the Case of Education and Training* (Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2013), IX.

⁵⁸ Serge Michel and Michel Beuret, *China Safari: On the Trail of Beijing's Expansion in Africa* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2009), 29. Kindle.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 31-37.

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2019* (Office of the Secretary of Defense), 6, accessed September 26, 2019,

David E. Brown's monograph from 2012, "Hidden Dragon, Crouching Lion: How China's Advance in Africa is Underestimated and Africa's Potential Underappreciated," assesses as of 2012, China's core interests in Africa were: secure natural resources, tap an emerging market, gain UN votes, and isolate Taiwan.⁶¹ RAND report, *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, provides a well-structured assessment of China in Africa focused on the operational variables of political and economic. The authors, Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris concluded: "China is not necessarily a strategic threat to U.S. interests in Africa."⁶² In 2014, this report found Chinese activities in Africa present both challenges and opportunities for the United States. The reason for this finding is because China and the United States have differing priorities across the continent. China is concerned with natural resource extraction, infrastructure development, and manufacturing. While there are concerns with the methods to which China achieves this, the resulting development helps increase opportunities for the United States to achieve its focus of high-tech trade and services, aid, governance, and human development.⁶³

https://media.defense.gov/2019/May/02/2002127082/-1/-1/1/2019_CHINA_MILITARY_POWER_REPORT.pdf.

⁶¹ David E. Brown, "Hidden Dragon, Crouching Lion: How China's Advance in Africa is Underestimated and Africa's Potential Underappreciated," (monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, September 2012), 7-8.

⁶² Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris, *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), xiii.

⁶³ Ibid.

Overall, literature regarding China maintains relatively consistent themes depending on the year published. Documents produced directly from China focus on a China-Africa relationship of mutual respect, benefit, and success. These documents emphasize economic investment, industrial capacity growth, and, most recently, military cooperation. Literature from independent sources or other nations address the same strategic goals but add more contentious objectives that China is focused on support to its political ideology and is attempting to assert itself as a replacement for the United States and European power. One final consistent claim is China is aggressively focused on itself, forcing many Africans to think China is just a new colonial power who only cares about itself and not the prosperity of Africa.⁶⁴

Summary

Chapter 2 summarized the literature, research, and sources related to the primary and secondary research questions of this study. These included national strategic documents of the United States, Russia, and China, government publications including highlights of leadership speeches, scholarly journals, and articles focused on assessing the Great Powers activities in Africa, and reports from research institutions such as RAND, Janes Sentinel, and the Council on Foreign Relations. This literature review helped the researcher delineate what the strategic objectives are for the United States, Russia, and China in Nigeria. Next, Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology applied to gather pertinent information and answer the research question in Chapter 5.

⁶⁴ Friend, *How China Sees the World*, 104.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used to make conclusions in support of the primary research question, what are the implications on the strategic objectives of the United States?” This research uses the operational design framework outlined in JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*.

The operational design framework is a four-step process used by military commanders and staffs seeking to understand the operational environment, strategic guidance, define the problem, and determine an operational approach. Identifying the current and future conditions in an environment enable identifying a problem and building an approach. Understanding strategic guidance is done through analysis of cyclical strategic documents or specific planning guidance to determine the future end state in terms of long-term, intermediate, or ancillary objectives.⁶⁵

Understanding the operational environment is conducted to determine the current status as it is, “the composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander.”⁶⁶

Understanding the operational environment is conducted through analysis of strategic guidance, the nature of the conflict, relevant history, physical and information factors,

⁶⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 16, 2017), IV-6 to IV-8, accessed September 1, 2019, <https://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/Joint-Doctrine-Pubs/5-0-Planning-Series/>.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, IV-10 to IV-11.

and the operational variables of PMESII. PMESII is an analytical tool that assists in determining relationships and interdependencies in an environment. When using PMESII, not every element must be used as the process can and should be tailored to fit objectives and the situation. This research only uses the variables of political, military, and economic because they nest within the strategic objectives of the United States in Nigeria. Defining the problem is then conducted by analyzing the gaps found between the current environment and the objectives identified in the earlier steps.⁶⁷

This research stops after defining the problem because determining an operational approach is not within the scope of this paper. Overall, the operational design framework is used as a guide for analyzing the impacts of the great powers in Nigeria. This framework is done through an assessment of strategic documents combined with that of the operational environment. Figure 1 depicts the operational design framework used as a guide for the methodology.

⁶⁷ JCS, JP 5-0, IV-10 to IV-11.

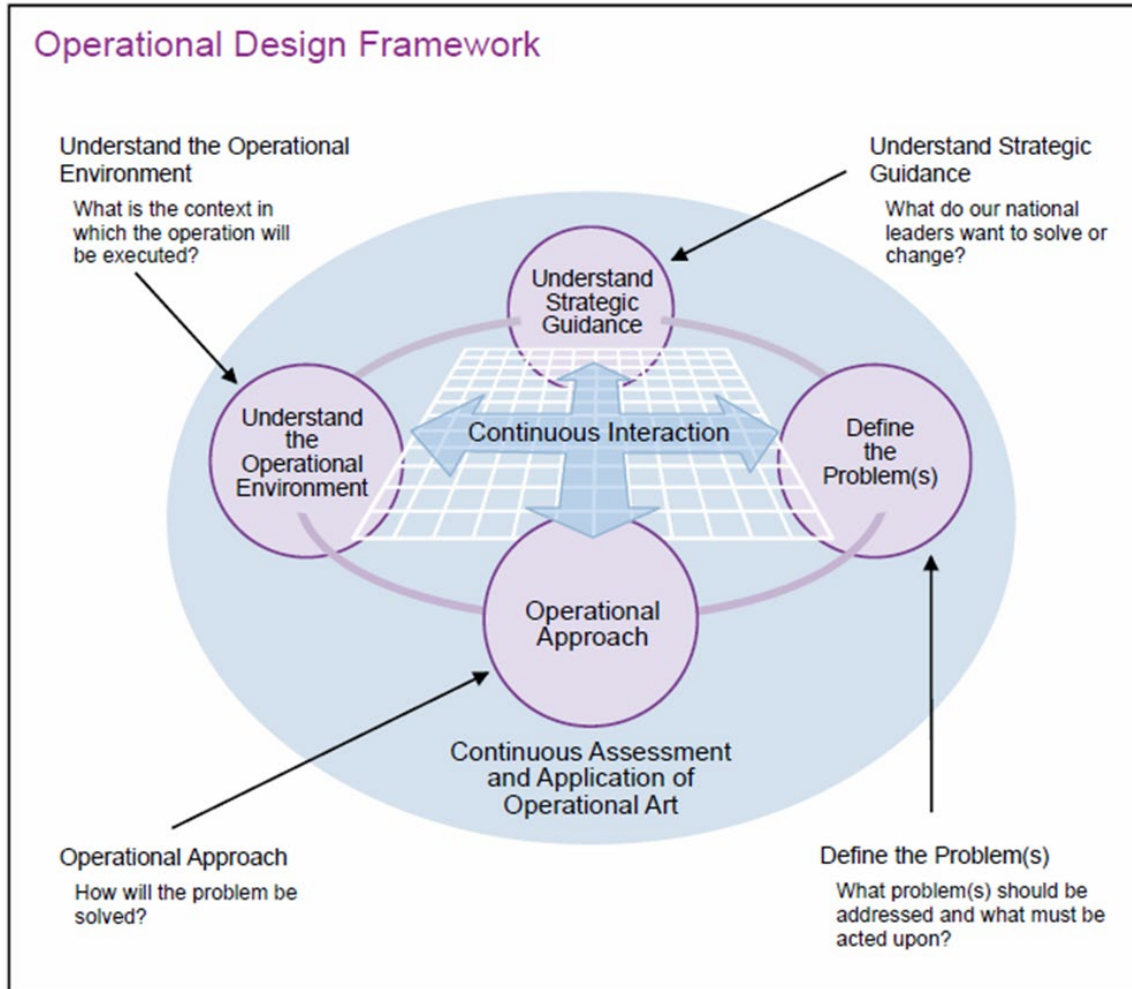


Figure 1. Operational Design Framework

Source: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 16, 2017), IV-7, accessed September 1, 2019, <https://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/Joint-Doctrine-Pubs/5-0-Planning-Series/>.

The overall methodology follows a five-step process. These five steps are described in the following paragraph and depicted in Figure 2, Research Methodology.

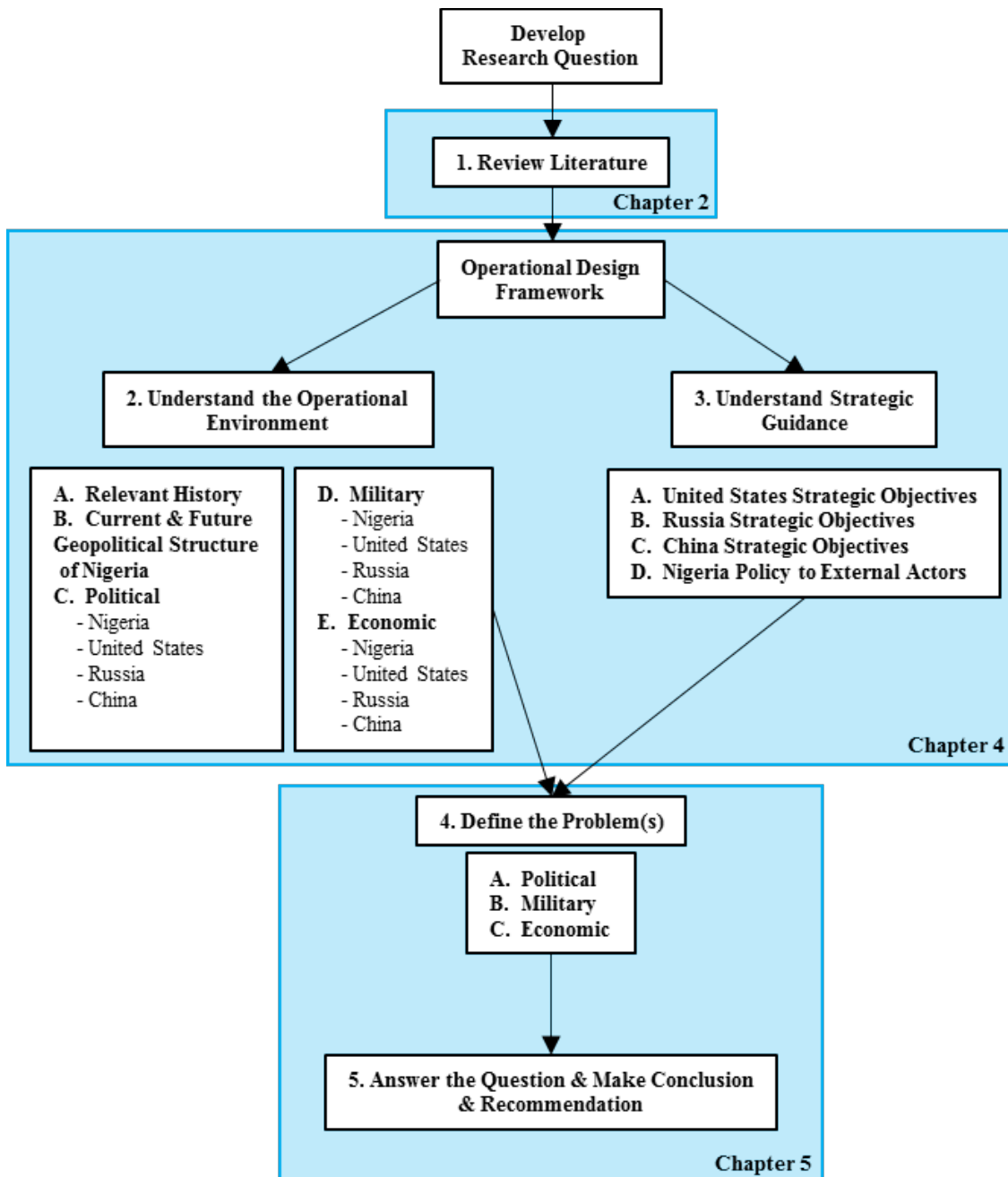


Figure 2. Research Methodology

Source: Created by author.

Step one, the researcher conducted a review of all relevant literature. Chapter 2 outlines the outcomes of this first step.

Step two, Understand the Operational Environment. In this step, the researcher describes the operational environment through the analysis of three subsections: relevant history, current and future geopolitical structure of Nigeria, and three operational variables. JP 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment*, serves as a guideline for defining the operational environment and variables. Appendix D of JP 2-01.3 identifies subsystems of each variable. Figure 3 depicts the subsystems used in this research. Each variable addresses the current environment in Nigeria and the subsequent actions of the United States, Russia, and China.

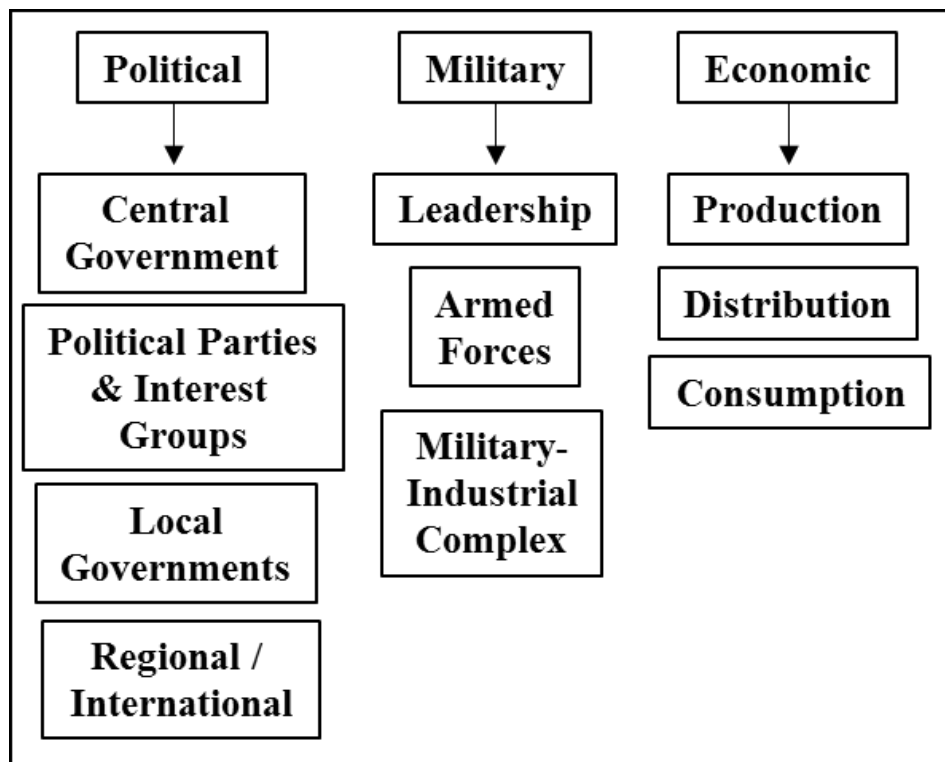


Figure 3. Operational Variables and Subsystems

Source: Created by author using information from U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 2-01.3, *Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 21, 2014), D-9 to D-14, accessed September 1, 2019, https://cgsc.blackboard.com/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=_10430_1&content_id=_938365_1.

Step three of the methodology is to understand strategic guidance. In this step, the researcher determined the strategic objectives of the United States, Russia, and China through analyzing national policy documents and scholarly literature. Additionally, this step analyzes any official reports or speeches addressing the Nigerian government's policy towards external influencers being involved in their nation. This step answers the first four secondary questions, and the outcomes feed into steps four and five.

Step four of the methodology is to define the problem(s). Located in Chapter 5, the researcher identifies areas of tension, competition, opportunities, and challenges from an assessment of the information presented in steps two and three. The information identified in this step builds the base for the implications portion of the research question. This step ends the formal part of the operational design framework.

Step five is the final portion of the methodology. In this step, the researcher combines all the information from the previous steps and answers the research question. The researcher concludes the study and identifies questions left unanswered and topics for further research in the future. This step closes with recommendations to decision-makers and final thoughts.

In summary, this chapter discussed the five-step research methodology used to answer the primary and secondary research questions. Using the operational design framework helps build an understanding of the operational environment in Nigeria in the context of great power competition combined with internal change. Next, Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected throughout the research process. Through a detailed analysis of the operational environment and strategic guidance of great power competition in Nigeria, the facts and findings will answer the primary research question. To review, the primary research question is, what are the implications on the strategic objectives of the United States? The data will also answer the secondary questions.

This chapter starts by defining the operational environment through the analysis of history, the geopolitics of Nigeria, and the operational variables of political, military, and economic. The chapter then analyzes the strategic guidance of the great powers to determine the strategic objectives in Nigeria. The data and analysis of the operational environment and strategic objectives will lead to Chapter 5 and defining the problem.

Step 1: Summary of Literature Review

Chapter 2 provided a summary of relevant literature broken down into the subcategories of Nigeria, the United States, Russia, and China. Overall, none of the great powers have published specific policies for Nigeria. Strategic documents of the United States and updated literature primarily address the overarching objectives across the African continent. These documents, combined with academic works, provide enough to discern what the objectives are in Nigeria. Russia is the most complicated and secretive when identifying its objectives. Limited strategic guidance is published, leaving the researcher to focus on analyzing current actions and reports from bilateral engagements.

China is much like Russia in the sense that it rarely publishes strategic objectives. However, Chinese activities across Africa are significantly more reported on, resulting in an easier opportunity to identify objectives in Nigeria. Finally, literature regarding Nigeria focuses on security dilemmas and corruption. The Government of Nigeria publishes few strategic documents.

Step 2: Understand the Operational Environment

This step begins the formal portion of the operational design framework. This step describes components of the operational environment through five parts. First, review of relevant history. This section addresses the history of Nigeria, followed by the history of the United States, Russian, and Chinese relationships with Nigeria up to the year 2012. The second part addresses the geopolitics of Nigeria by discussing the current geopolitical structure of the nation and how that structure will change. Parts three, four, and five define the operational environment through the variables of political, military, and economic, respectively. Describing the environment in these three variables identifies what actions the United States, Russia, and China are taking in Nigeria from the year 2012 to 2020.

History

While the earliest civilization in Nigeria dates 9000 BCE, modern history starts in 1842 when the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society established its first mission in the region. The area of Nigeria then came under British colonial rule until October 1, 1960, when Nigeria became an independent country. Seven years after independence, Nigeria fell into a civil war from 1967 to 1970. Overall, five periods define Nigeria: 1960 to 1966

first republic, 1966 to 1979 military rule, 1979 to 1983 second republic, 1983 to 1998 military rule, and 1999 to the current fourth republic. Another important date is December 1983, Nigeria's fourth coup d'état with Major General Muhammadu Buhari becoming military head of state; the same Muhammadu Buhari is currently the president of Nigeria. The importance of this date is to highlight how current Nigerian senior leaders have ties to the periods of military and republic rule of over 30 years ago.⁶⁸

Since 1999, the fourth Nigerian republic has seen three peaceful transitions of power in 2007, 2010, and 2015. Most notable and recently was May 29, 2015, when leadership of the nation was peacefully transitioned to the opposition leader, Muhammadu Buhari. Since 1999, Nigeria dealt with three persistent issues. First, the resurgence of faith-based conflict, primarily in Muslim communities in the north seeking to institute Sharia law. Second, the Niger Delta turning into a breeding ground for attacks and kidnappings in the early 2000s. Third, the rise of Islamist terrorist groups, specifically with Boko Haram's arrival in 2009 in the northeastern portion of the country.⁶⁹

Overall, for the past 60 years, Nigeria has been in a constant state of turmoil. On the upside, the country is currently in its most prolonged period of civilian-led democratic rule. The history identified in this section is essential to take forward in the analysis of the current and future geopolitical structure. The next portion of this historical overview defines the history of relations between Nigeria and the United States, Russia, and China.

⁶⁸ Toyin Falola, Ann Genova, and Matthew M. Heaton, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*, 2nd ed. (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 6-13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

United States-Nigeria relations were formally established in 1960 after Nigeria's independence from the United Kingdom. This relationship was stagnant during the ensuing four decades of unstable Nigerian governance until 1999. With the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as president, the United States-Nigerian relations begin to improve.⁷⁰

Since 1999, United States relations with Nigeria have been one of the essential components of United States relations with the African continent. From 1999 to 2011, the President of Nigeria conducted official visits to the United States 12 times.⁷¹ The importance of this reinvigorated relationship is also seen in the visits by Presidents Clinton and Bush to Abuja, Nigeria, in the years 2000 and 2003, respectively. Additionally, the United States Secretaries of State conducted official visits in Nigeria three times from 1999 to 2011.⁷²

The most significant action historically in United States-Nigerian relations besides the 1960 formal adoption of relations was the establishment in 2010 of the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission. This commission established a joint venture to make progress in four key areas: good governance and transparency, regional cooperation and development focused on security and counterterrorism, energy reform and investment,

⁷⁰ DOS, "U.S. Relations with Nigeria."

⁷¹ Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State (DOS), "Visits by Foreign Leaders of Nigeria," accessed March 9, 2020, <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/visits/nigeria>.

⁷² Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State (DOS), "Secretaries Travels Abroad, Nigeria," accessed March 9, 2020, <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/travels/secretary/nigeria>.

and food security and agriculture development.⁷³ This commission established a formal system for yearly meetings and exchanges focused on fostering a positive United States-Nigeria relationship.

Finally, United States-Nigerian relations since 1999 have not always been positive. A strain on early 21st Century relations was due in part to the United States reducing its purchase of Nigerian oil, dropping from being the biggest purchaser of oil to purchasing no Nigerian crude by 2013. Additionally, during this time, there was disagreement on how to best combat VEOs such as Boko Haram and overall military cooperation. For example, in 2009, Nigeria rejected a proposal by the United States to establish a permanent military base for its newly established USAFRICOM headquarters.⁷⁴

Russian-Nigerian relations date back to November 25, 1960, with the formal establishment of a bilateral relationship between Nigeria and the Soviet Union. Relations over the next decade were fluid with Nigerians preferring an association with the west until Soviet influence increased during the Nigerian Civil War, resulting in over two decades of positive relationships. Bilateral relations decreased in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union and dictatorial military rule in Nigeria. Bilateral relations restarted in March 2001 after Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo traveled to Russia,

⁷³ Cambridge University Press, "U.S. – Nigeria Binational Commission Launched," *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 20, no. 3 (September 2010), 54, accessed March 9, 2020, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/foreign-policy-bulletin/article/us-nigeria-binational-commission-launched/B10FC5AAFC19F29C2DF871EC3CC9D1F3>.

⁷⁴ Falola, Genova, and Heaton, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*, 397.

resulting in both nations signing multiple agreements, setting the path for 21st Century partnership.⁷⁵

Between the years 2001 and 2012, Russian activities with Nigeria increased when compared to the 1990s but have been modest at best. Important political meetings and relationships did not take form until 2007 when Nigerian President Umaru Yar' Adua met with President Putin at the G8 Summit in Germany and again that year in Russia. It was not until 2009 and 2010 that senior Russian leaders traveled to Nigeria, the first time any senior Russian leader visited the country. In 2009, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Nigerian President Yar' Adua with an additional highlight being the signing of six bilateral agreements focused on economic, infrastructure, and legal cooperation. In 2010, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited multiple senior leaders in Nigeria, culminating in a joint agreement to mark the Russia-Nigeria diplomatic relations as a strategic partnership, meaning a shift to a long-term commitment to advancing each other's interests.⁷⁶

Economically, Russia and Nigeria have slowly increased connections since 2001. For example, trade between the two nations rose over four-fold from \$80.6 million in 2003 to \$350 million in 2012. This trade increase is deceptive as it weighs heavily in favor of Russia, who exports expensive items such as metals, fertilizers, and oil consumables instead of Nigeria, who exports cheap agricultural items. Part of the reason for this lopsided trade balance is because Nigeria relies on oil exports, something Russia

⁷⁵ Wapmut, "Trade and Investment Relations between Nigeria and Russia," 75-78.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

has in abundance. Though the trade balance has increased, the balance with other global powers dwarfs it. For example, the 2010 Russia-Nigeria trade balance was \$300 million compared to \$7.76 billion with China and \$14 billion with India.⁷⁷

This relevant history shows that, up to the year 2012, Russia-Nigeria relations have increased. When compared with the history of other powers, Russia is playing catch up because of a complete loss of political ties after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Data presented later in this chapter and summarized in Chapter 5 will help illustrate if the upward trend has increased since 2012 and at an accelerated rate.

Chinese-Nigerian relations date back to February 10, 1971, with the initiation of official ties between the two nations. Much like the United States and Russia, this relationship did not grow until the turning of the Century. This growth occurred as China turned to Nigeria for access to raw materials and new markets to stimulate the growth of the Chinese state. Economically, China's rise has been extremely vital to Nigeria as bilateral trade between the two nations grew over 39 times in size from 1998 to 2015 from \$384 million to \$15 billion.⁷⁸

Politically, China has provided a consistent presence among Nigerian leadership in the 21st Century. From 1999 to 2011, Chinese Presidents and Foreign Ministers visited Nigeria at least four times, and Nigerian Presidents visited China at least three times.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Wapmut, "Trade and Investment Relations between Nigeria and Russia," 83-86.

⁷⁸ Falola, Genova, and Heaton, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*, 92.

⁷⁹ Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, "Historic Pictures on China-Nigerian Relations," February 2, 2011, accessed March 10, 2020, <http://ng.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/ChinaNigeria40/t792194.htm>.

These critical meetings have been instrumental in establishing a series of forums and partnerships between China and Nigeria and the greater continent of Africa. Some of these include and will be discussed later in this chapter are the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Nigeria China Economic and Business Forum, and Free Trade Zones.

So far, Chapter 4 summarized the relevant history of Nigeria and its relations with the United States, Russia, and China up to the year 2012. A common theme across all three great powers is formal relations began around Nigeria's 1960 independence. This theme continued as all three kept relatively quiet relations with Nigeria through the cold war and Nigeria's turbulent political scene until the election of President Obasanjo in 1999.

What happened for the next decade is where the great powers differ. United States-Nigeria binational relations jumped to the forefront as the United States showed a consistent presence to focus on the development of the African nation. Russia showed interest in Nigeria, but over the first decade of the 21st Century, neither side had much to show for it besides unfulfilled agreements. Finally, China quietly stayed relevant and planted its seeds as their state grew globally. This relevancy is of most importance as it provided a launching point for China to leap forward as a leading partner with Nigeria from 2012 to 2020.

Geopolitics of Nigeria

Geopolitics is how a country's size, position, and other aspects influence its power and relationship with other countries. Currently, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, and with a July 2020 estimate of over 214 million people is the sixth

most populous in the world.⁸⁰ In addition to its immense population, Nigeria's geographical location has been a leading cause of its rise to the continent's largest economy but also a persistent source of internal conflict.

Nigeria is located between the oil abundant Gulf of Guinea and arid Lake Chad Basin while sharing borders with the nations of Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Splitting Nigeria into northern and southern halves around the capital city of Abuja helps define the structure of the nation. Reference Figure 4 for a map of Nigeria. Southern Nigeria is characterized by its tropical and equatorial climate along the Niger River Delta and the Gulf of Guinea. The south also has the highest population density, the nation's most populous urban area of Lagos at over 14 million, is the center for the Nigerian Christianity base, and is the economic hub of the country. Northern Nigeria is characterized by its arid climate, along with its proximity to the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin. The population in the north focuses on Nigeria's second-largest urban area of Kano at around four million and is the center for the nation's Islamic base.⁸¹

⁸⁰ CIA, "Nigeria."

⁸¹ Ibid.



Figure 4. Map of Nigeria

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook: Nigeria,” 2020, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>.

The importance of highlighting this geography is it fundamentally shapes the way Nigeria is and will be in the future. Currently, over 50 percent of Nigeria’s population is 24 years of age or younger, with a median age of being 18.6. The same percentage of the population is also urbanized, creating more stress on the nation's already stressed urban structure. This youthful population, combined with a growth rate of 2.53 percent,

explains the projections for the Nigerian population to increase to over 400 million, third globally by the year 2050.⁸²

Population growth is an essential topic in Nigeria because the nation already has issues stemming from its inability to support its current base adequately. For example, 2015 estimates showed over 30 percent of the population only had access to unimproved water sources, and 29 percent had access to unimproved sanitation facility access.⁸³ Additionally, Nigeria has been and will be continuously challenged by adequately addressing the security concerns across the region.

The primary security issues facing Nigeria are border control, terrorism, violent internal conflict, piracy, and organized crime.⁸⁴ Understanding the porous border situation of Nigeria and its government's lack of policy to control the issue sets the stage for understanding the rest of the security issues. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was created to encourage the free flow of goods, persons, and services in the West African region. The essential aspect of this idea is inter-state cooperation in helping combat the free flow of arms and forces in the ungoverned spaces. However, VEOs such as Boko Haram continues to manipulate these spaces and incite violence.⁸⁵

⁸² CIA, "Nigeria."

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Jane's IHS, "Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre Nigeria," January 3, 2020, 5-6, accessed March 1, 2020, <https://janes-ihs-com.lumen.cgsccarl.com/MilitarySecurityAssessments/Country/Nigeria>.

⁸⁵ Okolie-Osemene and Aluko, "Border Prosperity and counterinsurgency in Nigeria," 72, 81.

This portion of geopolitics focuses on describing the impact of Boko Haram, JNIM, ISIS-Greater Sahara, and ISIS-West Africa. Terrorism from VEOs has defined Nigeria's security situation since the arrival of Boko Haram in 2009. From 2009 to 2015, Boko Haram represented the VEO landscape of Nigeria. This landscape became more complicated in 2015 when Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram's leader, pledged allegiance to ISIS, leading to the creation of ISIS-West Africa. Today, ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram are two branches of the same organization, serving under two different leaders. ISIS-West Africa is more known for only attacking the Nigerian military and Boko Haram for attacking both civilians and the military.⁸⁶

ISIS-Greater Sahara is often confused with ISIS-West Africa as both groups have a base of support in Nigeria. The difference is ISIS-Greater Sahara operates outside of Nigeria, often being the responsible force behind attacks across the region in nations like Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali.⁸⁷ JNIM further complicates the environment as the local al-Qaeda affiliate. JNIM began in the 1960s as an organization committed to promoting Islam and unifying Muslims in the region. Over time it became more conflicted with other views throughout the area resulting in the violent faction it is today enforcing its beliefs.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Jacob Zenn, "Where Exactly is the Islamic State in West Africa?" Council on Foreign Relations, May 24, 2019, accessed March 17, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/where-exactly-islamic-state-west-africa>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Falola, Genova, and Heaton, "Historical Dictionary of Nigeria," 210.

The internal conflict stems from an increased risk of civil war due to a rise in sectarian divide and confrontations between farmers and herders. In the last three years, these confrontations have killed an estimated 4,000 people and displaced a quarter of a million. By sheer scale, this conflict is more violent than the more well-known fight against Boko Haram. These conflicts play significant importance as the Nigerian government has had to dedicate its efforts to stemming internal violence instead of applying pressure to terrorism, piracy, crime, and anti-corruption.⁸⁹

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea occurs at a higher rate than any other region in the world. These operations focus on kidnapping crews and holding them for ransom instead of hijacking oil cargoes. Though piracy within Nigerian territorial waters remains a significant threat, the number of successful incidents has decreased since 2014. This decrease is due to increased cooperation amongst Gulf neighbors, improved onboard security measures, improved Nigerian systems to track vessels, and incidents are moving further into the sea outside territorial waters or into waters of neighbors.⁹⁰

Crime in Nigeria centers around kidnappings, the cocaine and heroin trade, human trafficking, illegal arms trade, and oil theft. Kidnapping is the highest risk to foreigners across the Niger River Delta and large population areas of Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Kaduna. Nigerian crime networks are the backbone of the African continent's

⁸⁹ Jane's IHS, "Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre Nigeria," 6-8.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 10-11.

drug trade as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime notes Nigeria and Ghana are the critical African redistribution centers of South American cocaine and Asian heroin to Europe.⁹¹

Overall, since March 2012, 30,171 deaths have occurred due to violence throughout Nigeria. This number is attributed to not only VEOs, but deaths caused by government forces, illustrating the significance of the issue from both government and non-governmental sides.⁹²

In summary, this section on geopolitics covered the current geopolitical structure to include population, geography, and security issues. The most important aspect of this data is that the Nigerian government cannot effectively manage its environment. Unless something drastic occurs, there is a high risk of significant issues in the future. This risk is due to the increased challenges of managing population growth combined with the continuously evolving security concerns across the nation. To further understand the situation, the remaining portion of this part in Chapter 4 addresses aspects of the Nigerian political, economic, and military structure and how the United States, Russia, and China have influenced those variables.

Political

Figure 3 in Chapter 3 identified subsystems of the political operational variable as central government, political parties and interest groups, local governments, and regional

⁹¹ Jane's IHS, "Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre Nigeria," 15-17.

⁹² CFR, "Nigeria Security Tracker."

and international organizations. The following section describes those subsystems of Nigeria and the activities of the United States, Russia, and China within those.

Nigeria's central government is a federal presidential republic with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. A president leads the executive branch with elections occurring every four years. Since 2012, Nigeria has been under the leadership of two administrations, Goodluck Jonathan from 2011 to 2015 and Muhammadu Buhari since 2015. The legislative branch consists of a Senate and House of Representatives, each position elected every four years. The judicial branch consists of a series of courts from the Supreme Court down to multiple levels of courts of appeals and state-level courts. Additionally, the Nigerian legal system is based on a mix of English common, Islamic, and traditional laws.⁹³

Since 2012, the All Progressives Congress Party (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) have defined the political party and interest group structure of Nigeria. President Buhari has represented the APC for two elections, defeating Atiku Abubakar of the PDP last February 2019 by a margin of over three million votes. The results of this election further support the north-south geographical divide in Nigeria. President Buhari and the APC won the northern states in addition to the populous region around Lagos. The opposition, PDP, has a base of support in the southeastern part of the nation.⁹⁴

⁹³ CIA, "Nigeria."

⁹⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation, "Nigeria Presidential Election Results 2019," accessed March 16, 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-f0b25208-4a1d-4068-a204-940cbe88d1d3>.

Local government exists at the state and city level. At the state level, Nigeria has 36 states and one territory, the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. Nigeria is a member of multiple regional and international organizations. Organizations worth mentioning are the African Development Bank, African Union, ECOWAS, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, United Nations, World Health Organization, and World Trade Organization.⁹⁵

Overall, Nigeria's strength contributes to its positions and power regionally and globally. Internally President Buhari faces a continuous fight against corruption and stress from running a government ill-equipped to manage its nation. Nigeria's history illustrates its political structure requires assistance from across the globe, specifically from global powers like the United States, Russia, and China.

Earlier in this chapter, the history of the United States' political relationship with Nigeria was addressed. This history was highlighted by a relatively stable relationship from 1999 to 2011 and the establishment in 2010 of the Binational Commission.

Recent (2012 to 2020) visits and official political exchanges between Nigerian and United States leaders suggest the binational relationship is as strong and vital as ever. Since 2012, Nigerian Presidents Jonathan and Buhari conducted five official visits to the United States.⁹⁶ United States Secretaries of State conducted five official visits to Nigeria, most recently in March 2018.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ CIA, "Nigeria."

⁹⁶ DOS, "Visits by Foreign Leaders of Nigeria."

⁹⁷ DOS, "Secretaries Travels Abroad, Nigeria."

Yearly political interactions have occurred since 2012 as a part of the Binational Commission. This formal meeting rotates the host location each year. Though both nations maintain open communication through this forum, it does not guarantee an unhindered political partnership. Most recently, the United States imposed a travel ban on Nigeria due to a failure to meet security and information-sharing requirements.⁹⁸ Overall, United States activities and actions with Nigeria across the political variable show an open forum for political support exists, but is held to a standard.

Currently, as the world enters the 2020's, Russia-Nigeria relations are at a peak since the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia and Vladimir Putin have reenergized their focus across the African continent, most recently seen in the hosting of representatives from all 54 African Nations at the first-ever Russia-Africa Summit in October 2019 in Sochi, Russia.⁹⁹ This summit established a formal system for dialogue between Russia and Africa with similar summits to be held every three years and formal political consultations yearly.¹⁰⁰ This formal system of exchange focuses on building positive cooperation across the realms of politics, security, trade, economics, law, science,

⁹⁸ Humeyra Pamuk, "Nigeria working to have U.S. travel ban lifted," February 4, 2020, *Reuters*, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-ban-nigeria/nigeria-working-to-have-u-s-travel-ban-lifted-foreign-minister-idUSKBN1ZY2KD>.

⁹⁹ Evan Gershkovich, "At Russia's Inaugural Africa Summit, Moscow Sells Sovereignty," *The Moscow Times*, October 26, 2019, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/10/26/russias-inaugural-africa-summit-moscow-sells-sovereignty-a67916>.

¹⁰⁰ Russia-Africa Summit, "Declaration of the First Russia-Africa Summit," October 24, 2019, accessed January 4, 2020, <https://summitafrica.ru/en/about-summit/declaration/>.

technology, humanitarian assistance, information, and the environment.¹⁰¹ While this summit increases dialogue across the continent, Russia has yet to establish a binational dialogue focused on politics like the United States.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari attended the summit and was one of few leaders to hold private meetings with President Putin. This bilateral meeting resulted in multiple formal and non-formal agreements and is essential to understand as the basis for future Russia-Nigeria relationships. While most of these agreements deal with the economic variable, it is necessary to highlight them under political due to the high level of political interaction that occurred to make them. Earlier, this chapter highlighted the senior-level political interactions between Russia and Nigerian leaders. The visit to Russia by President Buhari marks the first meeting of senior leaders of the two nations since 2010.

Formal agreements included military cooperation, oil sector development with Russian based Lukoil supporting Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), natural gas sector development with Russian based Gazprom supporting the NNPC, Russian assistance in finishing the build of the Ajaokuta Steel Rolling Mill, and Russian support to the development of 1,400 kilometers of railroad between the cities of Lagos and Calabar.¹⁰²

Non-formal agreements were made to pursue Russian assistance in the advancement of the establishment of a nuclear power plant in Nigeria, renew the Nigeria-

¹⁰¹ Russia-Africa Summit, “Declaration of the First Russia-Africa Summit.”

¹⁰² Ogunmade, “Buhari, Putin Sign Pact on Military Cooperation.”

Russia Military Technical Agreement providing more accessible procurement of Russian military equipment, training, and support, Russian support to fixing issues with the Aluminum Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON), education support in the form of Russian scholarships to Nigerian students, Russian support to Nigerian agriculture in the form of wheat and potassium fertilizer production, security assistance in combating Boko Haram and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and finally mutual support for reform in the United Nations Security Council including Russian support for Nigerian permanent membership on the council.¹⁰³

To summarize, the Russia-Africa summit provided a new focus for relations ranging across multiple operational variables. Russia's political interaction with Nigeria remains focused on garnering support across multinational organizations. It is too early to conclude whether the two nations maintain open and honest dialogue as there is no binational political forum, only one on economics.

Chinese political engagement with Nigeria has continually increased over the past two decades. Overall, Chinese political relations stem on two preconditions; commitment to the "One China" policy and a position of non-interference in African problems. Since President Jinping's rise to power, there has been a trend of increased Nigerian support to the Chinese government. An example of this occurred in January 2017 as Nigeria pledged full support to the one-china policy with the foreign ministers of both China and Nigeria signing a joint statement acknowledging the stance. This signing also occurred days after

¹⁰³ Ogunmade, "Buhari, Putin Sign Pact on Military Cooperation."

Nigeria had Taiwanese officials move from their office and shut down official representation of Taiwan.¹⁰⁴

Political interaction since 2012 has occurred intermittently, usually focused in line with the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. President Buhari last met with President Jinping in 2018 in the most recent conference in Beijing. This meeting ended in the joint signing of cooperation documents focused on China's Belt and Road Initiative.¹⁰⁵ Since 2012, no senior Chinese leader has visited Nigeria. The only publicized senior-level meeting was in 2019 when Yang Jiechi, Special Representative of President Jinping, traveled to Abuja and met with President Buhari. This meeting consisted of Jiechi's acknowledgment of supporting the outcomes of the 2018 forum and President Buhari voicing continued support of the Belt and Road Initiative.¹⁰⁶

In summary, great power competition exists in Nigeria within the political variable. The United States, Russia, and China each employ their own forums with Nigeria. Historically, the United States and China have had a longer and more focused political relationship with Nigeria. However, the United States remains the only power

¹⁰⁴ MFA PRC, "Wang Yi Holds Talks with Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama of Nigeria."

¹⁰⁵ The 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, "Xi meets Nigerian president," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, September 5, 2018. accessed March 19, 2020, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zxyw_1/t1592132.htm.

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples Republic of China (MFA PRC), "Yang Jiechi Meets with Nigerian President Buhari," September 6, 2019, accessed March 19, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1695139.shtml.

with a formal binational forum focused on politics. Russia and China have binational economic forums with Nigeria.

Both the United States and China hold Nigeria to a standard in the political realm from dedication to security and information sharing to a formal commitment to the “One-China” policy. On the other side, Russian political partnership is more no strings attached. The political downside for Russia is the consistent theme that its relationships with Nigeria are young and lack depth.

Military

President Buhari serves as the Commander in Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces consisting of an Army, Air Force, and Navy with a total strength of 124,000 personnel. At 100,000 strong, the Nigerian Army is one of the largest in the West Africa region. The Army focuses on internal security. In March 2018, the Army was deployed to 30 out of the 36 Nigerian states, focused on combatting Boko Haram. Equipment consists of a mix of Russian T-72 and T-55 main battle tanks, British Vickers Mk 3 main battle tanks, a wide variety of armored personnel carriers, Soviet and Czechoslovakian 122mm artillery, Italian 155mm artillery, and an assortment of surface to air missile systems. Additionally, weapons procurement actions addressed in later sections illustrate the Nigerian Army recently came in possession of Russian Mi-35 HIND attack helicopters.¹⁰⁷

The Nigerian Air Force of 9,000 personnel continues to focus on building capacity and capabilities after a history of insufficient funding and maintenance.

¹⁰⁷ Jane’s IHS, “Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre Nigeria,” 69-77.

Currently, it has 12 Chinese Chengdu F-7NI and 11 German Alpha Jet fixed-wing combat aircraft, multiple trainer aircraft, various transport, and intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, and Russian Mi-24 and Mi-35 attack helicopters. This fleet of aircraft will increase in the coming years after procurement agreements with the United States for 12 A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft, three PAC/CAC JF-17 Thunder fighters from Pakistan, and six Italian Leonardo AW109 utility helicopters.¹⁰⁸

Air Force capacity has increased since 2015 due to a surge in requirements across Nigeria and the West Africa region. These requirements include supporting operations against militant attacks on the oil infrastructure in the Niger River Delta and support to ECOWAS activities in The Gambia. Additionally, the Air Force increased operations in the fight against Boko Haram in the northern part of Nigeria. These activities over the past four years support increased Nigerian strength and influence in the region.¹⁰⁹

The Nigerian Navy includes the Coast Guard and consists of 15,000 personnel. Like the Air Force, the Navy has suffered from years of insufficient funding, leaving it incapable of adequately conducting its missions of counterinsurgency, anti-piracy, and gulf security in the Niger River Delta and the Gulf of Guinea. Since 2011, the Navy has participated in multiple training exercises, including Operation Nemo, a joint West African exercise to increase cooperability, and the yearly Obangame Express ran by the

¹⁰⁸ Jane's IHS, "Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre Nigeria," 106-107.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

United States Navy. Besides internal security around the Niger River Delta, the Navy supported the 2017 ECOWAS Operation Restore Democracy in The Gambia.¹¹⁰

The Naval fleet consists of a range of attack craft, patrol craft, and rotary-wing aircraft. The Nigerian Navy operates three frigates, two of which were provided from the United States. Additionally, Nigeria has relied on China to expand its fleet with the addition of two Chinese offshore patrol vessels. Like the Army and Air Force, the Navy is expanding its capabilities. Still, its efforts are often curtailed due to the significant cost associated with maintaining a fleet.¹¹¹

Nigeria's military-industrial complex lacks any significance and ability to support the armed forces properly. This lack of capacity is due to a continuous lack of spending on the defense budget and reliance on foreign aid to support the armed forces. Since 2017, the Nigerian defense budget has not surpassed 0.53 percent of the national gross domestic product and will not go above half a percent for the next four years. The importance of this limited budget is it is continuously spent on improving pay, benefits, and training of the Army, leaving little to develop the military-industrial base. This lack of development, combined with Nigeria's persistent inability to secure itself, reinforces the continuous need for military assistance from outside sources.¹¹²

Military arms sales are one of the first metrics of military cooperation to analyze. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, since 2012, the

¹¹⁰ Jane's IHS, "Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre Nigeria," 132-139.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 66, 147.

United States conducted 12 arms transfers to Nigeria, totaling \$82 million. These sales have ranged from diesel engines to armored personnel carriers to advanced precision missiles.¹¹³ While the Stockholm Institutes' data is useful, it is not the most current. Most recently, the United States sold 12 A-29 Super Tucano light fighter aircraft to Nigeria, a sale valued at over \$500 million.¹¹⁴

United States training support to Nigerian Armed Forces occurs during three training exercises: Flintlock, Obangame Express, and Unified Focus. Flintlock is an annual military and law enforcement exercise throughout North and West Africa. This exercise most recently occurred in February 2020 and included members from Nigeria.¹¹⁵ Obangame Express is a maritime exercise with West African nations to improve security in the Gulf of Guinea. This exercise most recently occurred in 2019 and included members from Nigeria.¹¹⁶ Unified Focus is a Lake Chad Basin regional exercise focused on building capacity to counter VEOs. This exercise most recently occurred in 2018 and included members from Nigeria with a focus on combating Boko Haram.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), "SIPRI Arms Transfers Database," March 9, 2020, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>.

¹¹⁴ Pompeo, "Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Statements to the Press with Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama."

¹¹⁵ U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), "Flintlock," accessed March 20, 2020. <https://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/exercises/flintlock>.

¹¹⁶ U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), "Obangame Express," accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/exercises/obangame-express>.

¹¹⁷ U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), "Unified Focus," accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/exercises/unified-focus>.

Another aspect of United States-Nigeria security cooperation has been a host of other smaller training events. While the exercises mentioned above were regionally focused, a binational exercise occurred in 2014 with the focus of building capacity to counter Boko Haram. However, this event did not go without complication as the Nigerian military canceled it before moving into its third phase. This cancellation was reportedly due to Nigerian frustration over not receiving weapons support due to the United States withholding a shipment because of reported human rights violations by the Nigerian military.¹¹⁸

In summary, the United States has maintained military and security cooperation with Nigeria based on capacity development through arms sales and training. While sales and training from the United States come with human rights requirements, consistent dedication to long term success has been a defining characteristic. The recent sale of A-29 aircraft, over six times more in value of all other transactions, shows a significant increase in commitment to building military capacity. One final theme is the actions of the United States are typically multinational from a Western government approach. There is no evidence of cooperation or a unified approach with Russia or China.

Russian activities with Nigeria across the military variable focus on the arms trade. Since 2012, there have been six Russian arms transfers to Nigeria totaling \$216 million. These sales have included transport helicopters, Mi-35 attack helicopters, anti-

¹¹⁸ Chris Stein, "Nigerian Military Training Cancellation Baffles US Experts," *Voice of America*, December 3, 2014, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/nigerian-military-training-cancellation-baffles-us-experts>.

tank missiles, and turbofan engines for Nigeria's JF-17 attack aircraft.¹¹⁹ These arms sales are the only publicly disclosed information about Russian military activities with Nigeria.

It must be assumed Russia is taking additional activities with Nigeria as it openly states in multiple forms of guidance and speeches it supports the fight against Boko Haram. The complicated part is finding proof of such activities. One claim is the Russian government-backed private military contractor, Wagner Group, could be supporting operations in the region. It is important to note these are allegations, and there is no actual evidence.¹²⁰

China's military and security cooperation with Nigeria focuses on arms trade and training to increase regional security. Since 2012, there have been five Chinese arms transfers to Nigeria, totaling \$115 million. These sales include naval patrol vessels, armored personnel carriers, air to surface missiles, and armed unmanned aerial vehicles.¹²¹

Training and military cooperation with China has focused on increasing security in the Gulf of Guinea.¹²² Most recently, in 2018, the Chinese Navy had one vessel

¹¹⁹ SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfers Database."

¹²⁰ Kimberly Marten, "Russia's use of semi-state security forces: the case of the Wagner Group," In *Post-Soviet Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2019): 190, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1060586X.2019.1591142>.

¹²¹ SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfers Database."

¹²² Hanauer and Morris, *Chinese Engagement in Africa*, 43.

participate in the Nigerian-led exercise and conference, Eku Kugbe, focused on building capacity to counter piracy and threats to shipping in the Gulf.¹²³

To summarize the military variable, the Stockholm Institute provides vital data for understanding military arms sales. Based on the sheer volume of sales, Russia leads the great powers sales to Nigeria, almost double that of China and more than double the United States. Additionally, Russia's sales have surged in recent years. Since 2017, Russia has provided \$72 million in arms to Nigeria, whereas China zero and the United States only six.¹²⁴ This data does not take into account the recent sale from the United States to Nigeria as the physical sale, and transfer of equipment has not yet occurred.

Just like the political variable, great power competition exists in Nigeria to gain influence through arms sales and training support. Neither the United States, Russia, or China seem willing to commit to a level beyond supporting the Nigerian Armed Forces to do the job themselves. Efforts from all three nations address the same issues but in an unsynchronized fashion, further supporting the idea none are willing to work together.

Economic

Essential aspects of the economic variable are the subsystems of production, distribution, and consumption. Overall, Nigeria has Africa's largest economy but relies heavily on the volatile oil and natural gas sector. Because of that, its economy is severely hampered and subject to global shifts in oil prices. After 14 years of economic growth

¹²³ Drake Long, "China participates in West Africa 'Eku Kugbe' naval exercise for the first time," *The Defense Post*, May 31, 2018, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://thedefensepost.com/2018/05/31/china-eku-kugbe-exercise-west-africa/>.

¹²⁴ SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfers Database."

averaging seven percent increases, the Nigerian economy began to crash from 2014 to 2016. This crash was due to a combination of oil price collapse and negative production, resulting in the 2016 economic recession with a negative 1.6 percent growth.

Since the recession, Nigeria has not fully recovered as economic growth from 2017 to 2019 remained at a modest two percent.¹²⁵ In 2019, over 90 percent of Nigerian exports were from oil and gas mining.¹²⁶ According to The World Bank, until Nigeria can broaden its dependency on the oil and gas industry, it will continue to under develop, giving a reason to its 152nd ranking out of 157 in the 2018 Human Capital Index.¹²⁷

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is another critical economic aspect to address. In the most recent data from 2018, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development reported Nigeria had an inward flow of just under two billion dollars for a total stock of over \$99 billion, 25 percent of their overall gross domestic product. The same report shows since the 2016 recession, FDI inward flow has decreased each year from its peak of \$4.4 billion though the stock has steadily increased.¹²⁸ To put this in perspective, the nation of South Africa is often in close competition to be the largest economy on the continent. The same report for 2018 shows South Africa receiving more

¹²⁵ The World Bank, “The World Bank in Nigeria,” accessed March 17, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview>.

¹²⁶ Jane’s IHS, “Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre Nigeria,” 62.

¹²⁷ The World Bank, “The World Bank in Nigeria.”

¹²⁸ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, “Nigeria, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Overview, selected years,” *World Investment Report 2019*, accessed March 18, 2020, https://unctad.org/sections/dite_dir/docs/wir2019/wir19_fs_ng_en.pdf.

outside investment at over \$5 billion inward flow and the total stock of over \$128 billion, 35 percent of its gross domestic product.¹²⁹

The low numbers for Nigeria are serious as its population growth is exceeding economic growth. The World Bank summarizes this situation by saying without significant structural policy reforms, living standards in Nigeria will only continue to worsen.¹³⁰ This idea of change and broadening the source of economic growth is important to consider when analyzing the actions of the United States, Russia, and China as all nations have pledged to support economic development.

Economic relations between the United States and Nigeria is best summarized through activities including trade, FDI, aid, and the actions of corporations and enterprises summarize the primary component of United States-Nigerian economic cooperation. Trade has historically been important to the bilateral relationship. Figures 5 and 6 depict export/import data between the two nations since 2001. During this time, the United States has consistently been one of the leading locations for Nigerian exports and origins for imports into Nigeria.

¹²⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, “South Africa, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Overview, selected years,” *World Investment Report 2019*, accessed March 18, 2020, https://unctad.org/sections/dite_dir/docs/wir2019/wir19_fs_za_en.pdf.

¹³⁰ The World Bank, “The World Bank in Nigeria.”

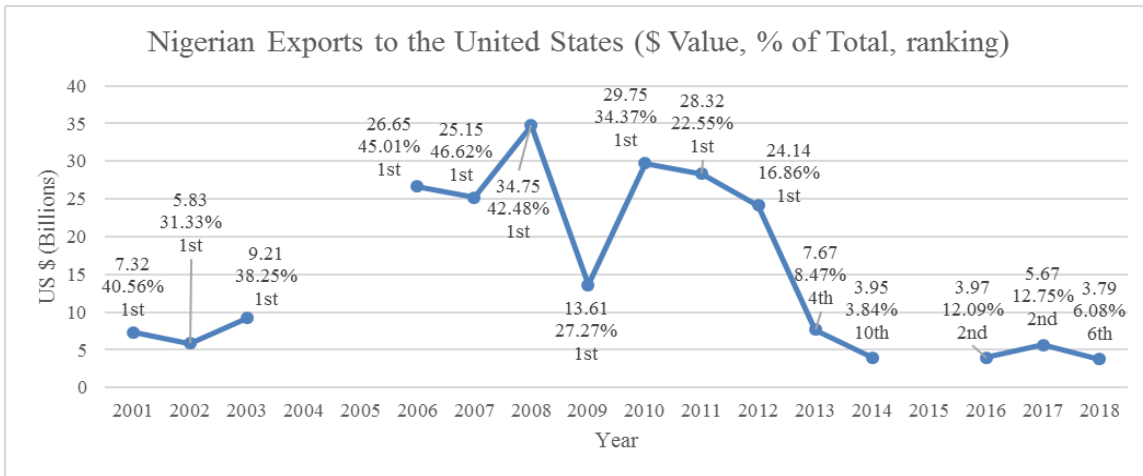


Figure 5. Trade Data: Nigerian Exports to the United States

Source: Created by author using information from World Integrated Trade Solution, “Nigeria trade statistics: Exports, Imports, Products, Tariffs, GDP and related Development Indicator,” The World Bank, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/NGA/StartYear/2001/EndYear/2018/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/USA/Indicator/XPRT-TRD-VL>.

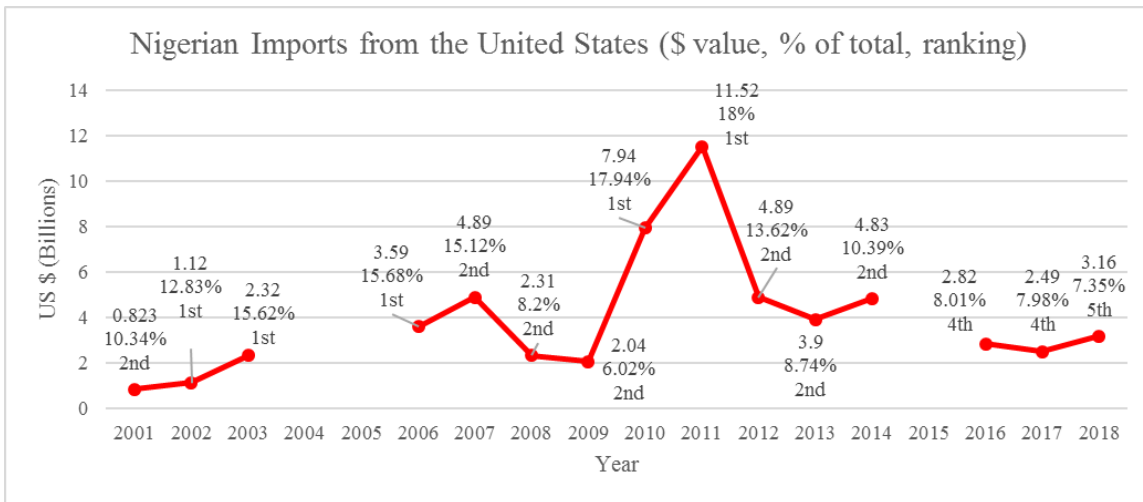


Figure 6. Trade Data: Nigerian Imports from the United States

Source: Created by author using information from World Integrated Trade Solution, “Nigeria trade statistics: Exports, Imports, Products, Tariffs, GDP and related Development Indicator,” The World Bank, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/NGA/StartYear/2001/EndYear/2018/TradeFlow/Import/Partner/USA/Indicator/MPRT-TRD-VL>.

Overall, there has been a decline in the Nigerian-United States trade. Most recently, in 2018, Nigeria exported over \$3 billion in goods to the United States, ranked sixth across all global export locations. A decline of \$21 billion and five ranks. This is a decline since 2010 when exports reached near \$30 billion, ranked first. Additionally, Nigeria imported over \$3 billion in goods from the United States, putting the United States fifth among global importers to Nigeria. This decline occurred since 2011 when imports peaked at \$11.5 billion, ranked first. The final note on the United States trade is data is not available for 2019, and there were three years of unreported data.

According to the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, the United States has maintained a \$5.8 billion share of FDI stock in Nigeria from 2017 to 2018. Like trade, 2019 data is not available. Since 2012, the average FDI stock holding by the United States has been \$5.3 billion, which shows current economic investment has not declined. However, additional data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis reports since 2014, Multinational Enterprises of the United States operating in Nigeria have decreased the number of employees and sales. From 2014 to 2017, these enterprises decreased employees from 11,000 to 9,000 and saw sales decline by half from \$25 billion to \$12 billion.¹³¹

Foreign aid has been a cornerstone of United States activities in developing nations. According to the United States Agency for International Development, the United States provided \$822 million in aid to Nigeria in 2018. This number ranks Nigeria

¹³¹ Bureau of Economic Analysis, “Nigeria – International Trade and Investment Country Facts,” accessed March 18, 2020, <https://apps.bea.gov/international/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?Area=429>.

third out of 49 nations receiving assistance in the Sub-Saharan region and fifth out of 53 globally in the lower-middle-income country income group. Since 2012, aid to Nigeria has steadily increased from \$548 million to \$822 million in 2018. Data from 2019 is not mentioned because it has only been reported.¹³²

The health of an economic partnership can also be seen from the private sector and whether corporations are willing to work in other nations. A 2019 report by Jobberman, the top employment recruiter in Nigeria, identified the top 100 companies to work for within the country. This report lists multiple companies from the United States, highlighted by Chevron named the most respected, admired, and desired company in Nigeria. Other companies of the United States in this list are ExxonMobil, Andela, Google, Microsoft, Proctor and Gamble, General Electric, McKinsey and Company, Halliburton, Oracle, Citibank, Flutterwave, and Pfizer. It is worth noting no Russian or Chinese corporations are on this list compared to the 13 from the United States.¹³³

In summary, the United States-Nigeria economic relationship used to be healthier. As the United States became less reliant on foreign oil and natural gas, its trade with Nigeria declined. Since 2012, the United States has dropped out of the top three in trade relationships and decreased FDI stock holdings by half. This summary depicts a grim

¹³² U.S. Agency for International Development, “U.S. Foreign Aid by Country – Nigeria,” accessed March 18, 2020, https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/NGA?fiscal_year=2018&measure=Obligations.

¹³³ Jobberman, *The ‘Best 100 Companies to Work for in Nigeria’ Report 2019*, accessed March 18, 2020, https://www.jobberman.com/research?utm_source=blog&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=jobberman-nigeria&utm_content=cmp-best-100-2019.

relationship, but its status in the great power competition depends on further analysis of the same data from Russia and China.

Russian economic priorities in Nigeria have steadily increased since 2012. President Putin stated during opening remarks with President Buhari at the Russia-Africa Summit, “We also give priority to the joint search for opportunities to broaden trade, economic, and investment cooperation.”¹³⁴ Economic relations with Nigeria begins with trade. In 2018, Nigerian exports to Russia totaled \$5.8 million, 0.009 percent of the Nigerian total export value, ranking Russia 56th amongst all other export destinations. Nigerian imports of Russian goods totaled \$1.01 billion, which is 2.36 percent of their total imports, ranking tenth amongst other import origins.

The 2018 import and export data are the highest numbers in 17 years. Overall, there is a significant difference in the quantity of Nigeria imports from Russia compared to what Nigeria exports to Russia. Figures 7 and 8 depict export/import data between the two nations since 2001.

¹³⁴ Office of the President of Russia, “Meeting with President of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari.”



Figure 7. Trade Data: Nigerian Exports to Russia

Source: Created by author using information from World Integrated Trade Solution, “Nigeria trade statistics: Exports, Imports, Products, Tariffs, GDP and related Development Indicator,” The World Bank, accessed March 8, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/NGA/StartYear/2001/EndYear/2018/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/BY-COUNTRY/Indicator/XPRT-TRD-VL>.

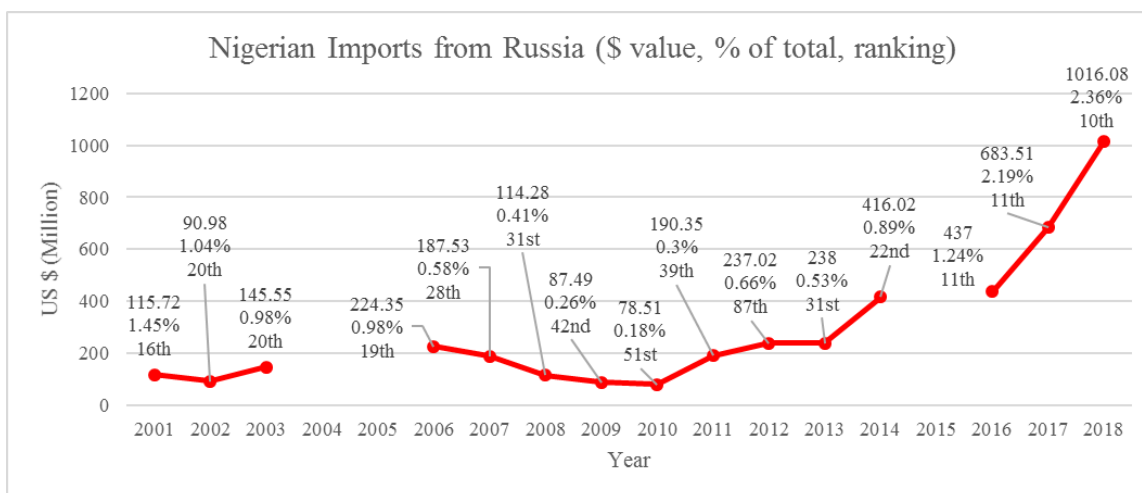


Figure 8. Trade Data: Nigerian Imports from Russia

Source: Created by author using information from World Integrated Trade Solution, “Nigeria trade statistics: Exports, Imports, Products, Tariffs, GDP and related Development Indicator,” The World Bank, accessed March 8, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/NGA/StartYear/2001/EndYear/2018/TradeFlow/Import/Partner/BY-COUNTRY/Indicator/MPRT-TRD-VL>.

Historically, Russia has not been a primary trade partner in Nigeria. Since 2001, Nigerian exports to Russia have never broken one percent of Nigeria's total exports, ranging from ranking as the 38th to 106th export destination globally. Nigeria imports of Russian goods have been around the one to two percent range of total imports, ranging from 10th to 51st amongst other import origins. Trade activity between the two nations saw a significant increase starting in 2016. The final note on trade is 2019 data is not available, and since 2001 there have been six years of unreported data.

Just like trade data, Russian FDI in Nigeria has been low. There are no official tables with FDI data, but the language from senior Nigerian officials signals a disappointing level of investment from Russia. During the 2019 Nigeria-Russia Business Forum, Nigerian Ambassador to Russia, Stephen Ugbah stressed Russia's modest \$300 million investment in Nigeria was "very disappointing."¹³⁵ Additionally, there is no official data on Russian aid to Nigeria.

Due to a lack of FDI and aid data from Russia to Nigeria, it is best to analyze agreements and actions made by Russian companies in Nigeria. Recent history shows Russian-Nigerian economic relations have focused on infrastructure development to assist in economic production. This relationship has focused on oil, natural gas, nuclear power, aluminum, and transportation industries.

Oil and natural gas infrastructure development are leading areas of assistance between Russia and Nigeria. Most recently, in October 2019, Russian oil conglomerate,

¹³⁵ Godsgift Onyedinefu, "ACCI Moves to Deepen Russian Investment in Nigeria," Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nigeria, May 20, 2019, accessed March 18, 2020, <https://www.accinigeria.com/acci-moves-to-deepen-russian-investment-in-nigeria/>.

Lukoil, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the NNPC to develop “deep offshore exploration, production, trading and refining of oil in Nigeria.”¹³⁶ Overall, Lukoil has been involved in Nigerian oil and gas production since 2014, when it entered the offshore deep-water project at the OML-140 block.¹³⁷ It is important to note operations in this block are split between multiple corporations, including the NNPC and the United States-based Chevron.

In 2018, Russian oil giant, Rosneft, signed an MoU with Nigerian oil and gas exploration company Oranto Petroleum to develop 21 oil assets across Africa.¹³⁸ Today, Oranto and its partner Nigerian Company, Atlas Petroleum International, operate 22 oil and gas licenses across 11 African nations.¹³⁹ Additional commitments include the 2019 signing by Russian rail conglomerate, JSC Transmashholding with Nigeria’s Trans-Continental Infrastructure Company to develop railway infrastructure projects, such as the 1,400-kilometer railroad between the cities of Lagos and Calabar.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Gladius Commodities Limited, “Market Report,” October 25, 2019, accessed January 10, 2020, <https://aop-media-serv-eu-1.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/2019/10/GWMR-25.10.2019.pdf>.

¹³⁷ Lukoil Oil Company, “International Projects: Nigeria,” accessed January 10, 2020, <https://www.lukoil.com/Business/Upstream/Overseas?wid=widDYjwOOUK9UuQJOAeuZZQkQ>.

¹³⁸ Tsvetana Paraskova, “Nigerian Firm to Partner with Rosneft to Develop 21 African Oil Assets,” *Oil Price*, May 24, 2018, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Nigerian-Firm-To-Partner-With-Rosneft-To-Develop-21-African-Oil-Assets.html>.

¹³⁹ Atlas-Oranto, “Portfolio: Nigeria,” accessed January 15, 2020, <http://atlas-oranto.com/portfolio/nigeria/>.

¹⁴⁰ Bassey Udo, “Nigeria, Russian firms seal deal to develop railway infrastructure, others,” *Premium Times*, October 24, 2019, accessed March 18, 2020,

In summary, Russia-Nigeria's economic relations are extremely immature when compared to the United States. In 2018, the United States imported over 600 times the amount of goods and services from Nigeria than Russia did. The same year, Nigeria imported three times the amount of goods and services from the United States than it did from Russia. Trade data and political and corporation agreements in recent years support Russia's claim increasing focus on Africa. However, unless something drastic changes, it will be hard for Russia to fill trade differences. The next section of data on Nigeria's economic relations with China further illustrates the lower level Russia is on.

Nigerian-Chinese trade history illustrates two stories. Figures 9 and 10 depict export/import data between the two nations since 2001. Historically, China is not a leading location for Nigerian exports. Since 2001, China has ranked between 14th and 30th as an export location, with 2012 being the one exception as China broke the top ten to 7th. Most recently, in 2018, Nigeria exported just over \$1 billion in goods to China, ranking China 16th amongst export locations globally. The second part of the Nigerian-Chinese trade story is China has been the leading import origin in Nigeria. In the 15 reported years of trade since 2001, China has been the leading import origin in ten out of the 15 years. Most recently, in 2018, Nigeria imported over \$8 billion in Chinese goods.

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/business-news/359269-nigerian-russian-firms-seal-deal-to-develop-railway-infrastructure-others.html>.



Figure 9. Trade Data: Nigerian Exports to China

Source: Created by author using information from World Integrated Trade Solution, “Nigeria trade statistics: Exports, Imports, Products, Tariffs, GDP and related Development Indicator,” The World Bank, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/NGA/StartYear/2001/EndYear/2018/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/CHN/Indicator/XPRT-TRD-VL>.

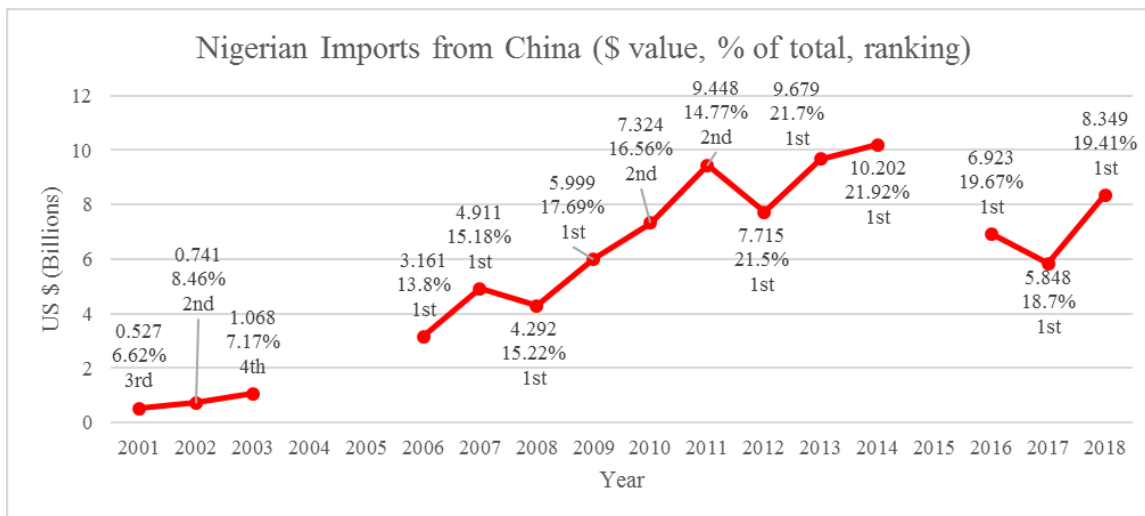


Figure 10. Trade Data: Nigerian Imports from China

Source: Created by author using information from World Integrated Trade Solution, “Nigeria trade statistics: Exports, Imports, Products, Tariffs, GDP and related Development Indicator,” The World Bank, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/NGA/StartYear/2001/EndYear/2018/TradeFlow/Import/Partner/CHN/Indicator/MPRT-TRD-VL>.

While China continues to lead the trade value with Nigeria, its FDI numbers do not represent the same. According to Johns Hopkins University's China Africa Research Initiative, in 2018, China held \$2.5 billion in Nigerian FDI stock and a net FDI flow into Nigeria of \$195 million. For FDI stock, China has maintained above two billion since 2013. A significant trend to highlight is the net inflow of FDI since Nigeria's recession has steadily increased from \$50 million in 2015 to 2018's \$195 million.¹⁴¹

Project, business, and infrastructure investment is one of the leading activities China takes for economic development in Africa. Like Russia, China does not publicly disclose how much and what type of aid it distributes across the world. Assessing aid from China must be done by analyzing projects it has committed to and funded. During the 2018 China-Africa Forum on Cooperation Summit in Beijing, China announced a plan to fund \$60 billion in projects. Specific to Nigeria, China funded the Abuja-Kaduna railway, the construction of the ECOWAS headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, and the development of an oil refinery in Edo State, Nigeria. While the projects above are more infrastructure investment, they have an economic impact and represent a significant investment from China.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ China Africa Research Initiative at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, "China-Africa Foreign Direct Investment Data, Country by Country, 2003-2018," accessed March 19, 2020, <http://www.sais-cari.org/chinese-investment-in-africa>.

¹⁴² George Tubel, "10 massive projects the Chinese are funding in Africa – including railways and a brand-new city," *Business Insider South Africa*, September 25, 2018, accessed February 25, 2018, <https://businessinsider.co.za/here-are-150-million-rand-projects-in-africa-funded-by-china-2018-9>.

The Johns Hopkins University Initiative provides additional detail on Chinese actions in Nigeria with data on the number of Chinese workers in Nigeria and the gross revenue of Chinese construction contracts in Nigeria. Since 2012, the number of Chinese workers in Nigeria has increased each year. In 2018, there were over 11,000 workers. A number ranked third across the African Continent and first in the West Africa region. Additionally, the gross revenue of Chinese businesses operating in Nigeria has nearly doubled since 2016, totaling over \$4 billion in 2018. This number ranked Nigeria fourth across the continent and first in West Africa. These two sets of data reinforce a claim China's surge in Africa and Nigeria is mainly for Chinese benefit.¹⁴³

However, the metrics previously cited are another example of discrepancies in reporting due to the Chinese government not publicly disclosing all data like the United States. A 2019 report quotes the President of China Chambers of Commerce in Nigeria, Ye Shuijin, stating 160 Chinese firms operate in Nigeria, employing 200,000 Nigerians, for a total investment of \$20 billion. These firms run across many commodities of business.¹⁴⁴

Chinese manufacturing company, Western Metal Products Company Limited, operates a multimillion-dollar steel mill. The China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation manages the construction of a \$1.5 billion railway, \$600 million for the development of four airport terminals, and is involved 22 infrastructure projects totaling

¹⁴³ China Africa Research Initiative, "China-Africa Labor Data, Country by Country, 2009-2018."

¹⁴⁴ Abiola Odutola, "How the Chinese are taking over Nigeria's economy," *Nairametrics*, November 28, 2019, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://nairametrics.com/2019/11/28/how-the-chinese-are-taking-over-nigerias-economy/>.

over \$47 million. The state-owned Export-Import Bank of China provided a \$500 million loan for the rail line modernization between Abuja and Kaduna. Dozens of Chinese businesses run in the Nigerian retail sector, including well-known telecommunications giant Huawei.¹⁴⁵ Finally, China has a deep commitment to the development of the Nigerian oil industry as the Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation pledged \$16 billion to the NNPC in 2019.¹⁴⁶

Besides increasing the volume of trade, China has influenced Nigeria economically through actions such as a 2016 joint agreement establishing the free flow of the Chinese currency, yuan.¹⁴⁷ The significance of this agreement is it diversifies the Central Bank of Nigeria reserves away from the dollar and assists in expediting trade deals. Additional commitments have been in the establishment of the Nigeria China Economic and Business Forum and the development of the Lekki Free Trade Zone outside the economic hub of Lagos.

In summary, great power competition in the economic variable exists between the United States and China. While Russia is increasing its activities and commitments, the low numbers put them on a lower playing field. Of the three great powers, the United States is the only one whose data supports a claim to mutual economic expansion. Data

¹⁴⁵ Odotola, “How the Chinese are taking over Nigeria’s economy.”

¹⁴⁶ Chika Oduah, “China Invests \$16 Billion in Nigeria’s Oil Sector,” *Voice of America*, August 28, 2019, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/china-invests-16-billion-nigerias-oil-sector>.

¹⁴⁷ Economic and Commercial Office of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, “Nigeria, China sign deal on ‘free flow’ of yuan,” April 13, 2016, accessed March 10, 2020, <http://nigeria2.mofcom.gov.cn/article/bilateralcooperation/bilateralagreement/201604/20160401294813.shtml>.

from Russia and China show an increased commitment to Nigeria but primarily one-sided. The final take away from this section is the numbers illustrate that the United States is decreasing its economic partnership with Nigeria. With the United States becoming more oil and natural gas independent, the reduced trade numbers show the once-prosperous economic relationship was reliant on one primary commodity.

Step 3: Understand Strategic Guidance

The overarching intent of understanding strategic guidance is to answer the question, what do national leaders want to solve or change?¹⁴⁸ This determines the end state and enables identifying any gaps. This step will analyze the strategic guidance of the great powers and identify the specific objectives for Nigeria, answering secondary research questions one through four.

Nigeria

Determining the strategic objectives of Nigeria is twofold. First, what are Nigeria's priorities for development? Overall, the Nigerian government has three objectives: reduce corruption, improve quality of life for Nigerians, and increase security by defeating VEOs and properly securing its borders. The second component of Nigerian strategic objectives was the fourth secondary research question, what are Nigeria's policies towards external influence? The literature review in Chapter 2 answered this question. To summarize, Nigeria values and seeks to continue binational cooperation

¹⁴⁸ JCS, JP 5-0, IV-7.

with the United States, wants to learn from Russia's transition from oil-dependent exports, and learn from China's experience growing out of being a developing nation.

United States

Current strategic guidance of the United States government comes from four primary sources, the President, DoD, DoS, and USAFRICOM. The *2017 National Security Strategy* does not provide guidance specific to Nigeria but outlines three priorities in Africa. First, partner politically to increase governments, civil society, and regional organization capacity. Second, expand trade. Third, improve partner capacity to counter terrorism, human trafficking, and illegal trade.¹⁴⁹ These three priorities establish the political objectives in Africa and shape the DoD and DoS strategies.

Next, guidance from the Secretary of Defense's 2018 National Defense Strategy and USAFRICOM's 2020 Posture Statement establishes the United States military strategy. As mentioned in the literature review, the 2018 National Defense Strategy sets partnership building to counter threats and the malign influence of non-African as the priority for the DoD on the African continent.¹⁵⁰

The 2020 USAFRICOM Posture Statement from General Townsend provides the second set of strategic guidance and context. While the posture statement is not an official strategic document, a Unified Campaign Plan or Country Plan cannot be accessed for this study, requiring strategic objectives to be determined from what senior leaders are

¹⁴⁹ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy*, 2017, 52.

¹⁵⁰ DOD, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America*, 10.

saying. General Townsend does not state specific objectives for Nigeria; they are implied from what the goals are for the African continent and the West Africa region.

USAFRICOM is assessed to have four strategic objectives in Nigeria. First, the safety of United States personnel and interests in Nigeria. Second, assessment of negative Chinese or Russian influence and activities to counter it. Third, support to countering VEOs. Specifically, the al-Qaeda branch JNIM, Boko Haram, ISIS West Africa, and ISIS Greater Sahara. Fourth, increase the capacity of the Nigerian government and military to secure itself and the greater West Africa region successfully.

The final item is the objectives of the DoS. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the DoS has three objectives in Nigeria: economic cooperation, anti-corruption, and security cooperation.

Overall, the consistent theme of guidance and objectives in Africa can be generalized in their application to Nigeria. After combining different forms of strategic guidance, the United States has five objectives in Nigeria, answering secondary research question number one.

1. Support governance to decrease corruption and increase legitimacy.
2. Support mutual economic expansion.
3. Support to counter-VEO operations throughout the nation and the Gulf of Guinea.
4. Increase the Nigerian military capacity to self-secure the country.
5. Counter malign external influencers and be the partner of choice for Nigeria.

Russia

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Russian government does not openly disclose strategic guidance like the United States. Determining Russian objectives in Nigeria requires analysis of any limited available policies, speeches of senior leaders, and literature. The first place to start is the 2016 Russian Foreign Policy. From the only paragraph addressing Africa, Russian policy has three objectives: mutually beneficial economic cooperation, security cooperation to prevent regional conflicts and enhance post-conflict settlement, and political support across multinational forums.¹⁵¹

President Putin's remarks and the agreements made at the 2019 Russia-Africa Summit provide the best data for determining Russia's current objectives in Nigeria. Step two of this chapter provided more information on the outcomes of the summit. Based on those actions, Russia has four strategic objectives in Nigeria, answering secondary research question number two.

1. Economic cooperation to increase trade.
2. Infrastructure development focused on energy and transportation.
3. Security cooperation focused on building military capacity to combat Boko Haram and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.
4. Political partnership to strengthen positions in the African Union and United Nations.

¹⁵¹ The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation."

China

The literature review in Chapter 2 addressed the official Chinese strategic documents and speeches of President Jinping relevant to identifying Chinese intent on the African continent. Based on an assessment of the literature, China has six objectives across Africa: the safety and security of investments and personnel, mutual economic development through market and natural resource access, infrastructure development, military cooperation to increase African defense capability, support to the Chinese political ideology across multinational institutions, and replace the United States and Europe as the partner of choice. All these objectives are to support the “One China” policy, the belt and road initiative, and President Jinping’s strong nation dream.

Based on the Chinese objectives for the African continent and their actions with Nigeria, China has five objectives in Nigeria, answering secondary research question number three.

1. Military and security cooperation to ensure the safety of Chinese resources focused on the Gulf of Guinea.
2. Chinese economic development through access to the Nigerian market.
3. Infrastructure development focused on the energy and transportation sectors.
4. Unhindered access to the oil and natural gas market.
5. Political support to the “One China” policy and China as the partner of choice.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented and analyzed the facts and data in this research. Following the operational design framework methodology, it defined the operational environment through the analysis of history, geopolitics, and the operational variables of political,

military, and economic. Additionally, this chapter answered part 3 of the methodology, understand strategic guidance. Following this framework determines where the United States is and where it wants to go. Next, Chapter 5 identifies the gap between where the United States is and wants to go to determine the problem(s).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 presented the facts behind the great power competition in Nigeria. The chapter used the operational design framework to define the operational environment through the analysis of history, Nigerian geopolitical structure, and the operational variables of political, military, and economic. The final step in Chapter 4 presented the strategic objectives of all four countries. At this point, all five secondary research questions have been answered.

Chapter 5 completes the final step in the methodology by defining any problems facing the current strategy of the United States in Nigeria. Defining any problems focuses on determining if there are gaps in the strategy of the United States based on the future geopolitical structure of Nigeria, the actions of Russia and China, and the current actions of the United States. Defining these problems leads to answering the primary research question of what are the implications on the strategic objectives of the United States?

Step 4: Define the Problem(s)

Political

The United States has had political influence in Nigeria for over two decades. Russia and China have also maintained political relations with Nigeria, but actions over the past three years indicate increased efforts to stem United States influence. Additionally, in terms of the political landscape, Nigeria does not seem to support a specific side openly. The political problem facing the United States strategy in Nigeria is

apparent. Russia and China are actively pursuing goals to oust the United States as a valid binational political partner and garner Nigerian support towards their ideologies on multinational forums.

Military

The military problem facing the United States in Nigeria is less apparent than the political one. Militarily, the United States, Russia, and China all actively conduct arms trade and military engagements aimed at increasing the capabilities of the Nigerian Armed Forces to self-secure their nation. The problem facing the United States is that in the current operational environment, Nigeria cannot defeat VEOs and provide adequate security throughout the country, even with outside support. Additionally, Nigeria's security problems are only projected to worsen as the nation's geopolitical structure becomes more stressed in the coming decades. Currently, activities of the United States across the military variable do not project to accomplish the objectives of counter-VEO operations and increasing Nigerian capacity to self-secure the country.

Economic

The United States has a long economic history with Nigeria. This relationship is the most stable across the three variables and provides an advantage over Russia and China. The problem facing the United States is a matter of Nigerian economic growth versus population growth. For the foreseeable future, Nigerian population growth at over 2.5 percent outpaces its economic growth, barely reaching two percent. Additionally, the Nigerian economy is still heavily reliant on the oil and natural gas industry, one of the more unstable industries across markets today.

Step 5: Answer the Primary Research Question

Having defined the problems facing the United States' strategic partnership with Nigeria, it is time to summarize all the data and answer the primary research question. This research has focused on assessing the geopolitical future of Nigeria and the level of involvement the United States, Russia, and China have in the country. The primary research question is, what are the implications on the strategic objectives of the United States? The answer to this will be provided in context with the five determined strategic objectives of the United States in Nigeria. Overall, actions taken across the three variables of political, military, and economic are interrelated. The United States' primary implication is if it decreases activities in one area, it risks losing its status in another.

First, support governance to decrease corruption and increase legitimacy. Influence from Russia and China on the Nigerian government provides the primary implication with this objective. Under the current structure, the United States' only advantage is it is the only one with an established binational forum focused on politics. Russian and Chinese forums are economically focused. China is the primary concern for the United States. Nigeria's support to the "One China" policy and openness to support from the Chinese Government illustrates Nigeria views this relationship of strategic importance.

Second, support mutual economic expansion. The primary implication of this objective relates directly to the problem. Current Nigerian economic growth cannot support the future geopolitical structure. While this is a more significant problem than the United States can handle alone, past and present approaches to achieving this goal are not sufficient. The Nigerian export economy is still 90 percent reliant on oil and gas. Until

this changes and the rate of economic growth increases, Nigeria's youthful and robust population will continue to live at a lower-tier level, and the government will not be capable of sufficiently funding armed forces to secure the country.

The third and fourth objectives are interrelated and have the same complication. Those objectives are support to counter-VEO operations throughout the nation and the Gulf of Guinea and increase Nigerian military capacity to self-secure the country. The United States helps the Nigerian Armed Forces fight against VEOs and piracy in the Gulf through arms trade and training exercises. The problem is violence has not been curbed. In the past three years, deaths resulting from VEOs, sectarian conflict, and government forces have increased each year, with 2,494 deaths in 2019.¹⁵² Violence is projected to increase as competition for resources and control increases. These results lead to the overall implication the actions of not only the United States, but Russia and China are resulting in a region no less secure than before.

Fifth, counter malign external influencers and be the partner of choice for Nigeria. Russia and China are increasing their activities in Nigeria. Each year they are committing more resources, making new agreements, and extending their influence across the country. This increase in Russian and Chinese activity and the data presented in Chapter 4 suggests the United States is no longer the partner of choice. Implications of this objective go beyond the borders of Nigeria. If Nigeria continues to support the actions of Russia and China, the United States risks losing Nigerian support across the West African region, the African continent, and on a global scale in multinational organizations.

¹⁵² CFR, "Nigeria Security Tracker."

Recommendations for Decision Makers

Nigeria has the potential for increased power regionally and globally. However, the nation is consistently hamstrung by internal strife and an inability to provide essentials such as security, leadership, and resources. The United States has been a leading partner to Nigeria for over two decades and must always take advantage of a long good standing relationship. However, it is clear, Russia and China have increased activities with some objectives to counter United States influence. At the same time, the United States comes across as decreasing its focus in the region. Taking this into consideration, there are two primary recommendations for decision-makers.

First, determine if there are areas the United States can cooperate with Russia and China in Nigeria. Currently, there is coexistence across the military and economic variables, but competition politically. Each nation is pouring extensive resources into Nigeria for the same objectives, such as support to counter-VEO operations and increasing Nigeria's ability to secure itself. However, results in those areas show limited gains for such input of resources. Perhaps there are ways each nation can cooperate, achieve unity of effort, and achieve their overall objectives.

Second, ensure support to Nigerian governance is the top priority. Historically, the United States wants African nations to solve their problems. Nigeria faces significant issues in the coming future. The Nigerian government cannot get caught in the middle of great power competition. It must more effectively implement policies to control its population growth and sectarian violence, secure its borders, and increase economic production.

Recommendations for Future Research

Most importantly, this research utilized the operational design framework but stopped at defining the problems. To complete the framework, further research could be conducted to determine an operational approach to achieve the United States' objectives in Nigeria. Determining an approach would help policymakers ensure the United States is appropriately using its resources to achieve its objectives.

Additionally, this research did not look into the operational variables of social, infrastructure, and information. Further research in these variables would help define the operational environment. A consistent theme throughout this research was Chinese actions across those variables, suggesting China is implementing a complete whole of government approach in Nigeria.

The actions of the United States, Russia, and China in Nigeria represents one small component of the great power competition of the 21st Century. Throughout this research, the African nations of South Africa, Angola, Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic were consistently mentioned as being involved with the United States, Russia, and China. Further research into the great power competition in these nations and others would help build a comprehensive assessment of what is going on across the African continent, enabling decision-makers to make the most effective objectives and approaches for the United States.

Final Thoughts

To succeed in Nigeria, the United States must employ a unified whole of government approach across all instruments of national power: diplomatic, information, military, and economic. As mentioned in the recommendations above, Nigeria is a

complex environment further complicated by the increased involvement of Russia and China. While the term great power competition implies actions between the United States, Russia, and China must be competitive, there are instances where great power cooperation and cohesion would further the greater good more than anything else. The terms great or global competition are the shiny bullet of today's strategic environment. The United States must remember the long-standing favorable position it has with regional powerhouses like Nigeria. Too great of a decrease in engagements during a time when others are increasing; risks jeopardizing a positional advantage built over decades.

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