

Trends and Issues in Security Challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republics, 1999-2015

DAHUNSI, Taiwo Adegbenro

Department of History, The College of Education
Lanlate, Oyo State

dahuntaisitaiwo@yahoo.com, dahunsitaiwo18265@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigeria is today a country that practices democratic governance but in the midst of security threat, the threat was orchestrated by youth militancy, sea piracy, inter-ethnic conflicts, National Union of Road Transport Workers' clashes, kidnapping, banditry, ethnic nationalism, Fulanis herders /farmers clashes, Boko-Haram insurgency etc. the spate of the threat made people to doubt the legitimacy of the democratic government more as violence erupted across major parts especially of the northern parts of the country hardly the Nigeria's Fourth Republic took off on 29th May, 1999. The coercive and repressive state system to quelling people's violent expression of grievances through the state security agencies thereby living the underlying issues out also proved extremely inappropriate. The state possession of modern military hardware, military proficiency, efficient police, customs, Directorate of State Security (DSS) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps never mitigate the threat posed. The threats posed especially by the youths militancy in the south-southern part which is the revenue nerve centre of the country is unprecedented. All the same, the activities of Boko-Haram, a terrorist organization did not only spell doom for Nigeria internally, but had disgracefully turned Nigeria to a terrorist state. The dynamics of the violent activities of the Boko-Haram, ethnic militias, Fulani herders / farmers clashes and the state inability to quell most violence are trends that this paper is out to interrogate having taken into cognizance of modern military hardware of the state. The paper however discovered that there are underlying issues such as mass alienation of people from governance, corruption, poverty, ethnic nationalism, and general underdevelopment. The paper suggests that true federalism, mass youth employment scheme, equitable distribution of the state resources and good governance with a strong statesmanship leadership, Nigeria will overcome the present security threats.

Keywords: National Security, Nigeria Fourth Republic, Terrorism, Militancy, Insurgency

Introduction

...A country may have the best army in terms of training and equipment, the most efficient police force, the most efficient custom men, the most active secret service agents; and best quality prison, but yet be the most insecure nation in the world as a result of defence and security problems from within – bad government, alienated and suffering masses, ignorance, hunger, unemployment and even activities of foreign residents or companies.

Nwolise, OBC (2006)

...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.

(Quotiy, MCNamara 1968)

MCNamara, 1968

Nigerians anticipation for relief and succour from the political and socio-economic procrastinations experienced under the long military rule became a reality when the political democratic process finally gave birth to the Nigeria's Fourth Republic on the 29th May, 1999. There and then, human right abuses, censored press, unequal distribution of state resources, corruption, people's alienation from governance, impunity and other repressive policies and actions of the military which undoubtedly positioned Nigeria in an unsecured country, expectedly and hopefully has come to a stop. Equally, unemployment, hunger, lack of social infrastructure and general underdevelopment which are the common features of the country under the Nigeria military dictatorship long before May, 1999 expectedly has come to an end. Franscesca, 2012, unequivocally described the period under the military to be characterized with political and civic disorder; human right violation, rampant and ineffective penal institutions.

The 1999 Nigeria constitution which was midwife by the Nigeria military became the instrument of operating the much opted democratic government of the fourth republic. However, the ingredients, and features expected in a true democracy became a hope desired. Invariably, a hope desired seems to be a mirage when hardly the Nigeria Fourth Republic came to life that the political space was put into turmoil. It was instructive enough to state that the constitution never takes care of the dichotomies and unsettled issues within the polity. Issues such as ethnicism, regionalism, ethno-religious pluralism and nature of the nation's federalism which had constituted threat to the unity and national security, since independence still remained unsettled.

Nigeria's Fourth Republic, thus started amidst security threats. Albert 2012; Danjuma, 2014; emplied that, it was obviously not the best of times for Nigeria when consider the spate with which internal security threats increased on the take off of the fourth republic. There seems to be no end at sight for the threat when the dynamics of the tension is brought to bear. Among the

threats are: Niger Delta Military; ethno-religious crises; terrorist bombings i.e. Book Haram insurgency; kidnapping, armed banditry; small arms proliferation, corruption in all sectors of government institutions; ransome taking etc among many others. No part of the country is spared from the crisis or the other. This made people to raise question on the legitimacy of the Fourth Republic, (Mohammed, 2012).

In the light of the above scenarios, this paper interrogates on the trends and issues of the ever increasing security threats hardly the birth of the Nigeria's Fourth Republic. And by extension, it is within its amplit to investigating on the impact of the threat on the political stability of the Nigerian State. It is imperative considering within the period under discussion when state of emergencies had to be declared in Plateau State in 2004 by President Obasanjo. This was occasioned by the spate of insecurity in the state. Again, due to wanton destruction of lives and property by the Book Haram sects in the North-east region of the country, President Jonathan equally declared state of emergency on 15 local government areas across the most affected states of Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Niger, and Plateau in 2012, (Danjuma, 2014). It is viewed with great concern also in this paper the dynamics of the Boko-Haram attacks and its external connections for logistics and training. The threat in a way was further magnified on international level on the 25th December, 2010. On this day, there was an attempted terror attack on American aeroplane in the U.S by a Nigerian, Farouk Abdulmutallah. All these are trends that have underlying issues that must be solved before a lasting solution could be sought.

In view of the above discussion, National Security' becomes an important idea that must be put in a right perspective within the context of this discourse. It will allow for proper understanding of the trends and underlying issues of the security threats in Nigeria Fourth Republic.

National Security

Difference views and ideas have been put up on what national security should be by security experts and analysts. In view of this, there are areas of differences and also points of convergence. The quotation referenced at the opening of this paper, that is Nwolise, 2006 and Mcnamara 1968 is a pointer to the fact that it is not only the possession of the military wares and best security institutions that constitute a country to be secured. Rather people inclusive government formed through democratic process, available employment for citizens; reduced poverty, equitable distribution of state resources, zero level corruption, infrastructural development, all these constitute general development which equally transcends to security. Nwolise, 2006 further emphasized that National Security is the ability of a country to maintain its sovereignty, tackle its political, economic, social and other interests in a sovereign manner and likewise act in relation to others in the international system. Extending further, Ndofia, 2010 says that management of communal crises, inter-religious and ethnic crises, observation of principles of rule of law, fundamental human rights as well as fighting corruption are all integral parts of national security. In the light of this, national security has to do with freedom from danger or with threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well being of its people, Imobighe, 1990. To achieve a secured nation as described Udofia, 2010 maintained that it is through good governancem that is, a government

based on the will of the people, a competent leadership, a caring government that provides for the common good, a constitutional and legal system that treat everyone equally and a government that is transparent and accountable. Within the above context, collective goals, interest and aspirations of the people of a state are taken care of and translate to development, this is taken as national security. It's within this context that this discourse operates.

Trends and underlying Issues of Nigeria Security challenges

National security in Nigeria context is basically seen as possession of modern military hardware and preparedness to defend the county against internal and external threats. This account for Nigeria leverage on the use of military force as preferred strategy for managing security issues. In this context, the underlying drivers of the security issues are left out, Sampson, I.T (2014); Animasanun, 2012. Going to the genesis of this policy, it was a British colonial heritage, it was the style invented by the British to subdue Nigerian's resistance of colonization. Undoubtedly, the ruling elite in the immediate post colonial Nigeria institutionalized such policy to sustain their hegemony. The military that took over the reign of governance in Nigeria barely six years after independent toed to same line of policy action of force repression of opposition or antagonism to military autocracy. It is instructive however that many underlying issues inherent in both the pre and immediate post colonial Nigeria were swept under the carpet for the coercive repression of almost four decades. When on 29th May, 1999 a democratic elected government was put in place in Nigeria, grievances from ethnics, religious, regional, political and socio- economic points of views of every part of Nigeria could now be show cased. While reactions mounted by the state actors were minerals, non state actors over blow it under the guise of alleged election malpractices.

The national security environment of Nigeria at the commencement of the fourth republic undoubtedly was bedeviled with violence of different magnitudes and dynamics especially in the northern part of the country. Since then, no part of the country was spared, all the six geo-political zones which Nigeria is divided to was engulfed with one crisis or the other. Albert, 2012 in his study, affirmed that the polity had otherwise been divided into four conflict zones. And that, most conflict issues is posing a threat to the unity and stability of the country as a whole. It revealed that the South-south geo-political zone is be-devilled with youths militancy and sea piracy; while the South-west is encampulled by ethnic violence especially since 1993 June 12 annulment of the presidential election believed to be wurmed by Chief M.K.O Abiola. Scores of violent clashes came up between Yoruba and Hausa ethnic group in Lagos, Shagamu and Oke-Ogun areas. The violent clashes of the members of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) especially in Oyo, Ogun and Lagos States. For the South-east zone, violence land disputes were not In common between communities. So also, kidnapping and hostage taking for ransom became rampant coupled with the violent activities of the Movements for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). The North central became characterized with violent clashes between the local farmers and Fulani herders. There was frequent violent clashes between the Tiv and Junkun tribes in Wukari, Tarraba state, so as the incessant clashes between the Hausa/Fulani settlers of Plateau suite became unabated. The rest parts of the North-west and Norm-east was-encroached with the virulent violent armed attacks of the Boko Haram sects.

A closer study of the security nature of all the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, reveals that there is the evolvments of militant groups in every zone which are out commonly to pursue

elicits agenda under the guise of ethnic, group, religions or otherwise regional sentiments and self determinism as the case may be. Omotosho, 2014 in the light of the above scenario opined that since 2001, there was the full blown activities of militant groups in every zone of the country, that there was the emergence of Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the South-west ; the Egbesu Boys in South-east; the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the South-south; the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the South-east; the Yan -Dabas; and Arewa People's Congress (APC) in the North and the Boko Haram Sects majorly in the North-east.

Studies have revealed that most violence erupted in the wake of the Nigeria Fourth Republic were offshoots of the absurdities which characterized the political environment of the colonial Nigeria, and was further compounded by the long military autocratic ruler ship of the country. All along, tension continue to build up in the polity, thus occasioned gross underdevelopment of the country. It was under this context that the Nigeria fourth Republic was presume to have taken root and spring up. This account for the upheavals that enveloped almost the whole country after 29th May, 1999. There was wanton loss of human lives and property as well as human displacement, Albert, 2012.

The Federal Government of Nigeria acknowledges the diverse and multifaceted nature of the security threat and that it was increasingly unpredictable with no clear boundaries between internal causal factors. This is a trend different from the primordial internal causal factors. In the non distance past, there were security issues in Nigeria that even occasioned the Nigeria civil war of 1967-1970, the Maintesene religious riot in the 1980s and other pockets of ethno-religious crises across the country. Undoubtedly, there was no one that took the trends of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. First, the military proficiency of the Boko Haram sect was unprecedented. The manner with which the sect went at its target with precision and with less no casualties at its side left much to be desired. The Boko Haram engagements often demonstrate high profile of military training, movements, uses of modern acquired military wares and innovations. Danjuma, 2014 affirming on one time Nigeria National Security Adviser, General Andrew Owoye Azazi disposition that, the sects were "professionals", then innovation move of making IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) and its uses, "I want to believe very strongly that there is outside assistance".

Considering the evolvement of Boko Haram and the spate with which it foment violence attacks in Nigeria, it has given Nigeria a terrorist state status. She is now been grouped alongside with Afghanistan, North Korea, Iran, Palestine etc. where terrorism reigns, James and Jabob (2014). Besides, the damage done to the nation by the sect since 2009 on human and materials resources is not only enormous but unprecedented. In a nutshell, the damage had surpassed what the nation suffered during the thirty months civil war of 1967-1970. In this regards, discarding or denial of underlying issues in Boko haram evolvement and activities is a plan to run away from the historical facts. Here, some questions are raised: why the name; 'Boko Haram' which is interpreted as 'Western Education unlawful'. And again, what precipitated the sect's violent attacks on state infrastructures, state security; institutions and personnel's, religious centres (Christians and Muslims) Schools, and International Institutions?

The leaders of Boko Haram continue to justify the various activities of the sect giving the secular nature of the Nigeria state forgetting the ethnic plurality of the country. The underlying issue is a determination to overhaul the primordial political hegemony of the political elites of the

state irrespective of adherence to any religion. Under this situation, there is a dilemma faced especially considering the attacks carried out on Mosques and Churches and their leaders in the North-eastern states of Nigeria, Roy, (1994) revealed that Mohammad Yusuf, the else while leader of Boko-Haram considered most Islamic societies and Nigeria state in general as been led by intellectuals educated in westernized environment. And that, they all continue to appreciate westernized ways of life and impact it on the state. However, to reposition the society back to the seventh century, Mohammad Yusuf took an option of violent attacks against the state, Olomjobi, 2013. This is what the organization followed after the death of Mohammad Yusuf. To eradicate the ruling elites as conceived by the organization ab initio was to allow for new political Islamic clerics (even if they could not recite the Quran or preach the Hadith) to lead the state. This was demonstrated when on October 1st 2010 during the Nigeria's Independence Day celebrations that Boko haram carried out multiple bomb attacks in Abuja.

The name Boko haram which means 'Western Education is unlawful evolved out of the ploy to win sympathy supports and finance from Islamic organizations and countries across the globe who are known to be anti-western in all spheres. The sect wanted Nigeria where Boko Haram evolved to be tagged as unsafe ally of the West and that her sovereignty is in doubts. This was demonstrated on 26th August, 2011, when the sect carried out bomb attacks on the UN Building in Abuja. In the attacks, 21 people were killed and 60 people were wounded. Hardly the above described bomb blast echo in Abuja of 1st October, 2010 goes down that an attempted terror attack by a Nigerian, Farouk Abdulmutallab on the American aero plane in the U.S.A was aborted.

Prior to the attacks described above, the sect had severally fomented attacks in the Northern parts of the country especially in Borno, Yobe, Gombe, Kano States etc. targeting security forces and westernized establishments etc. Other several deadly attacks were made on individuals and security agencies in the North - eastern Nigeria thereafter and to present. A case that sent tension and agony to the country was on the night of 14th-15th April, 2014 when this terrorist organization abducted about 276 female students of Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State. The sect made certain demands such as payment of ransome and the release of the captured Boko Haram members in government custody before the girls could be released. Up till date many of the abducted students were still in the custody of the sect. Today, to every Nigerian especially in the Northeastern part of the country the fear of Boko-Haram is the beginning of wisdom. The sect constitutes a major threat to the stability, unity and sovereignty of the country.

Adjudging from the evolvment and expansion of Boko-Haram in the Northern part generally, there was the abundant potentials for such development. Mohammad Yusuf, the Boko Haram leader took the advantage of gross unemployment for the youth in the country to build a strong hold of about 540,000 unemployed youths both u followers and members of his troop. Again, due to the porous nature of the country borders, the sect further had followership from neighboring countries like Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Somalia and Sudan, Olomjobi (2013). To further the course of Boko Haram activities, there were indications of financial supports from the Al-Qaeda Organization based in the Middle East, and from Al-Muntada Trust Fund which has its Headquarters in the United Kingdom. Coupled with this is the alleged fund supports from the Islamic World Society which has its Headquarters in Saudi Arabia, Nigeria Tribune (13th, February, 2012)

There is an underlying issue which must be looked into at this juncture. Most of the external assistance inform of funds, military wares and other logistics acquired by Boko Haram are western

by creation, transfer, haulage and use. The sect had never discarded the use of such western technologies in its logistics for attacks, defense, and kidnapping. There is an indication of corruption and collaborations of many state actors against the state. This however explains why the violent attacks of the terrorist group became unabated after all no individual or group could be bigger than the state. And again through the privilege their political positions accord them and with collaboration of their cohorts in government institutions such as Customs, Immigration Service, Directorate of State Service (DSS), Nigeria Ports Authority etc they manipulate their ways for immigration of mercenaries and importation of weapon to achieving their inordinate ambitions through the boarders they made to be porous for the purpose. Having achieve the said inordinate ambitions, their private solders were pushed over with the weapons procured for them. The mercenaries at this stage became available for recruitments into Boko-Haram Organization or militias as the case may be.

The most worrisome trends was the recruitment of child soldiers by the Boko-Haram seat. This was an attempt to ruin the nation from the root. Worst enough, the elements of the crisis started to extend to Nigeria neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Niger, Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso etc.

Within the context of the security threat, the Niger Delta region could best be described as an agitated, restive and conflict-ridden region. This was occasioned by the proliferation of militant groups and their confrontation with Nigerian state and the oil multi-national companies. The agitation is for resources control, distributions and provisions of adequate social amenities for the Niger Delta regions, Alade (2012). The agitators pressed on this due to environmental degradation which greatly disempowered people of the area on land and water to get resources for their livelihood.

Obviously the history of violent confrontations of the youths in the Delta region dated back to Nigerian First Republic. It was led by Isaac Adaka Boro, Sam Owonaro and Nottingham Dick under the banner of the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF). What the group attempted was to have a Niger Delta Republic, but at failed. Within the same context in the early 1990 various of militia groups evolved, such as movement for the Emancipating of the Niger Delta (MEND), Psn-Niger Delta Revolutionary Militia (PNDRM), Ijaw Youth Council (IVC), Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (ENDIC), Movement for the survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN) etc. all these militia groups remained undaunted in the pursuance of the earlier objectives pursued by NDVF in the Nigerian First Republic. Alade, (2012) stressed that “the Niger Delta Youths don’t recognized any other language today than violence” and that the militia groups in the area had caused grave damage to pipelines installations and flow stations. Consequently, the area became unsafe for the oil workers and multinational oil companies to operate.

The Nigerian State in order to abate the security threats in the Niger Delta region having realized that more than 80 percent of her national revenue generation is from the region embarked on militarization of the area, Alade (2012) stressed that militarization of the region through massive troop mobilization has been fingered as another major reasons for high incidences of criminality and agitation by the youths.

Amidst of the security threats, Nigerian state did not keep her finger crossed thus embarked on peaceful dialogues with the militias\ in 2004 by president Olusegun Obasanjo, also by President Musa Yar'adua in 2009, but with reconciliatory package of amenity. But all could not work as unfortunately the government could not fulfil their own part of the agreement.

In the final analysis, all efforts put up by the Nigerian State had not yield result, the spate of security threat remained unabated simply because the primordial underlying issues remained unresolved as earlier analyzed.

CONCLUSION

It was obvious that Nigerian groaned under the autocratic and repressive rule of military for almost two decades, but the birth of democratic governance on 29 May, 1999 never show a ray of hope for succor but rather than violence crises that continued to threaten the cooperate existence of Nigerian State. This was orchestrated by ethnic nationalism, militias groups, religious fundamentalism, religious fundamentalism, Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herders farmers clashes, agitation for resources control and use, etc. However, it was discovered that the unleashed political force suggest that each of the nationalities assumed that they must struggle for what rightly belongs to them through whatever means, even if and when it is violence.

The disheartening trends that the security challenges took was obviously due to the underlying primordial issues such as unbalance structure for the federation units, bad leadership, corruption, impurity, unequitable distribution of state resources. If an when Nigerian state is to be a state to be proud of, classical federalism, charismatic and statemanship leadership is needed. And with equitable distribution of state resources, Nigeria will be a country of peace where development could be achieved.

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