Security Challenge and Development in Nigeria: Leadership to the Rescue?

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Abstract

The imperative of peace in the development of a nation needs not to be over-emphasized. One can say without any fear of contradiction that any nation or state where peace does not exist relatively can hardly witness any progress to say the least. It follows that there exists an undeniable relationship between peace and development. The crave for democracy globally is hinged on providing leadership capable of engendering nation-building. While acknowledging that Nigeria is not the only country entangled in security challenge, her case is worrisome as the rising spate of insecurity serves as albatross to any meaningful development. This paper examines the nexus between peace and development. The work assesses the implications of security challenge in Nigeria. It takes a look at why insecurity remains unabated in Nigeria. It sees good leadership as imperative. It concludes by making some useful recommendations. The paper relies on secondary source of data.

Keywords: Security, Development, Leadership, Nation-Building, Peace.

Introduction

Insecurity, especially internal is not a problem that is unique to Nigeria. Other countries both developing and developed face the challenge. The difference however between some of them and our country, Nigeria is how they manage the threat.

(Albinus, 2012) gave an insight into the precarious state of Nigeria nation by saying that:

Within the last few years, heightened social insecurity in Nigeria has arguably fuelled the crime rate, leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation's economy and its growth.

The socio-political and economic landscape in Nigeria has been blighted by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence. The abysmal failure of successive administration in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities, ultimately resulted to anger, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by some individuals and groups. Such crimes include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government properties, among others (Albinus ibid). Nigeria is sitting on

a keg of gunpowder that can explode if things are not put right within the shortest time. While not painting a gloomy picture, I now want to believe that the criticisms that greeted the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report of 2005 that predicted the collapse of Nigeria in about 15years time must be undergoing a review from those who really love Nigeria.

Dimensionally, "the pattern of Insecurity in Nigeria has been regionalized. Militia groups' Insurgency in the north, kidnappers in the eastern and southern part of the country, ritual killing in the west, political and non-political calculated assassinations across the nation. The regionalized structure of Insecurity has also given rise to regionalized unlegislated security formation in the country in a bid to curtail the alarming rate of insecurity (Albinus, Ibid.)

Paraphrasing (Udeh, 2013), this disturbing sense of insecurity poses a daunting challenge towards Nigeria's effort at national economic development and consequently put to questioning the level of Nigeria's preparedness to be ranked among the twenty (20) developed countries of the world by the year 2020.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Development: Development like any other concept is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. Until fairly recently, great reliance was placed on Gross National Product (GNP) per capital as convenient index of development. Yet, experience has shown that increases in national income do not necessarily lead to solution of social, economic and political problems.

An alternative approach has been created by the United Nations Development Programmed (UNDP), with their Human Development Index (HDI) focusing on measures of health, life expectancy, education and access to resources. Human development is defined as:

"The process of enlarging the range of people's choices – increasing their opportunities for education, health care, income and employment, and covering the full range of human choices from a sound physical environment to economic and political freedoms. Human development is concerned both with developing human capabilities and with using them productively. The former requires investments in people, the latter that people contribute to GNP growth and employment. Both sides of the equation are essential" (UNDP, 1992, P.2).

Security

Like any other terminology, it doesn't lend itself to easy definition. However, from the conventional usage of the word, security means safety or freedom from danger; and protection from external attack or infiltration. This is security defined from the militarist point of view, but even at that, security involves but does not just mean defence (Nwolise, 2006). However, it is because, 'security', for long has been tied to the apron strings of the military that scholars like Barry Buzan regard the concept as underdeveloped, and needing to be rehabilitated, insisting that the world 'security', "has never been in proper working order" (Buzan, 1983). Buzan elsewhere laments the fact that the military factor has dominated the concept of security (Buzan, 1991), while (Garnet, 1972) asserts that security is a very ambiguous concept. Garuba asserts that the cold war era gave the highest currency to the conventional security doctrine to the effect that security

… rests on the assumption that only a (strong) military system can effectively deter force (attacks) and threats of forces … The cold war elevated security and its dependence on arms to the level of another ideology, indeed a religion. (Garuba, 1997).

The contemporary thinking about security is all-encompassing. As aptly captured by (Ogunbanwo) writing on the developing world:

Security is more than military security or security from external attacks. For many of the four billion inhabitants in the developing countries, security is conceived as the basic level of the struggle for survival. Therefore, in order to provide an integrated African security assessment, the non-military dimensions of security should be added .Henceforth, African security as concept should be applied in its broadest sense to include economic security, social security, environmental security, food security, the equality of life security and technological security.

Concurring with the contemporary school of thought, (MCNamara, 1983) has long warned that:

Any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortage, population explosion, low level of production and per capita income, low technological development, inadequate and efficient public utilities, and chronic problem of unemployment, has a false sense of security.

He goes further warning against the perpetration of poverty in a country, as it is the harbinger of unrest, internal upheavals, violence, and escalation of extremism. For developing societies, he urges political leaders to note that without development there can't be national security. In his words:

In a modernising society, security means development, security is not military hardware, though it may include it; security is not a military force, though it may involve it; security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it; security is development, and without development there can be no security. A developing nation that does not in fact develop simply cannot remain secure for the intractable reason that its own citizens cannot shed its human nature… that is what we do not always understand and what governments of modernising nations do not always understand (MCNamara, Ibid).

As a framework of analysis, frustration-Aggression Theory will be adopted. The theory argues that social movements occur when frustration leads to collective, often aggressive behaviour. Frustration has a variety of sources and can take two forms. First, it can be absolute, which happens when people do not have enough to survive, and second, it can be relative, which happens when people have enough to survive but have less than those around them.

Effects of Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity as a result of criminal activities individually or corporately creates insecurity and breach of the peace that are likely to or indeed affect legitimate social and economic activities in the country (Akintokunbo, 2011).

This problem has the damaging consequence of giving the signal to the rest of the international community that Nigeria is not a safe and secure place and as such not suitable for economic Investment and activities. Little wonder or no wonder, investors particularly foreign, are leaving the shore of Nigeria for other African countries with relative peace. This has the tendency of rubbishing the so-called transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan and making the expected gains from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) a mirage.

Aligning with the above is (Albinus, op. cit) when he submits that:

The rates of terrorist bombings, kidnapping, armed robbery attacks on banks as well as other violent crimes in recent months, have led to a prevalent massive loss of the nation's human resources. This ugly trend poses a threat to the future of the nation's agricultural productivity level, private sector investment volume, petroleum sector growth rate, manpower and overall economic development.

According to the Human Rights Watch, (Albinus, opcit), about 2800 lives were lost to terror-related violence between 2009 and 2012.Within the first nine months in 2012, 815 people were killed in 275 suspected attacks by the Boko Haram group and this represents more than the total number of deaths recorded between 2010 and 2011 combined. The organisation states that 211 police officers were killed while over 60 police stations in at least 10 northern and central states were attacked by the terrorist group apart from the police headquaters that was bombed in Abuja.

Similarly, it is needless to say that social cohesion amongst the various component units is a desideratum in the process of national political development. This feeling of alienation and mutual distrust as a result of rabid competition for power and positions among federating units in Nigeria has been eliciting widespread discontent and loss of confidence in governments' programmes and policies with a dire consequence on political stability and by extension democratic consolidation which is a sine qua non for good governance and development. This is almost practically unattainable under the present security challenge in Nigeria.

Even as Nigeria struggles with the teeming youth unemployment, companies in their numbers are closing down operations in the north and relocating to other African countries for fear of loss of lives and properties. And the few remaining companies operate on skeletal bases. Workers, both local and expatriates had fled the region. This development has multiplied the number of unemployed youth roaming the street and has become an easy tool for violence. This scenario has not only deepened the existing unemployment rate but also paints a gloomy picture of poverty.

Yearly, unspecified millions of naira is being paid as ransom for the release of victims of kidnapping; not forgetting the Central Bank of Nigerian (CBN) N100 million cash donation, the N200 million donations from the combined effort of the opposition governors, and also the $50,000 from the Christian Association of Nigeria, America chapter to reduce the suffering of the victims of regional militia (www.myfinancialintelligence.com) Ordinarily, these are money which is supposed to be channelled to human capital development now being deployed to the rehabilitation of families of the casualties and the renovation of properties destroyed. Since the inception of the Amnesty Program by the Federal Government to quenching the Niger-Delta militia, billions of naira has been spent on it not in commensurate with the expected results, an indication of wastages occasioned by the menace of insurgency. That was why public commentators have turned the Federal Government into a laughing stock when they almost dangled Amnesty in the course of negotiating with the Boko Haram leaders which would have amounted to a colossal loss.

Why Insecurity Remains Unabated in Nigeria
As earlier noted in this work, while other countries are showing commitment in tackling insecurity, Nigeria may be described as being lackadaisical in this regard for so many reasons.

Firstly, poverty in the words of (Danbazau, 2012) though is a global phenomenon; Africa is most hit because 40 of the 76 "chronically deprived countries" in the world are in sub-Saharan Africa, while in Nigeria, people living below poverty level increased from 687 million to 112.5 million between 2004 and 2010. He submits further that "the poverty-security nexus constitutes a 'tangled web' with overlapping threats of intervening variables and strands of reverse causality, as poverty and violence reinforce one another", he said, and cited United States Representative at the United Nations, Susan Rice, who, while examining the implications of poverty to global security, said: "poverty breeds insecurity by undermining the capacity of states to deliver basic physical security, legitimate governance, economic growth and social welfare" (Danbazau, Ibid). Moreover, unemployment as well as lack of record/database of criminals also in no small measure, contributes to instability and insecurity not just in Nigeria but in any other place. The saying goes that, 'a hungry man is an angry man'. We have a large number of unemployed youths in Nigeria and jobs are not forthcoming. Some of these unemployed people inadvertently go into crimes to survive while others have penchant for criminality. Where we have youth unemployment, it is not unlikely that it will contribute significantly to security challenge confronting the country.

A similar factor to the aforementioned is the unprecedented level of corruption that has permeated the fabrics of our national life. The figures these days are simply mind-boggling. (Okereke, 2012) An individual steals, embezzles billions or even trillions of naira without blinking an eye lid. It would seem there is a competition for winning the highest award for corruption. Corruption leads to the loss of revenue meant for infrastructural development, human capital development, enhancement of production capabilities and health care-all variables of development that should promote poverty reduction.

The perception of Nigerians, particularly, the disadvantaged is that, inspite the institutional mechanisms to curbing corruption, the system is being encouraged by lack of political will as evidenced in the handling of corruption related cases. This encourages rather than discouraging corruption with money meant for development going into private pockets. This is now what is creating a war-like situation in a bid to survive.

Not only that, (Odekunle, 2013) says it all when he captured it that "the electoral process itself has become usually tainted with observable manipulations and in some cases, heart-rendering violence with able-bodied youths 'employed as armed thugs, the post-election violence of 2011 being a most calamitous instance". The 'do or die' syndrome and winner-take all phenomena serve as springboards for resistance and violence situations.

On illiteracy, it is believed as one of the major causes of insecurity and a very strong factor leading people against their own country. Illiterate northerners came up with the ideology that education is bad. In the end, we are faced with an existential threat to the nation; several major attacks in the country have been attributed to this group, which is nurtured mostly by illiteracy (Sani, 2013). (Yuguda, 2013) added a voice by saying that "the psyche of many young people has been destroyed through the collapse of government, we have created those criminals through the collapse of educational systems in the northern part of the country.

Equally listed as some of the factors that exacerbate poverty and consequently Insecurity are: the neglect of agriculture, population explosion; indigene-settler dichotomy; Incapability of government's security apparatus at guaranteeing safety and security, limited opportunities for women empowerment and lack of political will and strategically sound and articulated policies.

Imperative of Good Leadership

It has earlier been established in the course of this work that where there is no peace relatively, development in any form may not take place. Expectedly, it is leadership that should come to this rescue. But, quite paradoxically, the reverse is the case in Nigeria. For purpose of clarity, "accountable leadership" simply means responsible governance, that is, a government that recognizes the superior authority of the people and is willing to submit to this authority as may be expressed in the constitution, the laws of the land and democratic principles. It can be seen as a means to an end- good governance, which in a simple sense can be used to indicate the extent to which the government lives up to the expectations of the people and meets the needs of the generality of the people (Omololu, 2006). This perhaps agrees with Jeremy Benthan's 'utilitarianism' implying "the greatest happiness of the greatest member" .

Sections 14(1) (2) (a-b) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria states that:

The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the principle of democracy and social justice.

It is hereby, accordingly, declared that

Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this constitution derives all its powers and authority;

The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government; and

The participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.

Inspite of the above unambiguity, all efforts at national development have not yielded the desired results even from successive governments. The country remains largely under-developed; the quality of life of most Nigerians has remained relatively low. All indices of development has weighed heavily against Nigerians. Is it per capita income, life expectancy, mortality rate, etc? The rising spate of insecurity and its attendant consequences on development has called to questioning the leadership capability and capacity in Nigeria.

Disturbingly, (Achebe, 1983) provides an answer to the Nigerian predicament when he asserted that:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and
Squarely a failure of leadership. There is
Nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian
Character. There is nothing wrong with the
Nigerian land or climate or water or air or
Anything else. The Nigerian problem is the
Unwillingness or inability of its leaders
To rise to the responsibility, to the challenge
Of personal example which are the hallmarks
Of true leadership

Concurring with the above, (Akintokunbo, Supra, Opcit) painted a pitiful, sympathetic and almost a hopeless situation of the quagmire when he avers that:

On the different terrorist attacks, listen to
What leaders with political will had to say?
On 9/11: "This is an act of war against
The United States. We 'll hunt down the

> *Terrorists. They can run but they can't hide*
> *…" George Bush.*
> *London Bombing: "We 'll track down the*
> *Terrorists and bring them to justice" –*
> *Tony Blair*
> *UN House Bombing: "Terrorism is a*
> *Global phenomenon. May be it is Nigeria's*
> *Turn". – Goodluck Jonathan.*

The above shows the depth of passion and care of leaders. As part of the challenges of nation-building, commenting on the national question, (Ajayi, 1992) argued as follows:

> *The National Question is … the*
> *Perennial debate as to how to order*
> *The relations between the different*
> *Ethnic, linguistic and cultural*
> *Groupings so that they have the*
> *Same rights and privileges, access*
> *To power and equitable share of*
> *National resources.*

Aside other indices that have interplay and make insecurity a daunting challenge thereby making development almost unattainable, the national question is a desideratum. That Nigerians are almost losing faith in the on-going National Conference abi nitio is a pointer to experiences in the past, and that all is not well. What comes out of the Conference? Only time will tell.

Conclusion and Recommendations

That Nigeria is passing through a turbulent period is visible even to the blind. Drums of insurgency and criminality are currently beating so loud across the country that it is difficult to appreciate the rhythm of Nigeria's celebration of democracy. Lending credence to this are the implications of security challenge and reasons why insecurity remains unabated chronicled earlier in this work. That the Boko Haram Saga and other related issues are threatening the unity of the country is an understatement. However, it is beyond pretense that virtually all the problems associated with this sorry state of Nigeria are caused by Nigerians either covertly or overtly. And at the centre of it all is the competition for power as well as positions amongst the component units of the federation. This perhaps makes the negotiation of our staying together non-negotiable. In creating a new template, the Holy Bible will be of help in (II Corinthians 5:17) when it states thus:

> *Therefore if any man be in Christ,*
> *he is a new creature: old things are*
> *passed away; behold, all things are*
> *become new.*

The corollary is that we should all cleanse ourselves of the animosity against one another as a people. Events in the Arab world and other African countries point to the fact that Nigeria's situation is not beyond redemption. The call for a paradigm shift becomes imperative as military solution alone in the fight against insurgency in the country seems unrealistic. It is against this background that the following recommendations are made:

-                 tackling unemployment head-on by resuscitating the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and repositioning the agricultural sector so that it can play active role in job creation for Nigerian Youths and reduce youth restiveness.
-                 The curriculum in schools must be redesigned in such a way that the value system must be changed. Every Nigerian must be part of this crusade as churches and mosques should be involved.
-                 Strengthening our judicial system by ensuring that justice is dispensed no matter whose ox is gored. Nepotism and a culture of impunity must be eschewed from our national psyche and life.
-                 Citizens should hold the leaders accountable and task the electorate to ensure that their votes serve as an instrument to bring development.
-                 Embracing the concept of good governance so that poverty related indices are drastically reduced.
-                 Leadership by example with such traits as political will, commitment, passion, integrity, etc.
-                 Putting in place collective security arrangement at all levels of government up to village level – community policing to reducing crime rates.
-                 Addressing the recurring national question where the constituent units re allowed to ventilate their grievances and the basis for co-habitation.
-                 Strengthening of the institutional mechanisms for carrying out the business of governance – the Police, EFCC, ICPC, Mass Media, Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDA's) other security agencies and Para-military, etc.
-                 Broadening participatory democracy by playing the political game according to the established rules and equally avoid 'do or die' and winner takes all syndromes.

It may not be out of the place to say that the above recommendations are by no means exhaustible; however, one is assured that if the above are given consideration and adhered to, it will go a long way in curbing the menace of security challenge in Nigeria thereby ushering in development.

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