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Insecurity and National Development: Nigeria at a Crossroad

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Insecurity and National Development: Nigeria at a Crossroad

Sheu Habeeb Abidoye

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I. Introduction

National security remains the development obligatory of developing countries of the world and indeed, the major prescribed goal of the international community. This involves the attainment of sufficient levels of economic growth and violent free society to allow for a progressive improvement in the standard of living of the citizenry. However, for Nigeria and most African countries their national security is in an abysmal state. The worsening security conditions have been generating a mix of domestic, social, political and international tensions. Average citizen expect governments to provide for political stability and socio economic security; including employment opportunities, good healthcare and shelter. The non-fulfillment breeds discontent, insecurity, social unrest and serious political challenge.

The rising wave of insecurity in Nigeria in the recent times has assumed a very dangerous dimension which is fast retarding her development and threatening the corporate existence of the country as a nation. Insecurity has become the defining characteristics of Nigerian political scene, especially since the return to democracy in 1999. Available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria reveals an increase over time. Since the emergence of nascent democracy, major cities and towns have become flashpoints of violent clashes, kidnapping, assassination, rape, hijacking, sabotage, insurgency, looting etc.

The overwhelming presence of insecurity in Nigeria today is easily established without recourse to any authority citation. Armed robbery, ethnic/communal clashes, religious riots and all forms of social unrest and upheavals had left many dead, maimed and homeless. Many Nigerians have fallen to the assassins' bullets. Others have been kidnapped and only released on huge ransom which re-payment they might not be able to meet up. Kidnapping has become a very fast-growing industry enriching the criminals with millions of Naira on daily basis. The Police and other security agencies appeared to be compromised while the government remains insensitive. The billions of Naira voted for security both at State and Federal levels for unexplainable reasons are not made available to combat these problems. Meanwhile citizens continued to fulfill their obligations to the Government of the day amid this state of insecurity, fear and tension. Similarly, electioneering campaigns and indeed the election itself are marred with riggings, violence and unrest (Oshio, 2019).

It is undisputable that this national insecurity which takes horrible and terror dimensions has halted the sustainability of development in the nation. Insecurity has become part of the most disturbing problems that have slowed down the pace of development in Nigeria. The political and socio-economic status of the country stands testimony to it (Sheu and Alamu, 2017).

Insecurity in Nigeria has resulted in a lot of death of able bodies who can contribute meaningfully to development sustainability, destruction of properties, social and economic dislocation and its attendant poverty and unemployment. The situation has further disempowered both the rural and urban poor. In the face of the national insecurity in the country, Nigeria is confronted with daunting developmental challenges. These developmental challenges include endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation

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rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt (Ewetan, 2013).

In this connection, it is easy to establish a nexus between national security and national development. Accordingly, it is meaningless to talk of national development in the absence of national security. In other words, insecurity in a nation is a threat to development hence the study.

II. Conceptual and Theoretical Clarifications

a) *The Concept of National Security and National Insecurity*

To aptly conceptualize the concept of national insecurity, it is important to have a brief discussion on security and national security. Security is the antithesis of insecurity. The concept of security may be seen as a state of being fend from harm or apprehensiveness. Quite a number of factors expose a nation to apprehensiveness and tension. In this light, national security is viewed as a multi-dimensional concept whose purpose is to protect human and national values. For a nation, security connotes conditions of peace, stability, order, growth and development. National security has been expounded in different ways, each of which emphasized vital factors underlying eidolons. Brennan (1961) sees national security as the protection of national integrity and survival, while Ray (1987) says that national security is to be understood in terms of the desire and capacity for self-defense. Ochoche (1998) holds that national security focuses on the gathering of military armament, personnel and expenditure for the protection of a nation.

Flowing from postulations of the scholars above, the concept of national security has often been taken to merely connote the preservation of territorial integrity, internal stability and sovereignty with the focus on the coercive power and military strength of the state. Traditionally, national security is perceived with state-centric notion. However, in today's complex and interdependent world faced with many non-traditional threats like pandemics, climate change, etc it must, however, be seen in a more holistic manner. Such an all encompassing view of national security demands that the determinant of security is not just the coercive elements of state power but its comprehensive national power with the latter being a composite of many factors across all facets of national life.

It is suffice to say that national security has gone beyond arms protection, preservation of territorial integrity cum sovereignty and maintenance of internal stability to encompass the protection of a nation from hunger, pandemics, diseases, environmental hazards and other forms of threats that might be looming in a nation. National Security question addresses a lot of issues bothering on human existence and well-being. Abdul-Monerm and Al-Marshat (1985) alluded that national security is more than territorial defense and should focus on the "*social, physical and psychological equality of life of a society and its members both in the domestic setting and within the large regional and global system*". A nation that is competent in ensuring national security enjoys immense competence for viable development.

Flowing from the above conception of security, it is suffice to say that insecurity is a state of harm or apprehensiveness. It connotes unrest, instability, disorder and underdevelopment. For Beland (2005), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to lack of adequate freedom from danger. It is a situation where human and national security of a state is compromised and hampered by weak economic, political, military and human conditions.

b) *Nigeria National Security Architecture*

Security Architecture is the security outfit/design that describes how the security controls are positioned to addresses the necessities and potential risks involved in a certain scenario or environment. The historical security antecedent and philosophy of Nigerian state and her security architecture is perceived to be centralized in nature. And this is partly responsible for the laxity and poor delivery of security services in the country. The Nigeria police was created for colonial interest; repression of the native and maintenance of law and order for exploitation purpose. With recourse to the West African Frontier Force, the Nigeria Police was centralized and oriented toward ensuring compliance with imperial act of 1807 and 1833 which abolished slavery as well as achieving the colonial objective of divide and rule. They were armed to aid the transportation of raw materials from the hinterlands to the metropolis (Jemibewon, 2009).

Decades after Nigeria got her independence, the security structure remains centralized with inimical consequences on the management of crime and security at the grassroot. The call for community and state policing that could catalyze the decentralization of the security structure has received little or no attention from the federal government that hold on to the police and armed forces pertinaciously. Though, between 1960 and 1967, the federating power was decentralized such that the three regions had their jurisdictions under their control. They had their police and prison system tailored to suite the geographical location and people's tradition. The military incursion however, disrupted the regionalism and its intriguing feature of healthy competition for development, with the regional policing inclusive. The over-centralization of the power at the centre returned the centralized security structure.

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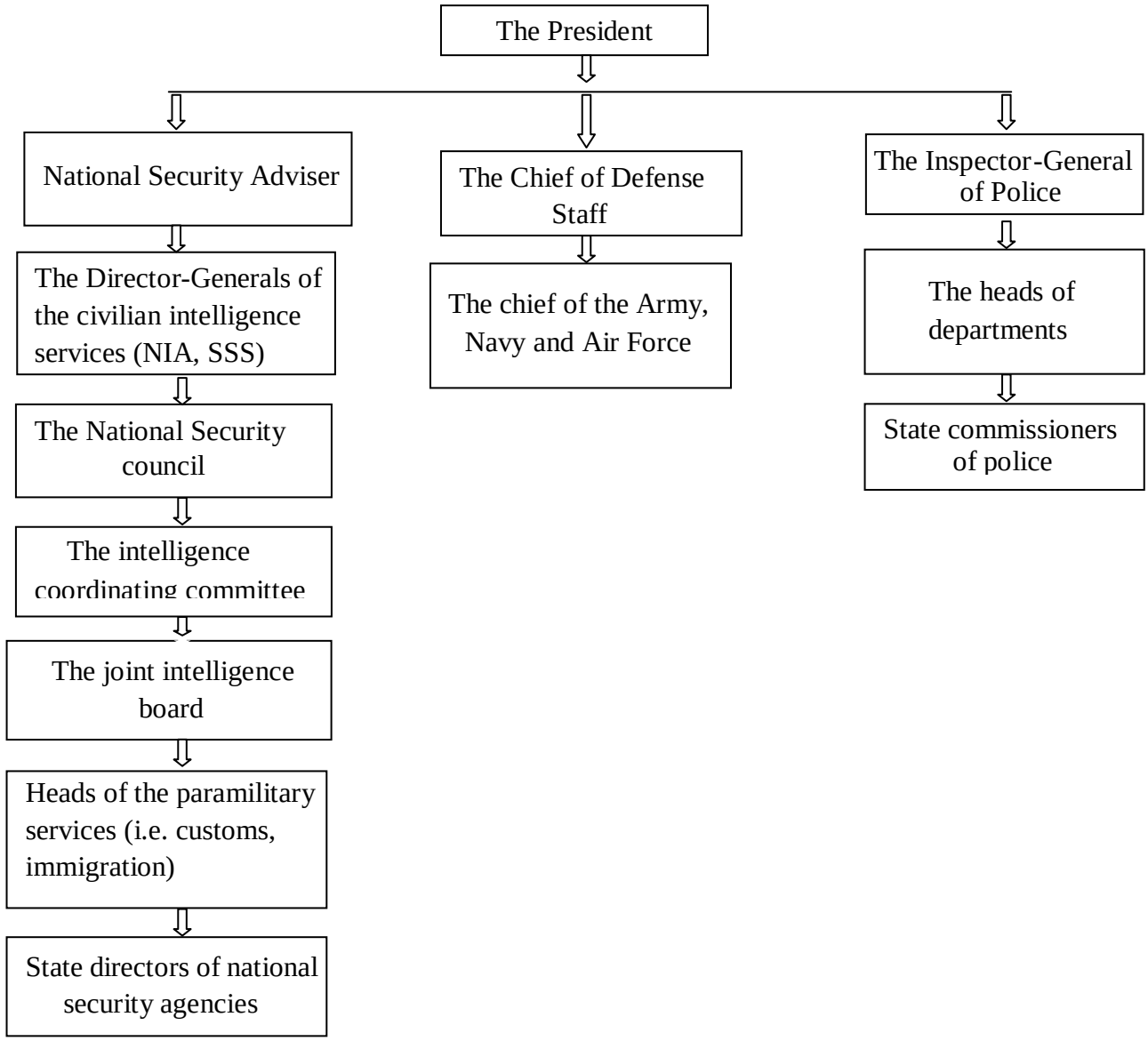

Source: Aghedo I. & Thomas A.N (2012)

Figure 1

c) The Concept of National Development

The concept of economic development is often used interchangeably for development and national development. However, development and national development are more encompassing to include political, social, cultural and economic development.

The traditional economic growth perspective sees economic development as the capacity of a national economy whose initial economic condition has been stagnant for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product (GNP) (Todaro and Smith, 2004).

The experience of many developing nation where despite realizing such economic growth targets, the level of living of the citizenry remained for the most part unchanged, informed the conjecturing of a more comprehensive and people-centered view on development. Development came to be conceived as multidimensional process involving major changes in social structure, attitude and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty. Development in its essence must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system move away from condition of life widely perceived unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better (Todaro and Smith, 2004).

Duffield conceives national development as a normative process of becoming; a series of interconnecting movements leading from poverty and vulnerability to security and well-being (Duffield, 1934). Anderson and Woodrow refer to it as a process through which people's physical/material; social/organisational;

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motivational/attitudinal vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities are increased (Anderson and Woodrow; 1988).

The critical variables that indicate national development in a country include; high per capita income, high incidence of savings, high level of investment, high level of technology, high level of literacy, high standard of living, low mortality rate, political stability etc. Development depicts general improvement in human conditions. It is an attack on the chief evils confronting the modern world today; malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, diseases, slums, inequality and insecurity.

d) Securitization Theory

The theory of securitization is generally traced to the Copenhagen School of Security Studies in Denmark, and it is generally attributed to Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, and a range of other researchers. The writing of Ole Waever on the theory and concept of securitization seek to address the increasingly worrisome debate between those who claimed that threats (insecurity) are objective, and those that maintained that insecurity is subjective (what is perceived to be a threat). In an attempt to address this worrisome debate, the Copenhagen school suggested that security should instead be seen as a speech act, and the central issue should not bother on whether threats are real or not, but the ways in which a certain issues can be socially constructed as a threat. The emphasis here is on how issues such as hunger, pandemic, disease, environmental degradation, immigration etc can be contrived to be threat to human or society (Munster, 2018).

Speech acts has its root in philosophy and it refers to the idea that by saying something, something is done. So, just as the naming of a farm is a speech act that brings something into effect, the uttering of "security" can be viewed as an act by which any kind of issues; traditional, political, social, economic, and environmental can become staged as a threat. However, not all issues about security qualify as securitization in the sense understood by Ole Wæver and his Copenhagen colleagues. A securitizing speech act needs to follow a specific rhetorical structure, derived from war and its historical connotations of survival, urgency, threat, and defense. This leads the Copenhagen school to define securitization as a speech act that has to fulfill three rhetorical criteria. It is a discursive process by means of which an actor (1) claims that a referent object is existentially threatened, (2) demands the right to take extraordinary countermeasures to deal with that the threat, and (3) convinces an audience that rule-breaking behavior to counter the threat is justified. In short, by labeling something as "security," an issue is dramatized as an issue of supreme priority. One can therefore think of securitization as the process through which non-politicized issues are elevated to security issues that need to be dealt with urgency, and that legitimate the bypassing of public debate and democratic procedures (Munster, 2018).

In relation to the theory discussed, national issue becomes a security issue when perceived and contrived as threat by the people and policy demand is made in the same regards. The national security questions are questions that bother on the well-being and safety of the citizenry. It might be economical, political, social or environmental. In Nigeria and most developing nations of the world, what are perceived as threat often receive little or no attention from the decision makers. The traditional state-centric notion of territorial integrity, internal stability and sovereignty are what state actors pay considerate attention to as what constitute threat. The recent security trend however required holistic approach to cover economics, political, social and environmental issue that threatens not only the lives of the citizenry but as well national development.

e) National Security and National Development: The Nexus

National Security and National Development are two sides of a coin. In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, it is crystal clear that security and development are inextricably linked, especially in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Threats to national security can have socio-economic undertones to include spillover effects of environmental degradation, contests over natural resources, social and economic inequalities, political and economic migration, and natural disasters, among others. For decades, development has been linked to security through the concept of human security. The relationship can be complex: retarded development can lead to grievance, and conflict can threaten development and corporate existence of a nation. Peace and security are prerequisites for poverty reduction and countries mostly affected by political instability, conflict and displacement are those whose citizens battle most with poverty and hunger.

f) Overview of National Insecurity in Nigeria

Major cities and towns are now become flashpoints of violent clashes, kidnapping, assassination, rape, hijacking, sabotage, insurgency, looting etc. In the North East, the activities of Boko-Haram constitute threats. The terrorist group is responsible for human rights abuses across Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. The violent radicalization of the Boko Haram members and the resulting military operations has reportedly affected many households in the region and its dastard effects are felt all over the country. This conflict has triggered an acute humanitarian and forced displacement crisis, with

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devastating social and economic impacts on the population, further deepening underdevelopment and regional inequalities. The most affected states are the Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. The most affected groups are women, children, and youth. Boko Haram's tactics have included multiple modes of attack, including suicide bombings, seizure and destruction of entire villages, forced displacement, abductions, sexual violence targeting women, and forced recruitment of men.

The conflict between farmers and herdsmen in the North Central has been on a rise for years now. This has escalated and expanded tensions. This conflict is multi-faceted and complex. The conflict centers around agricultural households and nomadic cattle-herding groups who come into conflict over land access. As the population in North Central Nigeria increases, the amount of land used for farming also increases, often into areas that have traditionally served as cattle grazing areas. At the same time, climate change and the Boko Haram insurgency reduce the amount of land suitable for grazing in North East Nigeria, forcing herding communities to expand their routes into increasingly Southern areas. This competition over land and resources is compounded by religion and ethnicity – herders are most members of the minority Fulani ethnic group and are generally Muslim. Farmer-herder conflicts often consist of attacks by one group and subsequent retaliation from the other community.

The South West is often faced with violent clashes over boundaries and resource control between ethnic groups. The Modakeke-Ife violent clash is typical example. The crisis left many dead, homeless and displaced. In Lagos and many other cities in the south west, the incessant clash between Yoruba and Hausa traders is testimonies to the high wave of insecurity in Nigeria. As if this is not enough, kidnapping for ransom known for South-South surfaced. The Oke-Ogun axis of Oyo State and Ife Road are flashpoints of Kidnapping. In cases where ransom are not handsome enough or delayed, the victim's lives are wasted.

The South-South that is popularly known as Nigeria's source of oil wealth and widely perceived as the economic force driving Nigeria is not left out of the insecurity. The south south region suffers from ecological degradation as a result of oil spills, high rates of youth unemployment, and extensive inequality between the local population and employees of oil companies. These issues are compounded by ethnic and political tensions in the region. In particular, ethnic minority groups have frequently clashed in competition for oil wealth; political tensions in this zone also run high. All of these factors have resulted in high levels of crime. Militant and pirate groups have operated in the region for decades, targeting oil companies, pipelines, and individuals. Killings, abductions, and robberies are not uncommon, and many people have been displaced from their homes or communities as a result of the violence.

g) Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Flowing from the writings above, the catalysts of insecurity in Nigeria are not farfetched as explained in this section of the study.

The too much emphasis on the traditional state-centric security notion of territorial integrity, internal stability and sovereignty by the state actors rather than the notion of securitization explains what breed insecurity in many developing countries, Nigeria inclusive. Nigerian state for example pays little or no attention to other forms of threat that are more apprehensive than the traditional security notion. The failure to diagnose and address the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria, most of which are domestic, economical and political posed a serious challenge in adverting insecurity in the nation.

Critical to the understanding of high wave in level insecurity in Nigeria is an appreciation of nature and character of the Nigerian state. Capital rent seeking, Corruption, patrimonialism and prebendalism are identified as the major character of the post-colonial Nigerian state. The characteristics have combined with one another and with many others to undermine the state obligation to guarantee fundamental human rights and freedom, ensure law and other and facilitate peace and stability as preconditions for national development. Given this situation, elite contestation for political power and capture of the state whipped up insecurity.

Poverty cum unequal distribution of national wealth is another catalyst that has nurtured insecurity in Nigeria. Mass poverty conditions the mind and attitude of Nigerians and makes them liable to elite manipulation for ethic and religion identities and the resultant violent clashes. As state is unable to satisfy the basic need of the people, they in turn withdraw from the sphere of state into religious and ethnic coccons with the heightened sensitivity to the role of others in their misery. In line with the common say that an idle hand is a devil workshop, unemployment among the youths has forced them to take to the work of terrorism, robbery, kidnapping and bloodshed.

Illiteracy and ignorance cannot be underscored as catalysts to religious violence. There is nothing so easy to enslave and nothing so easy to mobilized for violence as ignorance and illiteracy. The level of insecurity has risen in the recent time because of lack of knowledge and manipulation of the illiterates.

External influence is considered an important factor that contributes to insecurity in Nigeria. External influence can be in different forms. It can be in terms of ideology, environment and host of others. Notable among the external influence on insecurity is the activities of Nigeria Tliban and the link of Boko-Haram to international terrorist group such as Al-Qaeda.

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h) Implications of National Insecurity on National Development in Nigeria

One of the dire consequences of insecurity in Nigeria is the loss of lives and properties. The destruction of properties also further depletes the standard of living of the residents as it compounds the problem of poverty and unemployment which threatens national development in the country. A secured environment attracts foreign investors and investments that contribute to national development. This is however hampered by the incessant violence in the country. Violent clashes have destroyed infrastructures and create political instability. The destruction has led to deterioration of the economic environment and reduction in the desired levels of factors of production.

Not only do people living in violent areas suffer injuries, death and have their properties destroyed, they may also be displaced from their homes and lose their means of survival as evident in the recent looting that greeted ENDSARS protest in the nation. Insecurity results in deaths, injuries, disabilities and psychological trauma to able men and women who are needed for national development. Education is very vital in any national development. The nation is striving to put in place amenities for the purpose of elevating the education standard of the country. This is, however, hampered by incessant closure of schools and institutions in places where the level insecurity is on the high side. Insecurity often interrupts the education of children through the damage to schools, absence of teachers, changes in family structures and household income. For example, in the northern part of the country that is extremely violent, school year and calendar are disrupted. Schools are often closed, buildings and supplies are destroyed, teachers and students are killed and forced to become refugees in IDP camps.

Apart from the fact that many virile men of the nation are seriously affected by insecurity which consequently led to their death, the country's source of revenue is equally affected. Crises in the Niger Delta, for example, had shaken the country to her root, as the source of the revenue of the country was greatly affected with the damage of pipelines that convey the oil which is the mainstay of Nigeria's economy.

III. Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is concluded that the rising wave of insecurity in Nigeria in the recent times has assumed a very dangerous dimension and it is fast retarding her national development and threatening the corporate existence of the country as a nation. The Police and other security agencies appeared to be compromised while the government remains insensitive to this plight.

IV. Recommendations

The state should shift attention from the traditional security notion of integrity, internal stability and sovereignty the notion of securitization. Issues that are popularly perceived as threat by the citizenry should be accorded needed attention and policy should made in the same regard. Genuine fight against corruption is another viable tool to ameliorating the level of insecurity in Nigeria. The state obligation to guarantee fundamental human rights and freedom, ensure law and other and facilitate peace and stability as preconditions for national development should not be undermined by state actors and security of the nation should be strengthened to address these state obligations.

There is need for total overhauling of Nigeria security architecture, such that the security structure is decentralized to accommodate community policing. It is disheartening that violence is not properly investigated and punishment is not appropriately imposed. Decisive and obstinate actions should be taken against those behind scenes fueling insecurity in the country. Political intelligence and surveillance is also proffer as a panacea to solving the challenge of insecurity in Nigeria. There is need for developing an early warning system or raising alarm on the imminent threat to security. Tolerance among the ethnic and religious groups should be preached. This gospel will in no small measure ensure peaceful coexistence among Nigerians.

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