

Module: Nigeria in the International Community

Topic: Foreign Policy & International Relations

To deepen your understanding of **Foreign Policy and International Relations**, we need to look at the specific "strategies" and "theories" that explain how countries behave on the world stage.

1. Diplomacy: The Engine of Foreign Policy

Diplomacy is the official channel through which a country's foreign policy is executed. It is the "art of negotiation."

- **Types of Diplomats:**
  - **Ambassador:** The highest-ranking diplomat sent to a foreign country. They reside in an **Embassy**.
  - **High Commissioner:** The equivalent of an Ambassador, but used between member countries of the **Commonwealth** (e.g., Nigeria's representative in the UK is a High Commissioner).
  - **Consul:** A representative who handles commercial and citizen services (like visas and passports) rather than high-level political negotiations. They work in a **Consulate**.
- **Diplomatic Immunity:** Under international law (The Vienna Convention), diplomats cannot be arrested or prosecuted in the host country. This ensures they can speak freely for their home nation without fear.
- **Persona Non-Grata:** This is a Latin term meaning "unwelcome person." If a diplomat breaks a law or offends a host country, they can be expelled and declared *Persona Non-Grata*.

2. Non-Alignment and the Cold War

This is a critical part of Nigeria's history. After WWII, the world was divided into two "blocs":

- **The Western Bloc:** Led by the USA (Capitalist).
- **The Eastern Bloc:** Led by the USSR (Communist).

Nigeria's Choice: Nigeria joined the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**. This meant Nigeria refused to formally align with or against either bloc, allowing us to maintain sovereignty and trade with everyone.

3. Technical Aid Corps (TAC) Scheme

This is a unique Nigerian foreign policy tool established in 1987.

- **What it is:** Nigeria sends its young professionals (doctors, engineers, teachers, and lawyers) to other African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries for two years.
- **The Goal:** To provide "Soft Power" assistance to fellow developing nations and prove Nigeria's leadership without using military force.

4. Conflict Resolution Strategies

International relations often involve disputes. Nations use these methods to settle them:

1. **Mediation:** A neutral third party (like a respected leader) helps two fighting nations reach an agreement.
2. **Arbitration:** Both nations agree to let a third party (like the **ICJ**) make a final, binding decision.
3. **Sanctions:** Economic "punishment" (e.g., stopping trade) to force a country to change its behavior.
4. **Peacekeeping:** Sending soldiers (like the Nigerian Army under the UN or ECOWAS) to maintain a ceasefire in a war zone.

5. Key Concepts in Global Politics

- **National Interest:** The most important factor. It includes the survival, security, and economic well-being of a nation. As the saying goes: *"Nations have no permanent friends, only permanent interests."*
- **Sovereignty:** The supreme power of a state to govern its territory without outside interference.
- **Globalization:** The increasing interconnectedness of the world's economies, cultures, and populations through trade and technology.
- **Foreign Aid:** The voluntary transfer of resources (money, food, technology) from a developed nation to a developing one.

6. Current Challenges in International Relations

- **Climate Change:** Countries must cooperate to reduce carbon emissions because the atmosphere has no borders.
- **Terrorism:** Non-state actors (like ISIS or Boko Haram) cross borders, requiring international military cooperation.
- **Trade Wars:** When powerful countries like the USA and China place high taxes on each other's goods, affecting global prices.

Student Review Hint: In your essay, if asked about Nigeria's success in International Relations, always mention her role in **ending Apartheid in South Africa** and her leadership in **ECOMOG missions** in Liberia and Sierra Leone.