

A BLUEPRINT FOR TACKLING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

Ayeni Idesukhe Daniel

idesukhedaniel@gmail.com, 07045231037

UNDERGRADUATE ,

UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA

ABSTRACT

Security raises concern about the existence of humanity of which the Nigerian populace is part.

This article seeks to comprehend the circumstances that threaten this basic necessity in Nigeria. It examines the challenges to the guarantee of security in present day Nigeria. The study adopts the Root cause Analysis to give a holistic comprehension of the security situation in Nigeria and proffer solutions to security challenges in Nigeria. The study examines the major challenges to security in Nigeria followed by unravelling the root causes and solutions.

INTRODUCTION

In recent history, Nigeria is being plagued with a lot of challenges of which a large chunk of it is insecurity. Nigeria from independence to date has experienced a couple of security challenges to the present time. This insecurity is associated with riots, uprising, coup d'état, civil war, militancy, kidnapping, farmers-herders clash, banditry, insurgency, arm robbery and a host of others that has occurred since independence. Nigeria's insecurity is majorly internal.¹. The internal security challenges include: kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, armed robbery etc; therefore, the security challenges of Nigeria are primarily internal. It is imperative that internal security is a key in the present world for countries to thrive across different sectors and facets of national life.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Meaning of Blueprint

A blueprint is a print in reproduction of a technical drawing or engineering drawing using a contact print process on light-sensitive sheets. However, “the term blueprint continues to be used less formally to refer to any floor plan. It is evident that the above definition does not depict the character of the term blueprint in this context of discourse. However, a definition that can be adopted is that a blueprint is an early plan or design that explains how something might be achieved. It is a plan for achieving or improving something.

A blueprint can be inferred to be a plan, a roadmap and a scheme to do something. It is a planned process of achieving a goal, overcoming a difficulty or challenge to reaching a state of changing the status quo.

Meaning of Security Challenges

To get a proper grasp of the phrase ‘Security Challenge’, a proper understanding of the words that compose the phrase must be examined which are “security” and “challenge”. The word security is an enigmatic concept that meant different things to different people according to their time and place in human history (Rothschild 1995). Security is the freedom from danger or threat to a nation’s ability to protect and develop itself; promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhancing the well-being of its people. Therefore, security is the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the corporate existence of a nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values as well as freedom from danger to life and property. (Oche 2001:76).²

Williams (2013) defines security as widely associated with mitigating the threat to cherished values, particularly if left unchecked in the near future, threatens the existence of a specific referent object³. Onifade C. (2013) states that Security is seen as a situation that emerges from the establishment of ways of protecting individuals, information, and properties from hostile people, influences, and certain behaviors. It has to do with a situation in which people can travel around within a given natural space or elsewhere without any real or imaginary threats to their lives or properties.⁴ Therefore, security is the freedom from danger. It is the state of safety from threats either imaginary or real.

The word challenge originates from the Latin word “calumnia” which means trickery. Then, it metamorphosed to “Calumniar” which means to accuse falsely. However, it was misinterpreted and got assimilated into Anglo-French and refer to as “challenge” which means slander,

²

³

⁴

demand, opposition, accusation, claim and dispute.⁵ However, the present representation of the word challenge is given by the Cambridge Dictionary which defines it as the situation of being faced with something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability. A challenge is something that by its nature or character serves as a call to battle, contest, special effort etc.⁶ Therefore, security challenges are situations, occurrences, activities and positions that contest the safety of individuals from danger. Security challenges are call to test safety. There are situations that threaten the wellbeing of citizens of Nigerian in the context of this discourse.

Understanding Nigeria

Nigeria is a republic in West Africa with a coast along the Atlantic Ocean on the Gulf of Guinea. Most of Nigeria territory consists of a low plateau cut by rivers especially the Niger and the Benue. The country takes its name from its chief river. Until 1991, the capital was Lagos; the largest city located on the South-western coast. However, a new city called Abuja, located at the centre of the country became the capital in 1991. Nigeria has a federal form of government and it is divided into 36 states and a federal capital territory. Robert Stock (2011) opined that the area that is now called Nigeria was home to ethnically based kingdoms and tribal communities before it became a European colony. In spite of European contact that began in the 16th century, these kingdoms and communities maintained their autonomy until the 19th century. The colonial era began in earnest in the late 19th century, when Britain consolidated its rule over Nigeria. In 1914 the British merged their northern and southern protectorates into a single state called the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. Nigeria became independent of British rule in 1960. Nigeria is by far the most populated of Africa's countries, with over one hundred and fifty million people. The people belong to many different ethnic groups. These groups give the country a rich culture, but they also pose major challenges to nation building. Ethnic strife has plagued Nigeria since it gained independence in 1960. Nigeria, apart from being multi-ethnic is multi-religious with – Christianity, Islam and African religion as the three main religions. Constitutionally, Nigeria is a secular state.⁷

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will take into cognizance the Root cause Analysis to proceed in the study. The Root cause Analysis states that to find a solution, a blueprint to a challenge. It is of great concern to

5

6

7

find out the root causes of that challenge as to provide a solution to meet those causes. The root cause analysis also posits that there are basically three causes of a problem which are⁸

1. Physical cause: these include the tangible, material items that cause an effect
2. Human cause: these are causes by human activity
3. Organizational cause: these are causes that are caused by a break down from what an organisation is supposed to do.

ROOT CAUSES OF SECURITY CHALLENGES

Proliferation of Light arms and weapons:

The proliferation of small arms has been a major discourse at the international scene. Thus, it is a material root cause of security challenges in Nigeria. A report by SBM intelligence has said

“The number of small arms in circulation in Nigeria, in the hands of civilian non-state actors is estimated at 6,145,000, while the armed forces and law enforcement collectively account for 586,600 firearms”.⁹

The report highlights that proliferation of arms has enabled the rise of armed groups and also led to the displacement of several Nigerians.

The supply of these arms comes from different sources which include smuggling from countries. Light arms and weapons have a track record of accounting for arms used in violent conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa which Nigeria is part. The sources of light arms in Nigeria includes foreign countries such as Israel, Poland, Brazil, Iran, USA, Czech Republic, Algeria and Egypt and Turkey. In addition are sources from illegal local manufacturing industries. In a survey tagged National Small Arms and Light weapons Survey reported that “locally made weapons are estimated to be used in over 50% of crimes committed. 62% for Benue State and 69% for Plateau state. In Adamawa 32% are made locally. Furthermore, there are reports of manufacturing factories in Enugu and Calabar. ¹⁰In addition, there are lost and stolen weapons from state security institutions such as the Nigerian Police which between 1998-2000, 196 weapons were registered as “lost”

Thus, in the words of Mao Zedong (Chairman Mao) “power emanates from the barrels of the guns”. Therefore, if these powers be in the hands of those without authority, then it would reflect

8

9

10

the words of Lord Acton that “power corrupts” in which case Nigeria suffers from security challenge.

Unemployment and Poverty

Unemployment is the genesis of poverty and also understood to be a fuel to the fire of insecurity. Thus, it is a popular saying that “an idle man is the devil’s workshop.

Poverty aptly described as a state of lack; want and deprivation is a phenomenon without bias for race, ethnicity, and religion with extensive global reach. Poverty is a severe lack of physical and mental wellbeing, closely associated with inadequate economic resources and consumption.(Garatz and Grigsby 1971:120). Poverty is therefore being defined as deprivation in the material requirement for minimally acceptable fulfilment of human needs including food (UNICEF, 1986). There has been an established nexus between poverty and security challenges as it of wide spread knowledge that poor persons are targeted to be members of groups that challenge security. An illustration was the report of the recruiting of children of the poor by the Boko Haram sect in its early years of operation. As at 2010 the poverty percentage in Nigeria stood at 69%, encompassing about

Most theories on poverty show that there is a connecting trend between poverty and insecurity. The progressive social theory readily addresses this issue. This theory looks not to the individual poverty but to the economic, political and social system which cause people to have limited opportunities and resources with which to achieve income and well-being. Karl Marx demonstrated how social and economic systems combined to initiate, promote and sustain poverty situations across cultures. For examples, Marx showed how capitalism created what he called the “reserved army of the unemployed” as a conscientious strategy to keep wages low. Studies by Jencks (1996:72). Therefore the security challenges facing the country is an indication of the words of Adam Smith “No Society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which by far the greater part of the numbers are miserable”

Ideological and religious extremism:

Ideology originally means science of ideas. It is the “belief system that explains and justifies a preferred political order, either existing or proposed, and offers a strategy... for its attainment... [It] includes a set of basic assumptions, both normative and empirical, about the nature and purpose of man and society while religion on the other side is “human being relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine or worthy of especial reverence. It is also commonly regarded as consisting of the way people deal with ultimate concerns about their lives and their fate after death.

Nevertheless, extremism of these concepts has been a fuelling source to most security challenges in Nigeria, an apt example is the Boko Haram insurgency. Thus a writer once commented that

... religion has unleashed on mankind... it has left in its wake, a heavy toll of destroyed lives and wanton destruction of property. It has delayed workable political agreements and brutalised societies.... Religious violence has been responsible for the collapse of one political order or the other throughout history. It has given rise to assassination and tempted assassination of various Heads of State or government in recent times....leads to irretrievable breakup of internal harmony, and leads to foreign intervention. (Agi,1996).

The above words are a description of current status of things caused by religious extremism. In addition is the deteriorating state of violence in the middle belt caused by the ideology of superiority of some sect and persons to others.

Bad governance and poor Leadership

It has been Nigeria's fundamental cause of insecurity from the past till now. Government anywhere has the primary responsibility of providing basic services such as water, electricity, good road network, quality education, and general infrastructure.

Yet, these basic things are not there in Nigeria and the people, in general, are frustrated and demoralized. Demoralization and anger logically provide a strong fertile ground for aggression and general insecurity. The scarcity of these basic amenities in Nigeria is embarrassingly not due to a shortage of funds but rather to corruption at the highest level of leadership structure. A reality articulated by Hazen and Horner (2007), of a wealthy nation with poor people in the majority.

It is therefore an enormous task to take responsibility for giving leadership direction in such communities or societies in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria, given the current scenario of the democratic politics in which the nation has been located. To this end, believing that weak leadership, has added more challenges to the uncertainty and causes of insecurity not just in the north but also in Nigeria in general, might not be an unfounded statement According to Charas, Mbaya, and Liberty (2014), a number of violent cultures such as thuggery, indiscipline, corruption, abduction, bombing, etc. have come in since the arrival of third and fourth republics in 1999 and 2009 respectively, which was just a decade ago after the previous military invasion.

SOLUTIONS

Justice:

It is imperative to state the words of prolific personalities through history

Albert Einstein's view "peace is not only an absence of war, but it means or includes the presence of justice, law, order or government in the society as he said—Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order—in short, of government.

It is evident that a lot of security challenges especially those from separatist insurgents who complain of been marginalized and social injustice in Nigeria. Security challenges from time has always been an effect of social which those abused attempt to retaliate against the state threatening and challenging the security of citizens

Education:

Plato is credited with the saying ignorance, the root and stem of every evil. Ignorance has ruined Mankind from studies shown. Consequently, education is the key to solving the security challenges emanating especially those caused by ideological and religious brainwashing.

In the words of Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". It is evident to posit that countries with higher percentage of educated population have a better ranking of on the Global Peace Index. Thus, education in this context does not necessarily mean conventional education; it encompasses the knowledge of miss leading elements, education on the right to good governance and the evil of violence.

It involves the National Orientation Agency enlightening of the populace about security challenges, it causes and possible contribution of persons in the society to maintain safety. Thus, 'education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire' (WB Yeats).

Further, education should encompass the enlightenment of nationalism and the need to build a nation which with unity will overcome ant threat be it internal or external. Citizens should be educated on their importance of participating in community policing with slogans such as "if you see something, say something".

Consequently, citizens should have knowledge to be able to differentiate between criminals among tribes other than having a prejudice of that tribe. This will aid in the reduction of etho-religious crisis.

Creation of Enabling Environments for investment and Job Creation.

As earlier identified, "an idle man is the devil's work shop". The Nigerian is bedeviled with the effects of unemployment. This, it is important that government and other institutions provide the

enabling environment for investors to take advantage of the market which is embedded in the population of over 200 million persons while providing jobs. The Nigerian government and agencies at all levels should provide social capital in form of infrastructure development, provision of social amenities such as electricity, water etc.

Further, citizens should be encouraged and engage in skill acquisition i.e. those relevant in the 21st century such as AI, web development, Digital marketing etc.

In addition, there should be exploitation of resources and equal distribution of these resources among citizens.

Funding and Support of Security Apparatus:

The lack of funding has been on front burner of discussion about Security institutions in the Nigerian state. With a budget of less than a billion dollar; Thus, funding also include training of personal to be trained and developed to meet the security challenges that face the country. In addition technological apparatus and systems should be included into the combat of crime and intelligence gathering. The use of database technology and Artificial Intelligence by security institutions will aid the end and meet the challenges facing the country.

Consequently, physical apparatus with update should be provided to security institutions in Nigeria rather than the use of outdated apparatus such as combat weapons, computers etc.

Conclusion

The discourse shows that Nigeria is confronted with the challenge of security. This is made manifest in the various activities of anti-state actors and associations which has caused fear in the citizenry. The paper has been able to identify the causes and the structures of the security challenges and a blueprint forward.

References

1. **Akonbede Udama(2013). Understanding Nigeria Terrorism: Its Implications to national peace, security, unity and sustainable development. IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science, 8(5), 100-115.**
2. **Avweromre, I.L, (2014). „Insecurity and Democracy in Nigeria“s Fourth Republic“. A Seminar Paper for a Ph.D Award in Political Science. Unpublished.**
3. **Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012). Global Peace Ranking, Institute for Economics and Peace, Retreived from: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.**
4. **Achumba, I. C. et al. (2013). Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for**
5. **Business Activities and Sustainable Development, Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, Vol. 4, No. 2.**

