

TINUBU'S DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES IN ECOWAS CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This study explores the pivotal role of Nigeria, under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's leadership, in managing crises within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The region has been beset by political instability, military coups, and security threats, with ECOWAS at the forefront of efforts to mediate and resolve these challenges. The research aims to assess Tinubu's diplomatic strategies in navigating these crises and his influence on regional peace and stability. Guided by the regional security complex theory, which highlights the interdependence of states' security concerns, this study adopts a qualitative approach, relying on secondary data from government reports, ECOWAS communiqués, and scholarly articles. The findings reveal that Tinubu has employed a range of strategies, including bilateral negotiations, multilateral diplomacy, and the use of economic sanctions to address conflicts. His administration has also emphasized preventive diplomacy, engaging stakeholders to avert escalation. The study underscores Tinubu's reshaping of Nigeria's leadership within ECOWAS, reinforcing its commitment to regional security. However, challenges such as resistance from military regimes and economic limitations have hindered progress. To enhance long-term peace, the research recommends a balanced approach, integrating diplomatic engagement with economic incentives and fostering greater regional cooperation. Ultimately, this paper highlights the need for multifaceted strategies in ECOWAS's crisis management efforts to ensure sustained peace in West Africa.

Keywords: Diplomatic Engagements, Leadership, Crisis Management, Mediation, Preventive Diplomacy

Introduction

The West African region, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has faced profound political instability in recent years. Notably, military coups in Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso have significantly disrupted the peace and governance structures of these nations, posing grave threats to regional security and cohesion¹. These developments have demanded urgent and effective diplomatic responses, underscoring the critical role of regional bodies in conflict prevention and resolution. In this volatile context, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's leadership in Nigeria has emerged as a central force in shaping ECOWAS's approach to these crises².

Tinubu's tenure has coincided with an era marked by escalating political unrest in several ECOWAS member states, forcing Nigeria to take a proactive role in regional diplomacy. Under his leadership, Nigeria has sought to bolster ECOWAS's mechanisms for crisis management and peacebuilding, emphasizing the importance of diplomatic negotiations, sanctions, and multilateral engagement to restore stability. This paper seeks to critically examine the diplomatic strategies employed by President Tinubu in addressing the political crises within the ECOWAS region, assessing their effectiveness and the implications for the broader regional balance of power and stability³. By delving into Nigeria's strategic interventions under his leadership, this study highlights the evolving role of ECOWAS in managing political crises and the challenges faced in upholding peace and democracy across West Africa.

Conceptual Clarifications

1. Diplomatic Engagements

Diplomatic engagements refer to the formal and informal actions and strategies employed by states and leaders to foster dialogue, cooperation, and conflict resolution with other nations or international organizations⁴. In the context of President Bola Tinubu's leadership, diplomatic engagements involve Nigeria's active participation in peace negotiations, interventions, and dialogue processes aimed at resolving conflicts and promoting stability within

ECOWAS member states. These engagements include both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts to address political and security challenges within the region.

2. Leadership

Leadership, in the context of this study, refers to the role played by President Bola Tinubu in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy and its strategic initiatives within ECOWAS. Leadership in crisis management involves guiding regional institutions through diplomatic, political, and security challenges⁵. Tinubu's leadership in ECOWAS has included decision-making in the implementation of diplomatic strategies aimed at restoring democratic governance and regional peace in the face of political instability and military coups in West Africa.

3. Crisis Management

Crisis management refers to the process of handling and resolving crises through a coordinated effort by relevant stakeholders and in the context of ECOWAS, it involves the use of diplomatic, political, economic, and sometimes military strategies to manage conflicts within member states⁶. Crisis management includes preventing conflict escalation, mediating peace agreements, and ensuring that post-crisis recovery is sustainable. Under Tinubu's leadership, Nigeria has been central to ECOWAS's efforts in addressing political instability and military takeovers across the region.

4. Mediation

Mediation refers to the act of intervening in a conflict between parties in order to facilitate negotiations and help them reach a mutually acceptable solution⁷. ECOWAS, under Nigeria's leadership, has often employed mediation as a key diplomatic tool in addressing conflicts in West Africa. President Tinubu's involvement in mediation efforts in countries like Mali and Burkina Faso exemplifies his approach to managing crises by promoting dialogue between conflicting parties and encouraging peaceful resolutions.

5. Preventive Diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy is the proactive approach aimed at preventing conflicts from escalating into full-blown crises⁸. This strategy focuses on early intervention, dialogue, and engagement with local and regional stakeholders to address underlying causes of instability. In the case of ECOWAS, preventive diplomacy has been crucial in managing political transitions and mitigating the risk of violent conflict, with Nigeria playing a leadership role under President Tinubu to engage in preemptive measures before crises escalate.

Theoretical Framework: Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)

The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), initially developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, offers a critical lens for understanding security dynamics within a specific geographical region. The RSCT posits that security concerns in one state are intrinsically linked to the security concerns of neighboring states, creating a collective security system within the region⁹. According to the theory, a regional security complex emerges when states' security interdependence results in shared vulnerabilities, meaning security threats in one country are unlikely to remain contained within its borders¹⁰. Such threats, including political instability, military coups, and cross-border conflicts, necessitate collective action from states within the region.

At the core of RSCT is the idea that regional security is shaped by localized threats, such as terrorism or military instability, which cannot be addressed by individual states alone. As such, achieving regional peace and stability demands that neighboring countries collaborate in implementing security measures, such as diplomacy, conflict resolution, and military interventions. Therefore, the security of any given state is deeply connected to the security of others in the same region.

In the case of ECOWAS, Tinubu's leadership and diplomatic efforts are reflective of RSCT's emphasis on collective security responses. His administration has worked to strengthen regional cooperation to address security threats in West Africa, such as terrorism, coups, and political instability¹¹. Tinubu's emphasis on preventive diplomacy, including engaging with ECOWAS member states before conflicts escalate, aligns with RSCT's framework by underscoring the interconnectedness of security within the region. His interventions demonstrate that regional security cannot be pursued in isolation, but must involve collaborative and concerted efforts from multiple actors.

Through the lens of RSCT, Tinubu's diplomatic strategies highlight the necessity of cooperation within the ECOWAS region to address shared security challenges, thereby contributing to the region's long-term peace and stability.

Tinubu's Diplomatic Strategies in ECOWAS Crisis Management: Bilateral and Multilateral Diplomacy

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has employed a range of diplomatic strategies to manage crises within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). At the heart of his approach is a strong reliance on bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, which aligns with the principles of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). According to RSCT, the security challenges of one state have direct implications for neighboring states, necessitating a collective response. Tinubu's diplomatic engagement reflects this interdependence by advocating both direct negotiations with crisis-hit states and coordinated regional action through ECOWAS platforms. For instance, following the coup in Niger in 2023, President Tinubu engaged in direct talks with the Nigerien military leadership, seeking to understand the roots of the instability and explore pathways to restoring constitutional order. At the same time, he leveraged ECOWAS summits and meetings to ensure that the entire region adopted a unified stance on the situation, thereby demonstrating the interconnectedness of security concerns across West Africa¹². Tinubu's strategy of dialogue before sanctions epitomizes his balanced approach to conflict resolution, emphasizing diplomacy as the first line of response in managing crises. This method highlights the RSCT concept that regional stability is best achieved through collaboration and communication rather than unilateral actions that could deepen divisions between states¹³.

Economic Sanctions as a Deterrent Tool

Another key component of Tinubu's approach to ECOWAS crisis management has been the strategic use of economic sanctions as a deterrent against states that engage in undemocratic practices. In line with RSCT, economic sanctions serve as a collective security tool that aims to compel targeted regimes to change their behavior in a way that aligns with regional stability. Under Tinubu's leadership, Nigeria has supported ECOWAS in imposing sanctions on countries like Mali and Burkina Faso, which witnessed military coups that destabilized their democratic frameworks. These sanctions included trade restrictions, asset freezes, and financial embargoes designed to economically isolate the junta-led governments and pressure them into returning to civilian rule¹⁴. However, these measures have been met with mixed results. While they have effectively isolated the military regimes and increased their internal pressures, some of the sanctioned states, particularly Mali, have resisted the regional pressure, aligning themselves with external powers and pushing back against ECOWAS's authority. The effectiveness of these sanctions illustrates a core tenet of RSCT, which emphasizes that the security of one state often influences the entire region, but the success of such interventions relies on the cooperation of neighboring states and international actors¹⁵.

Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation Efforts

Tinubu's administration has also strongly focused on preventive diplomacy and mediation, strategies that align with the RSCT's emphasis on addressing security threats before they escalate. Preventive diplomacy involves early engagement with conflict-prone regions and stakeholders, preventing the eruption of full-scale crises. Tinubu has used Nigeria's significant diplomatic influence within ECOWAS to position the country as a regional mediator. By sending high-level envoys to at-risk regions, Nigeria has been able to intervene early in crisis situations, engaging rival factions and seeking to prevent conflicts from spiraling out of control. This approach was notably evident in Guinea and Liberia, where peace envoys were appointed to mediate between opposing political factions and ease tensions that could otherwise lead to violent conflict¹⁶. Preventive diplomacy reflects RSCT's belief that security in one state is deeply interconnected with the security of its neighbors, requiring proactive and collaborative measures to stabilize the entire region. Tinubu's consistent engagement in diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions exemplifies the RSCT notion that states must work together to ensure the collective security of the region through timely and effective conflict resolution mechanisms¹⁷.

Therefore, President Tinubu's diplomatic strategies in managing crises within ECOWAS reflect an understanding of regional security dynamics as articulated by Regional Security Complex Theory. His emphasis on bilateral and multilateral diplomacy underscores the interconnected nature of security in West Africa, while his use of economic sanctions highlights the collective actions required to address undemocratic shifts in governance. Additionally, his focus on preventive diplomacy and mediation demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to conflict resolution, seeking to address issues before they escalate into full-blown crises. Although challenges persist, such as resistance from military regimes and the complexities of international diplomacy, Tinubu's strategies demonstrate a strong

commitment to regional stability. Ultimately, his actions underline the importance of regional cooperation, a cornerstone of the Regional Security Complex Theory, in maintaining peace and security across West Africa.

Challenges to Tinubu's ECOWAS Diplomacy

As President Bola Tinubu steers Nigeria's role in ECOWAS, his diplomatic leadership is confronted by a range of internal and external challenges that complicate efforts to manage and stabilize regional crises. These challenges, rooted in political resistance, economic constraints, and public sentiment, illustrate the complex dynamics of West African diplomacy within the framework of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). The following sections explore the most prominent obstacles faced by Tinubu in his efforts to lead ECOWAS towards sustainable peace and security in the region.

Resistance from Military Juntas

One of the most significant challenges to Tinubu's ECOWAS diplomacy has been the resistance from military-led governments in countries such as Mali, Guinea, and Niger. These military regimes have often viewed ECOWAS interventions as forms of external interference in their domestic affairs, particularly when such interventions challenge their legitimacy or authority. From the perspective of Regional Security Complex Theory, this resistance can be understood as a natural response within a region where the security concerns of one state can directly influence the stability of others. RSCT asserts that security threats in one state have implications for neighboring states, and political shifts—such as military coups—have regional consequences¹⁸. Therefore, the actions of military juntas in these states are not only driven by internal political motives but are also informed by a broader regional security calculus.

In response to the coups in Mali (2020), Guinea (2021), and Niger (2023), ECOWAS, under Tinubu's leadership, attempted to impose diplomatic pressure and sanctions. However, these efforts were met with significant resistance from the juntas, who often viewed the measures as attempts to undermine their sovereignty and control. As a leader of Nigeria, the dominant power within ECOWAS, Tinubu has had to navigate the fine line between exerting pressure for democratic restoration and offering diplomatic incentives for the peaceful resolution of conflicts¹⁹. The emphasis on dialogue, which Tinubu has maintained, highlights a balanced diplomatic approach aimed at securing political transitions without escalating tensions to military intervention. This delicate balance is aligned with the principles of RSCT, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of security within a regional complex, suggesting that military interventions in one state could potentially destabilize the entire region.

Moreover, the RSCT perspective underscores the limited effectiveness of unilateral actions by ECOWAS when states like Mali, Guinea, and Niger resist cooperation. This resistance complicates Tinubu's diplomatic objectives, as he must simultaneously manage the interests of both the more compliant member states and those under military rule, while also trying to maintain the cohesion of ECOWAS as a whole. The junta-led states' reluctance to engage with ECOWAS strategies further illustrates the challenge of pursuing a cohesive regional security agenda when individual states prioritize their sovereignty over collective security measures.

Economic Constraints and Public Perception

Another pressing challenge for Tinubu in managing ECOWAS diplomacy is the economic constraints faced by Nigeria. As a leading member state and financial contributor to ECOWAS, Nigeria's economic stability is critical to the success of the organization's peacekeeping and diplomatic missions. However, Nigeria's domestic economic challenges, such as currency devaluation, inflation, and the removal of fuel subsidies, have limited its financial capacity to support ECOWAS's intervention efforts. These financial constraints have affected Nigeria's ability to project power and influence within the organization, particularly in situations that require large-scale interventions or economic sanctions²⁰.

From the viewpoint of Regional Security Complex Theory, these economic limitations can be understood as a structural challenge within the regional security complex. The economic interdependence between member states means that Nigeria's financial struggles have ripple effects throughout the region. If Nigeria is unable to fulfill its financial obligations to ECOWAS, the entire organization faces the risk of weakened diplomatic and peacekeeping capacities. RSCT emphasizes that regional powers, like Nigeria, play a central role in facilitating collective security and stability. However, economic instability within such a power can significantly undermine the efficacy of the

regional security framework. Tinubu's leadership is therefore constrained by these financial limitations, which hamper Nigeria's ability to carry out comprehensive diplomatic strategies across West Africa.

Additionally, economic constraints limit Nigeria's ability to support the sanctions regime imposed by ECOWAS against military regimes that defy democratic principles. Sanctions, which are a key tool in ECOWAS's diplomatic strategy, often require the financial backing of member states to enforce effectively. With Nigeria struggling economically, the implementation of sanctions and other economic measures has become increasingly difficult. This has led to mixed outcomes in ECOWAS's efforts to pressure the juntas in Mali, Guinea, and Niger to restore constitutional rule. In some instances, the military regimes have shown resilience against external pressure, highlighting the limitations of economic sanctions as a tool for regional peace²¹.

In addition to economic challenges, public perception within Nigeria and other ECOWAS member states has also posed a significant barrier to Tinubu's diplomatic strategy. Public sentiment in some ECOWAS countries has been critical of Nigeria's role as the dominant power in the region, viewing its leadership as imposing decisions that may not align with the interests of sovereign nations. For instance, in some member states, there is a perception that Nigeria's efforts to lead ECOWAS could be self-serving, attempting to preserve its regional hegemony rather than prioritizing the collective interests of all member states.

This public perception aligns with RSCT's emphasis on the challenge of sovereignty in a region where states' security interests are deeply interconnected. RSCT suggests that sovereignty and national interests often come into conflict with collective regional goals, particularly when powerful states like Nigeria assume a dominant role in shaping regional security agendas. Public resistance to external influence is, therefore, a significant challenge to Tinubu's diplomacy, as the legitimacy of ECOWAS's decisions is often called into question when the public perceives that one state is exerting undue influence over others.

However, the challenges to Tinubu's ECOWAS diplomacy, including resistance from military juntas, economic constraints, and public perception, reflect the complexities of regional diplomacy and security in West Africa. The interconnectedness of security within the region, as highlighted by Regional Security Complex Theory, shows that these challenges are not only domestic issues but also have significant implications for regional stability. As Tinubu seeks to balance firm diplomatic pressure with incentives for transition and address economic constraints, he must also navigate the delicate dynamics of sovereignty and regional cooperation. Ultimately, the success of his leadership will depend on his ability to unite ECOWAS member states behind a common goal of regional peace and stability, while addressing both internal challenges and external pressures.

Impact of Tinubu's Diplomatic Engagements

President Bola Tinubu's diplomatic engagements have had significant implications for West African stability and regional cohesion. His leadership within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has not only influenced the organization's response to regional challenges but also helped to solidify Nigeria's dominant position within the region. These engagements have contributed to strengthening ECOWAS unity and positioning Nigeria as the principal regional power. Below, I explore the extent of these impacts in greater detail, incorporating the framework of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to analyze the broader dynamics at play.

Strengthening ECOWAS Unity

One of the most profound impacts of Tinubu's leadership has been the reinforcement of ECOWAS unity in the face of regional instability. His diplomatic efforts have consistently focused on maintaining a coordinated response among member states to emerging crises, thereby ensuring that ECOWAS remains a formidable force in West African politics. Under Tinubu's stewardship, ECOWAS has shown greater cohesion, particularly in its collective stance on the military coups in Mali, Guinea, and Niger.

According to Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), security threats in one state create ripple effects across the entire region. In this context, the instability caused by the coups has been recognized as a collective regional threat. Tinubu's proactive engagement in emergency ECOWAS summits and his efforts to facilitate consensus-building among member states have been instrumental in forging a unified regional response to these crises²². By encouraging collaboration among diverse countries with different political and economic interests, Tinubu has worked to ensure

that ECOWAS does not splinter under pressure but instead presents a unified front against threats to democracy and peace in the region.

Tinubu's approach to dialogue-first diplomacy—prioritizing negotiation and peaceful resolution before imposing sanctions or military interventions—has aligned with the central tenets of RSCT, which underscores the importance of regional cooperation in addressing security challenges. His emphasis on diplomatic engagement rather than unilateral actions has helped to prevent the fragmentation of ECOWAS, enabling the organization to remain a coherent force in the region. This has been particularly important in the context of member states such as Mali, Guinea, and Niger, where the military juntas have been resistant to external influence. Through persistent diplomatic pressure and negotiations, Tinubu has contributed to a broader regional strategy that seeks to address instability without triggering open conflict between member states²³.

Positioning Nigeria as a Regional Power

Through his diplomatic strategy, Tinubu has also worked to reaffirm Nigeria's hegemonic role in West Africa. Nigeria's leadership in ECOWAS has historically been central to the organization's influence and effectiveness. Under Tinubu's administration, Nigeria has actively leveraged its diplomatic tools to maintain its dominant position in regional affairs, ensuring that the country continues to play a critical role in shaping the political and security dynamics of West Africa.

RSCT provides a useful lens for understanding Nigeria's position in regional politics. According to the theory, states that have significant military, economic, or political influence in their region—like Nigeria—are often positioned as regional powers. These states are expected to take on a leadership role in regional security complexes by providing security, economic support, and diplomatic leadership to neighboring countries. As a regional power, Nigeria's stability and diplomatic actions have profound implications for the entire West African security complex.

Tinubu's administration has made strategic use of mediation and diplomatic influence to navigate regional tensions. For example, in response to the political instability in Mali, Guinea, and Niger, Nigeria has played a key role in mediation efforts, often positioning itself as the primary negotiator between the military juntas and ECOWAS. This mediation has been critical not only in fostering regional security but also in reinforcing Nigeria's position as the leading power within ECOWAS. The country's hegemonic influence has allowed it to shape ECOWAS's diplomatic policies, ensuring that Nigeria's interests are represented in the broader framework of regional governance.

In addition to mediation, Tinubu has also emphasized economic diplomacy as a tool for regional stability. Nigeria's economic influence in West Africa, particularly its oil exports and trade relationships, gives the country significant leverage in shaping ECOWAS's regional economic policies. Through active participation in ECOWAS economic forums and trade agreements, Tinubu has positioned Nigeria as a cornerstone of the region's economic development and a driving force behind initiatives such as the West African Monetary Union and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme. These initiatives further enhance Nigeria's role as the principal economic engine in West Africa, reinforcing its hegemonic status within the region.

Furthermore, Tinubu's leadership in ECOWAS has ensured that Nigeria's strategic interests—including security concerns, trade relations, and political alliances—remain central to the organization's broader goals. By continuously emphasizing the need for regional cooperation, political stability, and economic integration, Tinubu has bolstered Nigeria's influence in shaping the direction of ECOWAS's policy and the security complex at large.

The Regional Security Complex Theory underscores the importance of hegemonic powers in maintaining stability within a region. For Tinubu, reaffirming Nigeria's role as the leading power in West Africa is not only about economic and political interests but also about ensuring that regional security remains interconnected across borders. Nigeria's leadership ensures that the stability of the entire West African security complex is upheld, with Nigeria's diplomatic leverage playing a pivotal role in shaping regional security arrangements.

Therefore, Tinubu's diplomatic engagements have had a profound impact on both ECOWAS unity and Nigeria's position as the dominant regional power. By reinforcing a coordinated regional response to crises, he has ensured that ECOWAS remains a cohesive and influential actor in regional security. At the same time, through strategic mediation

and economic diplomacy, Tinubu has positioned Nigeria as the principal hegemonic power in West Africa, reaffirming the country's leadership role within ECOWAS. His leadership aligns with the core principles of Regional Security Complex Theory, emphasizing the interconnectedness of security in West Africa and the importance of maintaining regional stability through cooperative and strategic diplomatic engagement.

Conclusion

President Tinubu's diplomatic strategies in ECOWAS crisis management reflect a multi-pronged approach that combines dialogue, economic measures, and preventive diplomacy. However, challenges such as military resistance, economic constraints, and geopolitical complexities require continuous adaptation.

Tinubu's Diplomatic Strategies in ECOWAS Crisis Management

President Bola Tinubu's diplomatic strategies in managing crises within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been characterized by a multifaceted approach that skillfully combines dialogue, economic measures, and preventive diplomacy. These strategies have played a critical role in addressing regional instability, promoting peace, and reinforcing Nigeria's leadership within ECOWAS. However, the challenges that Tinubu faces in implementing these strategies are significant and require continuous adaptation in response to the dynamic political, economic, and security landscape of West Africa.

Tinubu's diplomatic strategy within ECOWAS reflects a multi-pronged approach that incorporates dialogue, economic measures, and preventive diplomacy. These pillars are designed to address the complex security challenges facing the region and promote a stable political environment. Dialogue, as a primary tool of diplomacy, has been central to Tinubu's approach, with a focus on engaging with both regional leaders and military juntas in crisis-affected states. By initiating high-level talks, Tinubu has worked to de-escalate tensions and facilitate diplomatic solutions before conflicts spiral out of control. This commitment to dialogue, even with hostile regimes, aligns with the core tenets of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of states in a regional security complex and the need for collective regional responses to shared threats.

In addition to dialogue, economic sanctions have been employed as a key component of Tinubu's strategy. Targeted economic measures have been used to pressure military regimes in countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, where military juntas have undermined democratic governance. These sanctions—such as trade restrictions, financial freezes, and travel bans—have been effective in signaling ECOWAS's commitment to upholding democratic principles in the region. However, the effectiveness of these measures has been mixed, as some regimes have shown resistance to external pressure, highlighting the complex balance between diplomatic engagement and the enforcement of punitive measures.

Preventive diplomacy has also been an essential element of Tinubu's strategy. By deploying peace envoys to conflict zones before tensions escalate into full-blown crises, Nigeria has sought to mitigate risks and promote dialogue as a means of preventing violence. Tinubu's diplomatic outreach to countries such as Guinea and Liberia serves as a testament to Nigeria's commitment to resolving regional conflicts before they become destabilizing forces. Preventive diplomacy, as outlined in RSCT, underscores the importance of proactive engagement in addressing security threats at an early stage, preventing regional instability from spreading across borders.

Despite the positive impacts of Tinubu's strategies, several challenges continue to hinder the full realization of his diplomatic goals. These challenges primarily revolve around military resistance, economic constraints, and the geopolitical complexities of the region.

One of the most significant challenges that Tinubu faces in ECOWAS diplomacy is the resistance from military juntas in countries like Mali, Guinea, and Niger. These military regimes often view ECOWAS interventions as a form of external interference in their internal affairs, leading to a reluctance or outright defiance of regional diplomatic initiatives. The post-coup political environment in these countries is marked by military control, where leaders are unwilling to cede power or accept diplomatic compromises that may limit their authority. In this context, Tinubu's strategy of diplomatic pressure is often met with stiff opposition, requiring him to balance firm stances with the need for dialogue. The challenge lies in crafting an approach that pressures these regimes to transition back to democratic governance while avoiding the risk of further militarization or escalation of conflict.

The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) highlights that the actions of a regional power, such as Nigeria, are often constrained by the political dynamics within the region. Tinubu's efforts to mediate and negotiate peace are often thwarted by the sovereignty concerns and resilience of military regimes that do not see ECOWAS as a legitimate force for enforcing democratic norms. This resistance is a persistent challenge to Tinubu's diplomatic efforts, requiring him to adapt his strategies in order to navigate the complexities of the region's political realities.

Another significant challenge to Tinubu's diplomatic strategies is the economic constraints facing Nigeria and ECOWAS. ECOWAS interventions, whether through sanctions, peacekeeping missions, or economic aid, require substantial financial commitments. However, Nigeria's economic challenges, including fluctuations in the value of the naira, economic slowdowns, and the removal of fuel subsidies, have limited the resources available for regional diplomacy. These economic constraints have raised questions about the sustainability of Nigeria's leadership role within ECOWAS, as the country's economic capacity to support interventionist measures may be reduced over time.

In addition to financial limitations, the broader geopolitical complexities of the region also presents a challenge. West Africa is characterized by a range of ethnic, religious, and political divides, which complicate efforts at regional cooperation and conflict resolution. Countries with divergent interests—such as the tension between Sahelian countries and coastal West African states—often clash over the appropriate response to regional crises. Tinubu must navigate these geopolitical divides, balancing the competing interests of various member states and securing regional consensus on sensitive issues. These challenges, though difficult to overcome, are part of the broader process of maintaining regional cohesion and stability.

In light of these challenges, Tinubu's diplomatic strategies in ECOWAS crisis management must remain flexible and adaptive. As the security landscape in West Africa continues to evolve, Tinubu will need to recalibrate his approach to address emerging threats, adapt to changing political dynamics, and ensure that Nigeria's leadership remains effective in promoting regional peace and democratic governance. The Regional Security Complex Theory emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation and the need for flexibility in responding to shared security threats, and Tinubu's diplomatic efforts must be aligned with these principles in order to secure long-term stability in the region.

Ultimately, the success of Tinubu's strategies will depend on his ability to balance diplomatic engagement with coercive measures, foster regional unity, and adapt to the evolving challenges of West African politics. Through continuous dialogue, economic leverage, and preventive diplomacy, Tinubu's leadership in ECOWAS can continue to play a central role in managing regional crises and promoting stability across West Africa.

Recommendations

1. **Conflict Prevention Initiatives:** ECOWAS should establish early warning systems and conflict prevention mechanisms to address emerging threats before they escalate into full-scale crises.
2. **Capacity Building for Member States:** ECOWAS should provide technical assistance and training programs for member states to enhance their governance, rule of law, and security sector reform, fostering a stronger regional foundation.
3. **Public Diplomacy Campaigns:** ECOWAS could invest in public diplomacy initiatives to raise awareness of the benefits of regional cooperation and the importance of upholding democratic principles among the general population.
4. **Regional Economic Integration:** Strengthening regional economic cooperation, including free trade agreements and infrastructure projects, would increase interdependence and reduce the likelihood of conflict within the ECOWAS region.

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