

NIGERIA'S SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AFRICA

Mustapha Ayodele Haruna

Department of Social Sciences
Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Ondo State, Nigeria
harunmustapha721@gmail.com

Abstract. This study examines the various challenges associated with Nigerian security and the crisis of political development in the North African region. It interrogates the efficacy of such involvements, as they have deteriorated rapidly due to different factors such as armed conflicts, terrorism, migration, unconstitutional changes in power, transnational crime, refugees, civil wars, drought, famine, drugs, and human trafficking. Conflicts and insecurity are not only formidable barriers to development but can undermine nations and their values. Instead, we recommend bilateral and multilateral agreements based on intelligence and military cooperation, freezing of financial assets for terrorists and their sponsors, democratic consolidation, and eradication of sight-tight syndrome, among others. This study adopts the security governance theory as a theoretical framework to address security problems related to the management of threats, defence policies through the state, political and civic organization.

Keywords: coercive diplomacy, national development, security, state fragility

INTRODUCTION

Many African countries are either embroiled in conflicts or have just emerged from them. There is scarcely any part of Africa without its share of major conflicts either ongoing or recently resolved. It is possible to identify conflicts of succession, of ethnic sub-nationalism, self-determination, military intervention, and land ownership agitations. The dominant perspective in the literature is of armed conflicts characterizing the political process in African states. (Adetula 2014, 13). Also, until recently, very little attention has been paid to regional and global dynamics in terms of the way

they interact with the causes, conducts and resolutions of armed conflicts. African conflicts and the resultant security challenges continue to be of utmost concern to the international community and the continent. The perspective that African conflicts are often related to the crisis of African states is fast gaining prominence (Ibid, 14).

The Horn of Africa experiences conflicts that set states against states, communities against communities, resulting in political turbulence and human tragedy. This situation resides in the inability of states to pursue rational policies that call for social reforms (Wasara 2002, 39). Since the 1990s, the states of North Africa have experienced radical changes, which seems to be the harbinger of an uncertain future both domestically and in terms of their relationship with the wider world (Joffe 2014, 9)

During the past few years, security challenges have undoubtedly increased. They are highly concentrated in countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, Libya Tunisia, Western Sahara, Morocco - in the North Africa, and Nigeria in the west. These challenges have taken the shape of conflicts between sectarian, ethnic insurgent groups and state governments, civil wars among various coalitions of warring groups fighting for the control of the state itself, as well as challenges on political and economic issues, crisis on the distribution and consumption of scarcest resources allocation with intra- and inter- societies (Strauss 2016, 5)

Many African conflicts have their roots in domestic politics. However, these conflicts have affected more than just the countries where they occurred. Insecurity in Africa has not only made the pursuit of economic and political development difficult. It has hindered the development of regional integration. Peace and security promote regional integration just as the process of security integration can serve to consolidate peace and development (Adetula 2005, 395).

The newly unstable regional environment has created an array of challenges for Nigeria policymakers. Most prominent, jihadist

groups have flourished in post-revolutionary North Africa, capitalizing on state weakness to carry out several spheres of influence. Libya's descent into civil war has provided a further boost to regional jihadist groups and the proliferation of jihadist actors. The political instability that has beset North Africa in the years following the Arab Spring also undermines Nigerian strategic and economic interests in broader ways. North Africa has quickly descended from being a bastion of continuity and consistency into disorder and fragility. It's economic and political potentials have harmed Nigerian trade with its northern neighbours. Parts of North Africa have become strongholds for criminal networks, including drug traffickers and smugglers, who have used this region as a base from which gain entry into Europe (Gartenstein-Rosseds 2015, 7).

Nigeria's approaches to the sub-regional and continental security of Africa have been largely influenced by the national role conceived in terms of international relations by its leaders. This role conception has become the defining paradigm for foreign policy engagements. Accordingly, Nigeria is the natural leader of Africa with a manifest destiny and the responsibility to promote and protect the interests of Africa and black people everywhere. It is also believed that the country's security is tied to that of the other African states because of cultural and historical experiences and transnational security issues, which are defined by the way in which the security of a nation is affected by what happens in its neighbouring countries (Alli 2012, 5).

Nigeria's perceptions on security are framed in the West African view and have been historically characterized by three interconnected elements: the sense of vulnerability; a strong representation of the connection between national and (sub) regional security, and the necessity to be the guarantor of West Africa's stability and its leader. There is evidence of an established nexus between national and regional security. Conversely, (sub) regional security is deemed as having a potential effect on national security and stability (Haastrup and Lucia 2014, 1).

According to Bello (2012) and Obad (2013), cited in Haastrap and Lucia (2014):

Nigerian national defence policy objectives as including the security and stability in the West African sub-region through collective security, regional security by way of combative terrorism and other trans-national crimes being of strategic interests to Nigeria, internal fragilities, illegal trafficking piracy, unreported and unregulated fishing, oil theft and pipeline vandalism, as well as insurgency often transnational in nature (Ibid, 2)

Security policies are dealing with the broad issues of the management of the multiple threats to the core specific values in the international system. It is in this context that the national security policy of Nigeria provides the framework with which the calculation of instrumental responses (military, economic, health. etc.) to these multiple threats must proceed and resolve. Nigeria could find justification not only to contribute but also to provide leadership, including the use of its military to control any instability in the sub-region as a way of protecting her interests (Alli 2012). According to Gambari (2010), cited in Alli (2012):

In Africa, the lack of sustainable development has been linked directly to the proliferation and intensity of conflict situations and war, which, in turn, have hampered development efforts (...). The threats to peace in a neighbouring country, if not carefully managed and resolved, could lead to a massive exodus of refugees, weapons proliferation crimes, and a general insecurity that could threaten other stable polities and compromise national economies (Ibid, 10).

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Coercive Diplomacy

It seeks to resolve crises and armed conflicts without resorting to full-scale war (Jakobsen 2017, 277). Coercive diplomacy is the exercise of a threat when it is imperative, the limited use of force designed to make an opponent comply with the coercive wishes. It uses short of brutal force in the attempt to achieve a political

objective as cheaply as possible. It has been used to respond to acts of aggression, halt weapons of mass destruction programmes (WMD) and stop terrorism. It involves the use of threat and/or limited force in order to convince an actor to stop or undo the actions already undertaken (Ibid, 278).

It is a rather diplomacy of the threat than relying on negotiation (*Conflict Research Consortium* 2005, 3). It puts pressure in a manner and magnitude to persuade an opponent to cease the aggression rather than force it into stopping its ambition (Jentleson 2006, 2).

Development

A process by which people participate in defining and achieving higher levels of civilization. It is a self-propelled growth or improvement in people's welfare. Development is not just an economic process, it is also a political and social one (Asobie 2012, 7). It implies the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements.

Moreover, it is a process of economic and social transformation, which is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions. It connects research, experience, activism and alternative thinking in the purpose to provide a unique resource and point of reference for the dialogue between activists and intellectuals committed to the search for an alternative path of social transformations towards a more sustainable and just world (Grasa and Mateos, 2010, 27).

Nationalism

The belief that a particular group of people is a natural community, which should live under a single political system. Nationalism is often linked to the struggle for independence and political self-determination. It can also be a convenient tool for political leaders to mobilize support and overcome opposition by stressing internal or external threats to national unity, as it has been a common

ingredient in numerous international and civil conflicts (Chaturvedi 2016, 205).

Security

This concept implies freedom, no fear, anxiety or danger. The government should have as a primary objective to assure favourable national and international political conditions for the protection or extension of vital national values against existing and potential adversaries. It implies the capability of a nation to contain and ward off such threats and vulnerabilities that are acute enough to cripple or weaken its national values boundaries and institutions, as well as the overall well-being of its inhabitants (Okereke and Arres 2009, 37). A threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that is possible to degrade the quality of life of the inhabitants of the state or significantly restraint the range of policy choices available to the government or to private non-governmental.

National security is concerned with the ability of a legitimate national government to protect both the collective interests and the interests of individual citizens and groups. This implies having a national government strong and effective enough to deter and defend itself and its people against external aggressions (Omoweh and Okanya 2005, 299). Security means protection from hidden and harmful disruptions (Otto and Ukpere 2012, 676).

State Fragility

A state becomes fragile when its structures lack the political will and/or the capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights for the population. A state in a situation of fragility is a state with limited capabilities to govern or rule, and to develop mutually constructive relations (Grenoble 2010, 2).

Such states have weak institutions of governance, with precarious capabilities to deliver good services to their citizens, and lacking resilience when they are facing conflicts or political instability. We

are dealing, thus, with a complex phenomenon having multiple layers of causality and which, therefore, requires multiple layers of engagement (Uzoehina 2008, 7). It implies authority, services and legitimacy failures (Stewart and Brown 2009, 3).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the security governance theory at its theoretical framework. It provides and takes full account of the changing security challenges and the rapid rise of a trans-organizational network. It also addresses the security problems from global to regional aspects, and from traditional military security to the newly rising non-military security management. Security governance theory is the application of this theory and a process aiming at strengthening the security capability by the means of governance mechanisms (Liao 2011, 2).

Security governance provides a framework for analysing policy-making and policy implementation in the security field, clarifying and capturing group challenges. It allows understanding of the concept of security beyond the issue of defence and, above all, it encompasses the more diverse, less visible and less predictable nature of security in the 21st century. The framework of security governance facilitates understanding of interactions between states and regional institutions and how they individually and/or collectively manage not only international and regional crises but also a variety of threats to national and regional security (Kirchner 2014, 3). It covers threats that have to do with potential or actual violence, terrorism, war and counterinsurgency, ethnic cleansing, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, massive human right violence, and organized crime, as well as issues related to natural disasters, famines, pandemics, cyber warfare and even financial crimes and crises.

Security governance is a post-cold war phenomenon. It breaks the link with the realist and liberal ways of managing security in international polities. It is predicated on the belief that the new

security threats of the post-cold war era cannot be effectively addressed by inherited realist and liberal practices. It shifts the management of security from state-centric approaches and formal institutions towards more diverse actors and more flexible ways of working. It involves individual actors working in new ways and using new techniques to gather and analyse information and to communicate, negotiate, implement and evaluate policy responses to security threat (Bevir and Hall 2014, 31) Proponents, writers, theorists and authors on security governance theory include the following: Blike Krahmman (2003), Webber (2004), Hooghe and Marks (2001), Kirchner and Sperling (2007), Dorussen (2009), Dominguez (2011), Bossong (2008), Erikson (2011), Friesendorf (2007) Hollis (2010), Christou Croft Ceccorulli and Lucarelli (2010), Rhodes (1997) Slaughter and Hale (2011), Hohenstein (2007), Duffield (2001), Berir (2010), Osita Eze and Hehmann (2005). All of them insist on the following (Krahmann 2003:18):

- (i.) the geographical dimension, which suggests a movement from government to governance and the enlargement process that has contributed to the creation of a variety of new geographical arrangements that differentiate between members;
- (ii.) the functional dimension which, due to the broadening of the concept of security from military to human security issues, changes the scope of the functions and institutions associated with security policy;
- (iii.) the distribution of resources;
- (iv.) interest dimensions;
- (v.) normative dimensions;
- (vi.) the process of decision-making; and
- (vii.) policy implementation.

The connexion and relevance of security governance theory to this study is to provide solutions to the challenges confronting Nigeria’s security with respect to North Africa, which is beclouded with series

of internal political social and economic crises. Equally, it is relevant in the areas of integrating security governance into general democratic principles and the strengthening of regional cooperation in conflict prevention. Moreover, it provides a framework for analysing policy-making and policy formulation in a multi-actor and multi-level setting. It facilitates understanding of the interactions between states and regional organizations and how they individually and/or collectively manage the regional crises, as well as a variety of threats against Nigeria and its regional security.

Like any other theory, security governance has its own shortcomings, as proved by many scholars:

- (i.) the overemphasis on non-state functions might weaken the role of the state, which needs to be strengthened in the process of modernization;
- (ii.) the potential and practical absence of accountability and the cooperation with those non-state actors in the process of security governance;
- (iii.) its utility lies not only in directing the forces of security studies towards these theoretical and practical issues but also in suggesting future research on possible solutions by encouraging companions with the development of governance in the other areas.
- (iv.) it also suffers from logic scepticism as an alternative paradigm
- (v.) it is not an all-compassing framework capable of better dealing with all tricky problems. It largely depends on the regulations and orders designed by the security governance structure.

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH NIGERIA'S SECURITY CHALLENGES FROM THE CRISIS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH AFRICAN REGION

The political instability that has beset North Africa in the years following the Arab Spring swept through the Middle East and

North Africa and radically reshaped the region’s political and security environment. North Africa has quickly descended from being a bastion of continuity and consistency into a basket case, forcing the Nigerian government to carefully monitor threats so as to limit spill over into West African Sub-region. Indicators for Nigeria’s vulnerabilities to security include terrorism, insurgency, civil wars, refugees, drought, porous borders, drug, human (slave trade) and arms trafficking (Gardenstein-Ross et al. 2015, 17).

Terrorism/Insurgency

At present, the most pressing security challenge, according to Nigerian officials and as presented in the official documents, is terrorism and insurgency. It refers to the national dimension of terrorism and insurgency citing the activities of the Islamic sect Boko Haram in the North East of the country. The local transnational dimension is especially evident in Nigeria, where there is a close connection with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operating in the Sahel and, lately, ISIS in the Middle East (Haastrap and Lucia *op. cit.*). Force fighter returnees represent the greatest threat to Nigeria as they came back from North Africa to launch attacks and train local terrorists. As the returnees are likely to be better trained in weapons and explosion than their home group counterparts. They have featured in actual attacks or foiled plots in Nigeria, which have destabilizing effects on the country’s security (Gartenstein-Ross *et al., op.cit.*)

Nigeria’s Chief of Army Staff stated during the 2017 Annual Conference:

The scourges of cross-border crimes like human and small arms trafficking, drugs peddling, smuggling, banditry, cyber threats, money laundering espionage, terrorism and many others have created an interest for non-state actors that must be decimated by combined international efforts. The Nigerian Army Leadership in concert with the grand strategic focus of Mr President has continued to devise means of engaging our neighbouring countries towards tackling common threats in order to meet considerable

international obligations for the overall promotion of global peace and security (TY. Buratai 2017)

Human Trafficking (Slave Trades)

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that involves the movement of thousands of Nigerians women, men and children mainly through land routes to some North African countries, with the ultimate aim of taking them to Europe for slave labour and prostitution. According to UNGA (1999), cited in Adoba (2004):

Human trafficking is the illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national, international borders, largely from development countries in transition with the end goal of forcing with the end goal of forcing women, children into sexually or economically oppressive and economically oppressive and exploitative situations for the profit of recruiters, traffickers, crime syndicates as well as all other illegal activities related to trafficking such as forced domestic labour (Adoba, 2004:38)

The resistant effect of political instability in North Africa has given rise to poverty, which is systematically linked to human trafficking. Recently, slave trade resurfaced in Libya with Nigerians rational as victims of such practices. The Libya government has deported hundreds of Nigerians back to the country. More than 6000 persons have been deported last year and another 400000 are still held up in the North African countries, where the slave trade flourished (Momoh, 2017). According to Eze and Ezeobi (2017) cited in *This Day News Paper*:

More Nigerians have been saved from slavery and trafficking in war-tone Libya, as another 275 citizens were airlifted to the country a few hours after a batch of 144 Nigerians were returned Tuesday night on 7th December 2017 while no fewer than 1, 295 Nigerians were rescued in Nigerians were rescued in November 2017 alone (*This Day* December 7, 2017, 4)

It portrays Nigeria in a bad light as it creates the erroneous impression that the country is incapable of providing employment

and social welfare for its citizens, which makes them end in North Africa where are forced to face persecutions and humiliations.

Illegal Arms Trafficking

The proliferation of small and light weapons is another major security challenge which Nigeria is facing. Illegal trafficking and wide availability of these weapons fuel communal conflicts, political instability and pose a threat not only to national security but also to sustainable development. 640 million small and light weapons are in circulation worldwide, of which 100 million are estimated to be in Africa, about 30 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 8 million in West Africa and about 10 million in Nigeria. Proliferations came from North Africa, as a result of being a militarized region before, during and after the Arab spring revolution (Uwa and Anthony 2015, 8). The pervasiveness of small arms all over Africa is viewed by many as being linked to the intensity of various types of conflicts within and between the African states (North Africa), of which Nigeria is not exempted. The *Small Arms and Light Weapons* (SALW) trafficking nourishes the conflict in the Niger Delta, where most of Nigeria’s oil is located. All the crimes concerning oil (smuggling, theft pipelines vandalism) committed by militant groups have their source of illegal weapons from North Africa’s political instability (Haastrup and Lucia *op. cit.*)

Instability in North Africa and Oil Price

North Africa has the largest oil reserves and, in normal time, they provide 95% of the export revenues of entire regions, thus keeping the economy afloat. But the Arab spring revolution has shattered the economy, leaving the population almost wholly dependent on revenue generated overseas. The fragile political situation in North Africa continues to have an impact on production levels (which saw another year-to-year decline in oil production in the region - 22%. Libya; in the throes of civil war, saw production declined by 50%) (Steyn 2015, 5).

The effect on the political development in Nigeria is that oil is also shifting with a fall in price, the naira has fallen dramatically eroding foreign reserves, cut government spending high rise in inflation and the highly popular subsidy on public consumption of fuel (Campbell 2014, 6). Cross-referencing specific export and import of goods with their market share for West Africa (Nigeria) provide a more comprehensible understanding of the West African sub-region.

Porous Borders and Drug Trade

Nigeria continues to face serious security challenges due to the cross-border or trans-border criminal activities. There is hardly any criminal act or violence in Nigeria that could not be traced to North Africa, by which armed gangs enter and exit through the 149 national borders. People from North Africa have infiltrated these areas on account of inter-marriage, spillover of the crisis in North Africa, share similar cultures, practice and worship together (Asiwaju 1992, 33). The porosity of Nigeria's borders has given rise to illegalities, which have the resulted in drugs trade, refugees issues, importation of contraband goods, transmission of diseases, cyber and organized crimes, including smuggling. All these have created fertile land (Nigeria) for transnational criminal networks (Gartenstein-Ross *et al.*, *op. cit.*)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance are necessary for understanding, tracking and targeting terrorist networks and should be the main component of North African countries counter-terrorism strategy. Deployment of Nigerian troops to other countries to combat terrorism and insecurity. Freezing of financial assets of terrorists and so-called sponsors. Bilateral and multilateral agreements based on military cooperation. *Security Sector Reform* (SSR) will help counterterrorism efforts while addressing continuing

organizational and accountability deficits. It is a term for a number of policies to improve security practices and outcomes in developing and democratizing countries.

The establishment of the National Agency for the prohibition of human trafficking (NAPTIP) by the federal government and in collaboration with some organizations to stem the tide. In 2005, the NAPTIP Act which criminalized the keeping of brothels and the use of children as domestic house helps was amended. The properties of the offenders of this amended have become targets for seizure by the government. The Federal Government has encouraged NAPTIP to establish a national investigation task force (NITF), and the victims of human trafficking are to be portaged during the rescue and rehabilitation period. National campaigns for awareness should be organized across the country. The anti-human trafficking campaign should be strengthened in a wider scope.

The government should reinforce the country’s borders through surveillance and patrols. It should exist a close and effective coordination among intelligence and security agencies. The national government should impose tighter borders control to prevent illegal immigration.

A paradigm shift that calls for an integrated and sub-regional approach to conflict prevention, x-raying the challenges opportunities and benefits of the early warning and early response system established under the ECOWAS protocol should be undertaken. Nigeria’s current foreign policy should assume transformations, in order to put its people in the centre. Also, a change in the policies of dominant global powers toward Africa would enhance human emancipation and eliminate the numerous insecurities confronting the people.

CONCLUSION

It is imperiously necessaire that the security of Nigeria to be systematically sustained. This aims the approach whereby the

security of the individuals, the state and the international system are fully integrated and pursued collectively. It demands that all sub-systems of the national security be inseparable. Nigeria needs to promote democracy, political and social integration in the various independent states of the sub-region. Moreover, it should intensify the application of diplomacy and related non-coercive approaches towards conflict resolution to avoid catastrophes such as mass exodus, famine or bloodshed.

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