

INTERNAL INSECURITY IN NIGERIA, THE IRONY OF MULTIPLICITY OF SECURITY OUTFITS AND SECURITY CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

There is paucity of literature on internal security in Nigeria unlike other forms of security. Nigeria, a populous country in Africa has put in place certain numbers of security outfits to protect lives and properties of its citizenry yet the trend of criminality and security challenges are on the increase on daily bases. This study examines the security challenges in the country and assesses the role of internal security outfit. The Nigerian Police are the preeminent outfit saddled with maintenance of internal security in Nigeria. Ironically, the multiplicity of security outfit breeds inefficiency with the overlapping functions of security agencies. This study rests on observation and secondary data. The study concludes that holistic approach is required for efficiency of security agencies. The study therefore recommends collaborative efforts of security organizations in the country while there is the urgent need for modern crime fighting equipment couple with the intelligence gathering technique. More eligible men must be recruited into the existing security outfits to meet up with increasing Nigeria population for better performance.

KEYWORDS: Security, Threat, Internal Security, National Security, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Security has to do with the process connected with alleviation, assuaging any kind of threat to man and his cherished values. It is such an important concept that every state, organization and human person desire. This is why Buzan asserts that “security is about freedom from threat and ability of state and society to maintain independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile, while the bottom line is survival” (Buzan to Afolabi 2014:1)

Generally, security is an elastic concept which attracts view opinions in different fields and study and its day to day activity of men. It is referring to safety from harm and danger which may constitute threat to human existence. This is in consonance with perspective in Imobighe when he affirms that:

Security has to do with freedom from danger or threat of a nation’s ability to protect and develop itself, promote it’s cherish values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people (Imobighe, 1990: 224).

Therefore internal security could be seen as the freedom from or absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the cooperate existence of a country and its ability to maintain its vital institution for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objection as well as meet the legitimate operation of the people. The present challenge posed by armed robbers attacks, kidnappings, political assassinations, trans-border crimes,

espionage, smuggling, insurgency, oil bunkering and incessant vandalization of public infrastructures in Nigeria require the effort of the government, security outfits and entire Nigeria citizenry. Security outfits include.

- The Nigeria Police Force
- Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
- Nigeria Immigration Services
- Nigeria Prisons Services
- Nigeria Custom Services
- Federal Road Safety Corps
- Nigeria Fire Services,
- State Peace Corps in some states and numerous registered private security organizations.

Responsible Nigerians are now skeptical about the capability of our security outfits and government of the day to curb the ugly trend.

The pre-eminent security outfits - the Nigeria Police have been incapacitated to subdue the menace of criminality in Nigeria while the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps with the new armed squad men seem unfit to make an impact apart from their humanitarian services. One may infer that internal security has attracted very little attention among our leaders and academician. The porosity of Nigeria borders and infiltration of weapons and ammunitions from neighboring states account for the inefficiency of Nigeria Custom Service and Immigration Service.

Bluntly speaking, activities of criminals are the major yardstick by which internal security could be measured. One of the elements of a society is the presence of criminals who are minority in number, but they are so toxic that they trouble the peaceful co-existence of the society. It should be noted that if citizens are not secure, then the state is not secure. Threats to internal security amount to the threats to National security. This study therefore examines the duties of security outfits in Nigeria and identifies their present security challenges in Nigeria. The Nigeria Police Force is the dominant security and law enforcement agency established in Nigeria. Section 114(1) of the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria provided that “there shall be a Police Force for Nigeria which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section...”

The Nigeria Police is as old as Nigeria itself and has seven departments ('A'-G) with specified duties i.e Finance and Administration, Operations, Logistics and Supply, Investigation, Training, Research and Planning together with Information and Communication.

Police Force are vested by several statutes (i.e Police Act, Criminal Procedure Code, Criminal Procedure Act and the Public Order Act) with broad powers to investigate crimes, to apprehend offenders, interrogate and prosecute suspects, grant bail to suspects pending completion of investigation, search and seize properties suspected to be stolen or associated with crime, serve summon and host of others (Alemika, 2013:32).

With the statutory provision/function of the Police, the organization has not been able to fight crime efficiently in the country. The organization has been bedeviled with inadequate funding; lack of modern technological equipment;

inadequate training and poor remuneration. In 2013 budget, N1.033 trillion Naira was allocated to security votes. The Police got N320 billion Naira, Armed Forces N364 Naira, NSA N115 billion Naira and Ministry of Interior which manages Nigeria Prisons Service, Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps got 154 billion Naira (www.premiumtimesng.com). This shows the inadequacy of fund to take care of training, remuneration, procurement of modern technological facilities. The force has about 370,000 men although the figure (www.channelstv.com).

Another issue which is worrisome is comment credited to a member of the Police Service Commission that it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of officers and men in the force, because they are losing policemen daily either through retirement, dismissed or death (www.nigeriapilot.com). Even with about 370,000 men, the figure is not correlating with 160 million Nigerians because the United Nations recommends a minimum police strength of 222 per 10,000 people (Alemika:*op.cit*).

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is also an internal paramilitary outfit established by Act of 2003. NSCDC had also been assigned to play crucial roles in grassroots security system and nation building. It has power to arrest with warrant or without warrant, detain, investigate and institute legal proceedings against any person who is reasonably suspected to have committed an offence, investigate and take necessary step to forestall any planned act of terrorism and report same to appropriate federal security agency among others (Abolurin 2010:3). The organization also lack adequate manpower, modern technological equipment, adequate training and fund.

It is disheartening to state that most Nigerian do not know the constitutional responsibility of the organization despite the availability of the offices and stations across states of Nigeria Federation. Amendment of the NSCDC Act 2007 empowered the organization to have arm squad. A cursory look at armed men of this organization, one can infer that NSCDC is being grappling with lack of sufficient and modern firearms. Trailing behind the foregoing, it is difficult for NSCDC to combat crime efficiently in the country.

In the Nigeria context, there are other paramilitary organizations organized to assist military or perform specified security functions. These include: Nigeria Prison Services, Nigeria Immigration Service, Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria Fire Service and Nigeria Customs Service (Abolurin 2010: *ibid*). The efficiency of these organizations ought to have complemented the existing Nigeria Police. Inefficiency of the aforementioned organization had not been addressed.

Hence, the infiltration of small light weapons, contraband goods and influx of aliens into the country without necessary documents. These call for attention as it compounds the threats to Nigeria National security. Thus, a secure country is one that is able to protect and develop itself so that it can promote its precious values, meet the needs of its citizenry and provide them with safe atmosphere for self-improvement. The advent of Boko Haram insurgency demands holistic approach and the need for security agencies to synergize and share intelligence in the bid to curtail the prevailing insecurity in the country.

SECURITY CHALLENGES CONFRONTING NIGERIA STATE

Nigeria is presently faced by severe security challenges. Security outfits in the country need to be re-energized to address the menace. Some of the security challenges are discussed thus:

Kidnapping and Hostage Taking

This commenced in the South-south region of Nigeria and it had cut across Niger-Delta states. Kidnapping and hostage taking are notorious act in Oil rich Niger Delta. Agu and Nwajiri (2012; 6) argues that it has been used to address wanton neglect of their communities by successive government. This is why Nwankwo (2012) observed, for South-East, kidnapping and hostage taking are now tools for settling personal and political scores. Youths in the region utilized the tools to make huge amount of money as they call the families of their victims to pay millions of naira for ransom. Politicians equally use it to this to deal with their opponents and perceived enemies leaving citizens in fear. Many officials of multinational oil companies in the region have been victims thereby portraying Nigeria as no go and unsafe area.

Hired and Political Assassinations

This is another nefarious security challenge grappling Nigeria State. It is another dimension to the security crisis that is stretching the country to its limit. A cursory look at Nigeria democracy since 1999 reveals many unresolved high profile killings. To exemplify, former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige was killed on 23rd December, 2002 in his home at Ibadan. This marks the first scenario after the rebirth of democratic rule. It is unfortunate that the government has failed to fish out the perpetrators. Dikko, National Vice Chairman of Peoples Democratic Party was murdered in a cold blood while travelling in 2004, Ayo Daramola and Engr. Funso Williams, Peoples Democratic Party's [PDP] gubernatorial aspirants in Ekiti and Lagos State were assassinated while Philip Olorunwape, Kogi State chairman of State Independent Electoral Commission was killed in 2004 (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013:4).

More so, Harry Marshall, the National Vice Chairman of All Nigeria Peoples Party was also murdered, the former Nigerian Bar Association[NBA] chairman of Onitsha in Anambra State Barnabas Igwe and his wife were gruesomely murdered on 1st September 2002. Not quite long, a serving Senator Dantong Daylop and the majority leader of Plateau House of Assembly, Honourable Gyand Filani were also murdered Amujiri & Agu (2012; 7) observes that wave of assassination is sweeping across the country and the perpetrators have not been brought to book. Ahmed Pategi, a former PDP chairman of Kwara State was killed in 2005 while Godwin Agboroko, a former editorial board chairman of This Day Newspaper was also murdered in December. From the foregoing, it could be observed that the situation has not been seriously addressed and the Police have not been able to unmask the killers. Hence, assassination has posed serious security challenge to successive Nigeria government as there are reports of more cases of killings for rituals and money purpose.

Ethno-Religious Violence

Ethno-religious by this paper refers to a situation where relationship between members of one ethnic or religion group, multiethnic or multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, fear and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Salawu, 2010; 346). Ethnic cum religion violence has always be a troublesome tension facing Nigeria security. Northern Nigeria States and Plateau state in particular has become the hotbed of ethnic and religious violence with regular report of maiming and killings of innocent citizens which informed the emergency rule during Obasanjo led administration. Religious intolerance has been identified as the prominent causes of ethno-religious crises and the incidents has been noticeable in Nigeria times without number.

Ethnic and religion connections now determine who gets what in Nigeria. Such crises have occurred in other parts of the country like Shagamu [Ogun State], Lagos, Abia among others. Salawu is of the opinion that a major cause of present day ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria has to do with accusation and allegation of neglect, oppression, dominations, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization and host of others.

In recent times, Nigeria National security had been threatening by a religious gang that believed that western education and culture were forbidden [Boko Haram]. This group has killed many innocent citizens and even security operatives to the extent that Nigeria Police could not manage the attack and necessitated the involvement of armed forces which have not be able to subdue their attacks and activities. The factual fact is that activities of Boko Haram are now international affairs since terrorist attack on any part of the world is a concern and threat to international community.

Smuggling and Trans-Border Crimes

Another big security challenge threatening Nigeria is the smuggling and trans-border crimes. Smuggling and circulation of contraband goods like small arms and light weapons, human trafficking, drug trafficking lead to other threats to Nigeria internal security. Ngoa opines that these hinder the social and economic development of not only Nigeria but the continent of Africa (Ngoa, 2012). Smuggling encourages proliferation of arms, ammunition and compounded criminality in Nigeria.

Porosity of Nigeria borders instigate smuggling as Nigeria has over one thousand illegal routes through which aliens from neighbouring country can trek-in into the country. This equally informs the high rate of crime and public disorder in Nigeria. The influx of non – Nigerians and illegal immigrants mixing up with the teaming unemployed youths in Nigeria calls for Nigeria Immigration Service and Nigeria Custom Service to double their effort in the course of discharging their statutory duties. Some Nigeria borders are demarcated with drums and logs of woods which show the state of our borders. In spite of joint patrol and task force at the borders, security personnel are not enough to manage both regular and irregular route of entrance into Nigeria state.

Political Violence

Political violence in Nigeria has aggravated to other aforementioned security challenges in Nigeria. Political violence could be attached to over – enthusiasm and desperation by political gladiators to win elections to public office by all means. Since 1999 when Nigeria returns to civil rule, electoral violence appears to have presumed a devilish dimension. This had given birth to political assassinations and other threats to security.

Armed Attack and Robbery

With the number of security formations put in place by Nigeria Government, there is no fact to show any applaudable drop in the incidents of armed robbery. Thus, with the increase in security outfits and private security organizations, cases of armed attack are on the increase. It seems Nigeria security agencies are helpless in the face of rising wave of criminality in Nigeria. In 2011, in the first half of the year, about 5,000 cases of armed robbery were recorded, 2700 arrested, 700 killed, 800 assorted weapons recovered from hoodlums (Abolurin, 2011; 189). The fact above reveals the wave of the menace. In fact annual report of National Bureau of Statistics has proved the trend. The situation now is such that every Nigerians now reside inside barricaded compound with personal security device or self-employed guards. There are other challenges like subversion, sabotage and public infrastructure vandalization and host of others.

CONCLUSIONS

Nigeria from all indications is grappling with a big challenge of insecurity and the advent of Boko Haram insurgency has enlarged the existing security challenges. Though, an issue of security is an international issue but it is not inappropriate to infer that Nigeria security is deteriorating in spite of the multiplicity of existing security apparatus. It is becoming more evident that Nigeria security outfits had not be positioned to tackle the insecurity in Nigeria. In Nigeria, we have the Nigeria Police, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigerian Prisons Services, Nigeria Immigration Services, Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria Fire Services, National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, State Peace Corps in many states of the Federation and numerous registered private security outfits like Nigeria Peace Corps, Vigilante Group of Nigeria among others. In fact, Bayelsa state is recruiting about 1000 youths for state security outfits (Vanguard Tuesday 29th April, 2014). Hence, multiplicity is not the solution because internal security personnel and leadership at times are corrupt, ill-trained and ill-equipped.

Instead of collaboration effort and sharing of intelligence strategy alongside with institutional discipline, inter – agencies rivalry have snowballed into armed confrontation. Incessant clashes between the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps [NSCDC] and Nigeria Police or between Police and the military have been reported. Therefore, federal government of Nigeria should recruit more eligible men into the existing security outfits to match the Nigeria growing population. There is the need for overhauling of funding of security outfits while modern crime – fighting equipment should be procured for the agencies without leaving better remunerations of officers behind.

Above all, good political leadership, good governance and accountability are highly required. Huge amount of fund allocated to security vote should be judiciously managed to address internal insecurity in the country. Institutional corruption taking place in the government and even security institutions need to be rigorously addressed. Training and re-training of security personnel with modern equipment should be prioritized by government rather than proliferation and overlapping of security agencies in Nigeria.

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