

Natural Resources, International Economic Migration and the Challenges of National Security: A Focused Study on West African Sub-Region

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Abstract

In recent decades, due to shrinking national economies and increased depletion of limited natural resources there has been evidence of mass migration across international boundaries in search of subsistence and sources of livelihood. Another factor responsible for these observed mass migration across international boundaries as acknowledged by the United Nations Refugee Commission, the African Union Refugee Commission and other international peace corps, such as the Red Cross is the problem of war and national insecurity which has ravaged various sub-continent and in particular, the West-Africa Sub-continent.

Index terms—

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1 Introduction

It is the fact of human existence and evident throughout history that human beings are attracted to opportunities that would provide them with a secured life and national boundaries do not matter in pursuit of these opportunities. ?? In recent decades, due to shrinking national economies and increased depletion of limited natural resources there has been evidence of mass migration across international boundaries in search of subsistence and sources of livelihood. ?? Another factor responsible for these observed mass migration across international boundaries as acknowledged by the United Nations Refugee Commission, the African Union Refugee Commission and other international peace corps, such as the Red Cross is the problem of war and national insecurity which has ravaged various sub-continent and in particular, the West-Africa Sub-continent. ?? There is a critical proof that has come to the fore in recent years, which established the fact that Natural Resources underpins international economic migration, especially in the case of West-Africa where countries like Nigeria, which is the engine room of the sub-regional economy, Ghana, a model economic power house on the rise, Niger republic and even the war thrown countries of Liberia, Central Africa Republic as well as Sierra Leone have remained the bulk recipient and the target destination for International economic migration within the sub-region. ?? It is pertinent to say that the only credible explanation for this is that the above mentioned countries are for now the most resource endowed, Nigeria remained a major oil and gas producer and has developed critical infrastructures in the energy sector, Ghana on the other hand is also a new comer to the elite club of oil producing countries of Africa with a thriving economy that has enjoyed for some time now an A Rating by International Creditor Agencies, in the same vein, Niger Republic with its discovery of oil and proven deposit of uranium, has reinvigorated economy and similarly, although ravaged by war, countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone have proven deposits of Gold, Diamonds and other precious solid metals. ?? It is pertinent to note that international economic migration for whatever reason posed an unprecedented challenge to National Security and that is what underscores this research in view of the chain nature character of the issues involved, their sensitivities and

significance for the harmony, stability and prosperity of the international community and continuous existence of human family. ?? II.

2 Natural Resources and International Migration

Natural resources is undoubtedly the strategic factor in International economic migration, statistic published by the United Nations, International Labor Organization, the African Union, the ECOWAS have all proven the fact that international economic migration is riven by the lure of economic prosperity across international boundaries. ?? Take Nigeria for instance, with its enormous natural resources base, over the last four decades of global economic uncertainties and excruciating famine and the crisis of development within the West African sub-region, has remained the first choice destination for international economic migration in West Africa. It is therefore not surprising during the 1980s that the location of these resources in Nigeria such as the southsouth region in the case of oil, such as the northern state in the case of agriculture, the south-west in respect of the coca plant, fisheries, the sea port and its bustling economic activities and the south-east in respect of Palm kernel and its thriving industrial base have all experienced population explosion on account of international economic migration. ?? In Northern states of Nigeria, the international economic migration has been mainly from countries of Niger Republic, Burkina Faso, the Sudan, Mail, Chad Republic, Northern Cameroon and Northern Ghana. ?? In north western state of Sokoto, Kastina, Kebbi, Zamfara, and Kano state which constitute the border line states with Niger Republic there is thriving indigenized communities of citizens of Niger Republic, who were originally economic migrants during the 60s, the 70s, the 80s and the 90s, who have come to be part of the local population and partaking in all forms of economic activities ranging from agricultural produce trading, textiles, retail, import and export and telecommunication. ??0 Therefore, international economic migration could be a positive thing because, the migrant who indulged in legitimate business, will surely pay taxes and their economic activities will add significantly to the volume of trade, thereby generating prosperity for the country. ??1 In the same vein, the same migration has a way of contributing to biological and sociological development of the society in the sense that, they interact socially with Nigerians, inter-marry and procreate, thereby advancing the demography of the country. ??2 It is the same situation in the Northern-Eastern states of Borno, Adamawa, Yobe and Gombe, who constitute the border line states with Cameroon and Chad Republic. ??3 It is worth nothing that besides the geography of these states, they also have shared cross-boundary history of identity with the two above mentioned West Africa states. In fact, in the case of states like Borno, Yobe and Gombe states, there exist archeological evidence of common biological identity and history of origin between people of those states and the section of the population in both Cameroon and Chad republic. ??4 Therefore, the issue of international cross boundary migration between these communities divided by artificial international boundaries and international politics is a factual reality to say the least. ??5 At a recently concluded national dialogue organized by the present administration in 2014, in order to provide a platform for inter-regional discuss on strategic nation questions of statehood, fiscal federalism, national revenue sharing and national unity, a prominent royalty (Lamido of Adamawa) from that same region openly declared: "whether Nigeria survives or not is a matter of fate and those who think oil is about everything should be allowed to take their oil and we shall also be allowed to control out land and accordingly levy taxes on physical development if that will bring about lasting peace. But make no mistake if Nigeria breaks up today part of my family still lives in Cameroon and in less than 5 kilometers I shall be back home in Cameroon republic. ??6 "

The above statement from a paramount traditional ruler only goes further to provide an inconvenient reaffirmation of both the history and geography of the Nigerian state vis-à-vis the issue of international cross-boundary economic migration.

Paradoxically, in states like Borno and Yobe, the largest ethnic groups in those states are the Kanuris and they remained likewise a major ethnic group in Chad republic. It is therefore not an isolated coincidence that people of these states maintained socio-cultural, historical and strong religious affiliation with their communities in the Chad republic and the Sudan. ??7 In this context therefore, the issue of international cross boundary economic migration is a foregone conclusion because, beside the above 27 Theses front line Border states also shares Nigeria's maritime international boundary with Equatorial Guinea, the Cameroon and Sao-tome. It is the region of Nigeria that is called the Niger Delta region which constitute the onshore and offshore oil producing basin of Nigeria and therefore, lays the golden egg of Nigerian economy. 28 Similarly, just like in the other regions of Nigeria, there has been shared history of affinity between some tribes in those states within the region and ethnic nationalities across the boundary and this is of little surprise because until the referendum at independence, when those tribes were separated by the international boundary, they were as a matter of fact the same people and same communities. ??9 Take the instance of the English speaking southern Cameroon, originally, they were the same ethnic nationality with the people of border line states of Cross Rivers and Akwa-Ibom states and it is this shared history and geography that is at the core of the Bakassi question, which almost caused an outright war between Nigeria and the republic of Cameroon before the tragedy was averted and the dispute accordingly referred to the International court of Justice for Adjudication. ??0 It is important to note that just like in other instances the international migration traffic has always been from these bordering west African states to Nigeria and the Niger Delta which as a consequences of it geology and oil resources constitute the heart of the Nigerian economy with huge upstream and downstream Volume XV Issue II Version I 21 (H) energy enterprises has been the magnet and premium destination of international economic

migration. 31 It suffice to say that it is the moderated view point of these research that there is no better evidence of the critical interrelationship between natural resources and international economic migration than the history of Natural Resources, International Economic Migration and the Challenges of National Security: A Focused Study on West African Sub-Region also been trade and other forms of economic activities amongst the people. ??8 In the same vein, there is also evidence of intermarriages between these international communities across the boundary. Therefore, it is evident that these inter ethnic fusion would have tremendous impact on the demography of these states. ??9 In the south-western states of Lagos, Oyo, Osun, as well as Ogun state which constitute the front line Border States along Nigeria, Benin republic and the Cameroon it is the same scenario similar to what we have seen by way of geography, historical and even religious affinity between border line communities in Nigeria and the border line communities on the other side of the border. ??0 In case of the south-western states, the dominant ethnic groups are the Yorubas and the same ethnic group is found in Benin Republic, Republic of Togo as well as the Cameroon and therefore, it will be a farce or a negation of fundamental reality to assume that a colonial boundary recognized by international law will be enough to severe a pathological affinity that has come to define the identity of a people. ??1 In terms of international migration since the 60s, the 70s and the 80s it has always being from these west African countries of Benin republic, Togo and the Cameroon to the front line border states of Ogun, oyo, Osun and in particular Lagos State in the South-western part of Nigeria. ??2 In particular, the migration appeared to be targeted more at Lagos, which hitherto was the capital city of the country and the economic nerve center of the country and better yet, Lagos continue to house the largest sea port in the West Africa sub-region. ??3 These economic migrants usually compete for the huge economic opportunities provided by the export and import trading in commodities, telecommunication, real estate and agriculture. ??4 Therefore, they make remarkable contributions to the economy of Lagos state as well as the National economy, because, in the course of their businesses, besides providing employment opportunities for the local population, they likewise pay their taxes which immensely help in generating prosperity for the country. sub-regional West Africa economic migration and the Niger-Delta region as the most preferred destination. ??2 Apart from investing in sub-downstream energy retail and paying taxes in the process they also have stakes in the oil services sector. ??3 Similarly, apart from their participation in the national economy, in somewhat history of a common trend they interact socially, educate locally and intermarry, thereby changing the demography of the region. ??4 What is unique about this region in the context of this discussion which differentiates it from the other regions discussed is the fact that the federal universities in these border line states generates tremendous income from foreigners from the neighboring countries of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, the lateral states across Nigeria's maritime boundary. ??5 Take for instance, university of Calaba in Cross River State, and university of Uyo in Akwa-Ibom State, statistic have shown that a good percentage of the lecturers are actually from the adjoining boarder countries of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea and the same university census has established the fact that one third of the population of these Nigerian universities are actually from these same bordering countries. ??6 It is therefore pertinent to observe that in every opportunity lies an underline challenge, therefore, despite the positive economics of economic migration it those pose monumental security challenge. ??7 It is the same chronology of factual reality regarding international economic migration when it comes to the south-eastern border line states of Nigeria. These states include Abia State, Abambra state, Ebonyi State and the Imo state. ??8 In particular, states in the region like Anambra State, Imo State and Abia state do have long stretched international border with West African countries of Equatorial Guinea, the Cameroon and Congo Brazzaville and the archeology of that region has actually established a genetic link between the people of those states and the neighboring countries of Equatorial Guinea and Congo Brazzaville. ??9 It has to be said that the south eastern region of Nigeria represent the hope and the future of the Nigerian economy. In view of the incredible industrial stride that the region has made over the last five decades, it is therefore not surprising the dominance of the region in the manufacturing and retail market sector of the Nigerian economy and thus the magnet for international economic migration from the bordering West African countries. 41 a) International Economic Migration and the Challenges of National Security

The foregoing discussion no doubt has established the fact that there is a strategic connect between natural resources endowment and international economic migration and beneath the obvious economic benefits of it lies the huge national security consequences of it. ??2 As analyzed above, transnational boundary migration does impact on the demography of its national destination and that in itself has the potential for national instability. ??3 Take the case of Nigeria for example and the above instances of transnational boundary economic migrations into the various regions of the country and in particular the Northern-western, the Northern-eastern, the south-western and the south-south front line border state of the country, the level of integration of these migrants through socio-cultural interactions, intermarriages and to an extent naturalization through state citizenship, their distinctive foreign identities simply disappears and they become unaccounted for through state records of immigration services, the police and other security agencies. ??4 Today, in the northern-western states of Sokoto and Kaduna, there are vestiges of original transboundary economic migration that is almost impossible to characterize as such. ??5 Take the instance of Sokoto state, beside local governments like Gada, Isa and Ilela which had been adjudged as having lost their original ethnic identity to trans boundary migration, in Sokoto, the state capital of Sokoto state, there is an area of the capital called Runjin Sambo and the outback area of it called Gidan Haki which is densely populated by third, fourth and fifth generations of migrants from Niger Republic, that are so localized in the context of the socio-cultural Similarly, in Zaria Emirate Council of

Kaduna State, which is the educational nerve center of the state and does share the cosmopolitan sophistication of the state has an area called Mallawa Settlement, the term Mallawa originates from the word Mali which is a North African country, the implication of this is not farfetched, because, anybody you found in Mallawa area of Zaria had a great-grand parent that originally migrated from Republic of Mali. ??? It is pertinent to observe, that, just like in the case of Sokoto state, it is almost impossible for present generation of Mallawa in Zaria City to be described as foreigners, because, their original Malian identity has simply disappeared through Socio-cultural evolution of Zaria City, as such, the chronology of their history has erased the state record of their international migration. ??? Without prejudice, we have to admit that despite the positive opportunities of international economic migration, it does pose a danger to national security, because, a complicated situation that makes possible for a transnational migrant to simply disappear off the security radar of a state through socio-cultural history and demography, would only make worst the challenges of national security management. ??? It is most unfortunate to admit that the same situation exist in both the south-south and the southeast front line border states of Nigeria and that is the bane of national security crisis that has presently engulfed the country and posing serious threat to its continuous corporate existence as a country. 50 b) International Economic Migration, the Boko Haram Insurgency, the Nigerian Government and the Attendant Challenges of Internal Security management

Against the background of current trans boundary dynamics of the Boko Haram insurgency which does not recognize international boundaries, it is now beyond dispute that, transnational migration is playing a critical role in the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern front line Border States of Nigeria. ??? In view of the same dynamics analyzed above, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Boko Haram 47 Mahdi, A., Migration and Nation Building: A Case Study of Northern Nigeria (Nigeria: Center for Historical Development 1993) PP. 1.23 48 ibid 49 Igbo, S., "The State and national Security challenges" Electronic Version www.migrationverket.se retrieved November, 2012 50 ibid 51 Jonathan, G., "We will Over Come Our Security Challenges", This day News Paper Nigeria Limited, Sep, 17 2011, Vol. 16 insurgency is the most virulent threat Nigeria has ever faced throughout its history as a country. ??? In the same vein, in view of the demography, the geography and the transnational ethnic configuration of the conflict, the insurgency is proving impossible to defeat and it is evidently clear that the counter insurgency strategy adopted by the Nigerian government has remarkably failed it and thus, it is not on top of it game regarding this issue. ??? It is the uncomfortable truth that Nigerian government would rather deny than admit, but unfortunately, it is too late too little, because, the evidence of the profound failure of its anti-terrorism, counter insurgency war is everywhere. ??? It would suffice to argue that the tragic gains, the remarkable advances and recent score of military successes recorded by Boko Haram insurgency against the Nigerian military constitute an iron clad proof that despite the political rhetoric about mirage of victory recorded against the insurgency, the facts are stoked against the Nigerian government. ??? As a matter of fact, on the account of the foregoing, some pundits and academicians have maintained the educated view point that until government admit to itself, that in view of the transnational ethnic configuration and the geography of the conflict that the Boko Haram insurgency is no longer an exclusive Nigerian problem but rather a regional conflict and begin to revise it counter insurgency strategy accordingly, Nigeria may be heading for a failed state. ??? Nothing can be further from the truth, the Nigerian Military, which had hitherto built incredible reputation and respect for its pedigree in international peace keeping and its huge contributions to global peace and security, has failed woefully in its traditional mandates of managing internal security challenges and defending any external aggression against the Nigerian state. Therefore, the military high command ravaged by hyper corruption and general soldier's apathy for war and most dangerously polarized along ethnic and religious lines, would rather continue to pursue the path of arrogant, face saving military posturing and continue to deceive government and the Nigerian people that it is on course to crushing the Boko Haram insurgency than to admit the honest truth that it lacks the sophisticated weapons of modern warfare and the adequate morel to defeat the Boko Haram insurgency. ??? It is a terrible irony that it is the same military with remarkable history and pedigree for a clinical performance record in Africa that has simply melted away in the face of Boko Haram onslaught in the northeast front line border states of Nigeria. 59 c) The African Dynamics of Trans Boundary Economic Migration and the Challenges of National Internal Security Management

It is therefore beyond dispute that, despite the tantalizing prospect of economic and social opportunities provided by transnational economic migration, it has a way of feeding into internal security crisis, political turmoil and general instability of nation states, especially the fragile and unstable African states with porous and uncontrollable borders. ??? The instances of these scenarios in Africa are simply remarkable: North-eastern Nigeria, Niger Republic, Mali, Libya, Liberia, Sierra Leon, Central Africa Republic, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, the Sudan, Chad republic, Eretria and the South Sudan Republic. ??? In Nigeria and West Africa, they have Boko Haram is lamist group to contend with, in north Africa, there is Al Qaida in the Maghreb, in East Africa, predominantly in Somalia and Kenya there is Al-Shabab terror cells which has remained very active and ferocious in its savage attacks on security structures as well as civilian population, in Uganda, south Sudan there is the Lord's Resistance Army and in southern African states of Rwanda and democratic republic of Congo, there are the Hutus and M23 rebels and all these sub-continental terror groups identified have the delicate intrinsic character of trans boundary economic migration and ensued ethnic configuration and does feed into the general insecurity situation across Africa. ??? The ethnic character of the general instability across Africa underpinning trans-boundary economic migration is most disturbing because it destroys the very

foundation of the society and it has the potentials for 58 Ibid. ??9 Ibid. ??0 total conflagration in view of the fact that ethnic identity and religious belief structure would forever remain the integral part of the lives of the people especially in the traditional and cultural communities. ??3 Sadly, it has to be admitted that in Africa this has played significant role in destroying nation states like Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leon and was also responsible for the genocide in Rwanda which remained the darkest hour of humanity and the irredeemable scare on the conscience of humanity. ??4 It is therefore significant to observe that the ethnic and religious character of trans boundary economic migration does define most conflict rooted in natural resources endowment and the desperate competition for a slice of national economic prosperity across the coast of West.

3 III.

4 Conclusion

From this focused study, the most significant revelation is the evidence of the connection between Trans boundary economic migration, the natural resources endowment and the challenges of national security.

As articulated above, trans-national boundary economic migration comes with prospects of opportunities but in the same vein does create unprecedented security challenge.

The current Boko Haram insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria bears the hallmark of the thesis of this research that because of the ethnic configuration of the insurgency as a consequence of decades of transboundary economic migration and the extraordinary security challenges with it. It has become mission impossible for both the Nigerian army and the Nigerian government to handle.

It is therefore the view point of this research that trans-boundary economic migration create unique security reality that requires special security architecture that is mostly lacking in most developing countries of Africa and Nigerian in its current turmoil provides a vintage example of that. ??5 These countries still have maintained colonial security architecture of a traditional army left behind by advanced military technology profoundly lacking in training and knowledge and dynamics of contemporary security challenges, such as the clandestine threat posed by trans-boundary economy migration. This is a threat that due to its social-economic character, it is very slow in evolving and takes extraordinary sensitivities and long term programmed action plan and alertness to contain it. ??3 Ibid. Undoubtedly, this is the hardest lesson that Nigeria has learnt from its ongoing struggle to contain and embolden Boko Haram insurgency.



Figure 1:

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Figure 2:

Figure 3:

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Figure 4:

Figure 5:

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