

A close-up portrait of Donald Trump, smiling, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and blue tie. The background is a blurred American flag.

**WHAT DOES
PRESIDENT TRUMP
MEAN
FOR NIGERIA?**



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2016 will go down as the year of the roll back. In Nigeria, we are going through our first recession in nearly two decades. Our colonisers, the United Kingdom, turned their backs on four decades of European Union membership, Turkey, a major Nigerian trading partner, has slowly started turning its back on the legacy of its founder, Kemal Atatürk, and the United States, today, has turned its back on the world.

Of course the US vote to put Donald Trump in the White House will not result in immediate change. The ships of the US Fifth and Sixth fleets are not going to roll up their anchors and leave Bahrain and Naples. However, it does signify that the American electorate has made its voice very clear that it wants an inward looking leader who puts America first. How will this affect Nigeria?

First, it will have a psychological effect. Mr. Trump's victory has shown, from the primaries, that being unconventional works, and that you can successfully take on the establishment. Imagine folks with multiple PhDs and dollops of political experience losing essentially to a free-lancer using "chaos theory"? A lot of Nigerians who have taken America as an orderly country that can be relied on at any given point to form a logical national self-interest and elect leaders who can enforce same will have to reassess their thinking. This will strengthen the voices here at home, who say being qualified for high office does not matter.

In Nigeria at the moment, the economy is paramount, and the American result is significant in that it is positive for our economy in a roundabout way. The markets do not like uncertainty, and a President Trump, just by his very nature, will mean four years of executive uncertainty coming from a country that has been the world's stabilizing force since 1945. The markets, starting today, will panic. This will weaken the US dollar, putting a little more money in the pockets of Nigerians who have been battered all through 2016 by the naira quaking at the tacit strong dollar policy of the US Federal Reserve. Nigeria's government remains dependent on oil revenues, and historically, long periods of uncertainty have always been kind to oil prices. If we can find a solution to the systemic issues in the Niger Delta, then expect higher output, which with a return of higher oil prices, will be a win for the Buhari government. What will remain to be seen will be how they will handle that windfall. There is one

caveat to this though - a Trump Presidency will be very aggressive about US exports of natural gas and oil, and will not be hung up on environmental concerns like the Obama presidency was. This could result in low oil prices in the medium to long term. An indicator of this will be how Mr. Trump handles the controversy surrounding the Keystone pipelines.

Another position that Nigeria can take advantage of will be the impact of a Trump Presidency on the latest climate change agreements. Is he likely to abide by them? Likely not. This opens a window of opportunity for Nigeria to truly exploit its potential in coal as a power source.

It is clear that many of the American led multi-lateral institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, whom Nigeria is hinging some of its plans to borrow to fund its budget may no longer be a reliable option, considering Trump's mantra of everyone paying their fair share will probably mean reduced American financial contribution to these bodies. The hope is that the possible windfall from the predicted oil price increase will make up for this source of funding that may be closed.

Another potential impact is a possible influx of returnee Nigerians who might take the chances of coming back to Nigeria if Trump goes ahead with his plans for migrants or if Americans reading the body language of President Trump become even more openly hostile to foreigners, especially Africans. This influx will present an opportunity for Nigeria to harness such talents and it is encouraged that the Nigerian government builds an active campaign to encourage such Nigerians to come back home and also create the environment for them to bring their skills and experiences to bear.

Politically, for the Buhari government, Mr. Trump's victory is the worst possible outcome. A Hillary Clinton presidency would have continued to provide material, moral and political support for the Buhari government. A Trump presidency, which will not be too interested in issues outside the shores of the US, will place Nigeria, and indeed Africa, very low on its list of interests. This means that should the Buhari presidency make a mistake in some of its political calculations, he will not be able to count on the support of the



Americans, which may have proved very critical. In the light of recent electoral decisions on both sides of the North Atlantic, expect the most engaged major Western power over the next four years, with any appetite for direct involvement in our region, to be France. We see China continuing to ramp up its influence in Africa in this vacuum and Chinese support will increasingly become more crucial to Nigerian and indeed African leaders.

On the Boko Haram war, and rising Islamism, Clinton as Secretary of State did not have a favourable policy towards Nigeria, enforcing the Leahy Law which blocked sales of lethal weapons to Nigeria and being unwilling to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist group. President Trump's disposition towards aiding foreign nations to fight terrorism is clear. We do not think he will ramp up support significantly, considering his "pay your fair share" stance. If we can cough up the cash, he will be willing to sell the lethal arms Nigeria needs to combat Boko Haram.