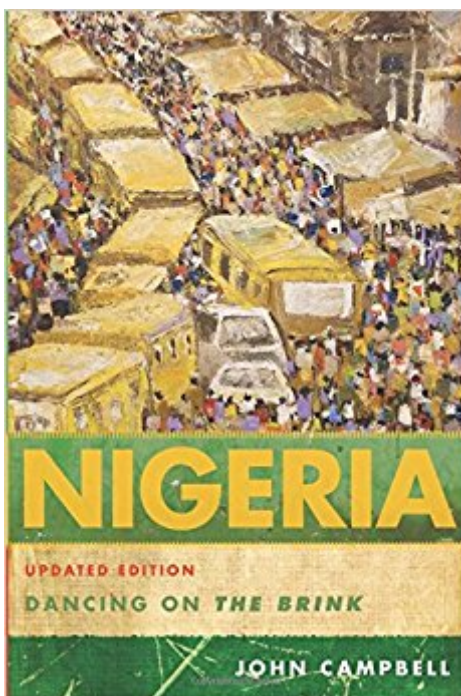


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Nigeria: Dancing On The Brink (A Council On Foreign Relations Book)



Synopsis

In this thoroughly updated edition, John Campbell explores Nigeria's postcolonial history and presents a nuanced explanation of the events and conditions that have carried this complex, dynamic, and very troubled giant to the brink. Central to his analysis are the oil wealth, endemic corruption, elite competition, and radical Islamic insurrection that have undermined Nigeria's nascent democratic institutions and alienated an increasingly impoverished population. Campbell provides concrete policy options that would not only allow the United States to help Nigeria avoid state failure but also to play a positive role in Nigeria's political, social, and economic development.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nigeria, onetime giant of Africa, rich in both human and natural resources, has in the past decades or so descended into what Samuel P. Huntington calls 'praetorianism'—the control of society by force or fraud, especially by venal, corruptible, and often sycophantic people; into what Richard Joseph calls 'prebendalism'—the disbursing of public offices and state rents to one's ethnic-based clients; and into what Larry Diamond calls 'uncivil society'—lacking the horizontal relations of reciprocity and cooperation that breed the honesty, trust, and law abidingness that mark the civic community. The aforementioned descriptions of Nigeria raised the specter of a failed state. Campbell (Ralph Bunche Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies, Council on Foreign Relations), former US ambassador to Nigeria, cites numerous factors responsible for this situation: endemic corruption, maladministration, election malpractices,

and sectarian violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. Campbell condemns Washington's indifference in the past and cautions the Obama administration to be circumspect in helping Nigerian civil society in reversing this trend. A must-read for people interested in security of Nigeria and US-Nigeria bilateral relations; recommended for other readers. Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduate, graduate, research, and professional collections. (CHOICE) In closing, Campbell's monographic illuminates Nigeria and its probability for super-power statehood as searching outwardly for internal healing. . . . Campbell's book is a literary testament to the modernity of Nigeria's sociopolitical atmosphere with an undertone poignancy for practical transformation. Without reluctance, I strongly recommend this literary masterpiece, because through combining primary evidence and personal experience, Campbell administers a strongly supported critical analysis of Nigeria's political upper class (formally known as the 'Ogas'). Academically, he exhibits the potential of Nigeria and the litany of governmental dysfunctions in a systematic chronological fashion that is readily comprehended without being a histo-academician. . . . Ambassador Campbell attentively resurrects the idea that Nigeria can mobilize for political purposes in steps towards a righteous direction of statehood stability and dependable political behavior servicing its citizens in kind for a tangible bright future. (African Studies Quarterly)[A] bold and courageous book. . . . Campbell sounded the alarm bell [but] we ignored the clear and prompt message contained, instead we went ahead to demonise the messenger. . . . If Nigeria continues to be the epicentre of corruption, infrastructure decay, violent conflict, religious extremism and criminality, there is not much anyone can do to improve her image. I earnestly hope that our country wins the war against terror which will possibly begin with the safe return of the girls kidnapped from Chibok. It is now clear that Campbell was right in most of the issues he raised. . . . The lesson is that we must try to give some of the many Western discussions about Nigeria the benefit of informed scrutiny before discarding them as promoters of pre-conceived interests. (Punch) A crucial layman's introduction to Nigeria as a whole, and to its inextricably intertwined identities of religion, politics, and society. (Tony Blair Faith Foundation)

John Campbell is the Ralph Bunche Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. He served twice in Nigeria, from 1988 to 1990 as political counselor and from 2004 to 2007 as U.S. ambassador.

My interest in Nigeria is work-related and I found myself wanting to know a little more about the

country. Well, I mostly wanted to know a little more about Lagos specifically, but there were no good books on just Lagos so I went with them. All in all I'm pleased with the decision. I found this to be an easy read, not too dry and kept my interest. And I did learn a lot more about the history of Nigeria, from a political standpoint. I was mostly interested in the second half of the 20th century onward and felt it covered that nicely.

Unbelievable book. Highly recommended read for both the curious and the already educated on Nigeria. Great trek through history to the present day.

Great book has many of the cruel truths of dealing in this country, its economy and people.

Good, broad overview of recent history for a general audience. Raises more questions than it answers, a function of Nigeria study of any kind.

Very informative, well written and easy to read. This was a great book and highly recommend

Great read for anyone interested in understanding the complex history and politics of West Africa's largest state.

An interesting and quite readable introduction to Nigeria.

As a political scientist, I write a bit about Nigerian politics. As a peacebuilding activist, I help defuse tensions in Nigeria and other countries where "identity" issues drive societies asunder. It doesn't matter which of my hats I wear. John Campbell's book is by far the most insightful and the best written one on the largest and, arguably, the most important country in Africa. It is based on his years of experience living there in two tours as a diplomat and his scholarly research on Nigeria which has been at the heart of his work at the Council on Foreign Relations.

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