Insecurity: A Threat to Human Existence and Economic Development in Nigeria

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Abstract
Insecurity has become a hydra headed monster which security agents in Nigeria appear incapable of handling vis a vis its multifaceted manifestations like bombing, kidnapping/hostage taking, destruction of property, creation of fear, to mention but a few. This paper therefore examines the causes, government efforts at fostering peace as well as the effect of insecurity on human being and the nation economy. The study revealed that the power shift from the northern hegemony to a minority geo-political zone of South-south is currently on top in the list of issues that are instigating groups and individuals against the interests of the state. Other matters of concern include intra/inter-party rancour; porous boundaries; unemployment, jobs racketeering and illiteracy. This is targeted at minimally debunking the usual argument about religion being the major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. It is a known fact that insecurity is detrimental to general well being of the people with its resultant effects in the areas of illnesses; low life expectancy; low quality of life and even death. On the economy, insecurity has led to the destruction of business, properties and equipments; relocation and closing down of businesses. The study suggests that since Nigeria can not be sold to private managers as usually can be done to public enterprises, the government should allow for dialogue through the convocation of a conference of ethnic and minority groups to fine-tune a more peaceful way-forward for Nigeria.
Keywords: Insecurity, Human Existence and Economic Development

Introduction

One of the fundamental human rights of the people in any given state is the right to security and this is why it is always provided for in the constitution of most sovereign states. Nigeria is not an exception, thus Section 14 (2) (b) of the Nigerian 1999 constitution states clearly that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government". Although the problem of insecurity is not new in Nigeria, however since the confirmation of Goodluck Jonathan in February 2010 as the President and Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria following the hospitalisation and eventual death of President Yar'adua the nation has been witnessing unparalleled security challenges. Now, hardly a day goes by without a report of one security challenge or the other. Unfortunately, ordinary citizens as well as the nation's economic resources are at the receiving end of this wanton destruction. The series of bombings and killings in the north; kidnapping and armed robbery attack in the south; political and economic related assassinations as well as the politically-influenced communal wars has become a multi-hydra headed monster which security agents in Nigeria appear incapable of handling.

Security has long been a part of human existence and sustenance and could be aptly viewed as freedom from threat or violence which could lead to the loss of lives and properties. That is, security is a situation in which citizens are free from any threats to their life and means of livelihood, safe from bodily harm, diseases, unemployment, and human rights violations wherever they may find themselves within a sovereign nation. This paper therefore examines the causes of insecurity, the effect of insecurity on the citizens and the nation's economy and government efforts at fostering peace.

A Review of Related Literature

Various scholars across the globe have postulated differing viewpoints on the concept of security; according to the United Nations Development Programme (1994) human security could be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the daily activities, at homes, offices or communities. That is, security is the state of being safe and secure from danger, it could also be protection from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression.

For the Commission on Human Security (2003), human security is the protection of important aspect of human lives in a way that would enhance human freedoms and fulfillment. Human security encompasses freedom from want, harm, fear and the freedom to take appropriate actions without any form of hindrance. It is also the assurance of future well being and freedom from threat.

Williams (2008) who sees security from the socio-political perspective averred that security involves the capacity to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. That is, security is socio-political in nature as without security there can be no political stability and consequently social activities will be in chaos. Palme (1992)

argues that there is a connection between security and survival. For him, security is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. Thus, security is synonymous to freedom from danger, fear and doubt among others. Security, Nwagboso (2012) argues is an essential concept which is commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to the survival of individuals or groups. Thus, for him, security can be equated with freedom from present and future danger, harm or anxiety however, security may not be the absence of threats but it is the ability to respond to these threats with appropriate skill and expertise.

In the views of Otto and Ukpere (2012), security relates to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis. For Akin (2008) security is any laid down procedures toward the protection of persons and property against hostile persons. It is a situation where by a conducive atmosphere is created within which people in the state can go about their normal daily activities without threat to either their lives or properties. Thus, security encompasses all approach toward safeguarding human as well as material resources in the state against all forms of aggressions or violent conduct.

Critically appraising Nigeria's security problems Omoyibo and Akpomera (2012) avowed that security in Nigeria is synonymous to an individual who put iron bars across his or her windows which eventually prevents the individual from escaping a fire outbreak. For them, the only condition for the maintenance of peace and the guarantee of security is by upholding law and order. By this, state could be secured against threats which may include low-level civil disorder, crime, organised violence, or even an armed insurgency (El-Rufai, 2012).

Forms and the Causes of Insecurity

Political Factors

The unexpected power shift from the northern hegemony to a minority geo-political zone of South-south, as a result of the death of President Yar'adua could be linked to the high tempo of insecurity. That is, the death of President Yar'adua resulted in an alteration of the northern perpetual claim on political power in Nigeria. In addition, the refutation of the North-South agreement on rotational presidency within the People's Democratic Party (PDP) is also another major factor, thus the death of Yar'Adua and the ascendancy of Goodluck Jonathan as the president upset careful political arrangement (Ferrell, 2012). Other forms of insecurity include politically related assassinations. In addition to this is the continuing rancour among political leaders even within same party and rancour between the ruling party and the opposition (Wali, n.d.). There are also several economic related assassinations all over the nation which creates danger to the nation's economy. Furthermore, there is the power play and over-ambition of politicians who willfully encourage the procurement of weapons in order to pursue their inordinate political ambition (Egbewole, 2013).

Leadership Factor

The Nigerian state for sometime now has not had the benefit of being administered by good leaders as most of the political leaders are in office for pecuniary gains. Often, sadly, these crops of political leaders oppress the citizens with the looted money, train thugs and hooligans who later turn to robbers or engage in other forms of crime when they are dumped by the politicians after elections thus constituting a major threat to the security of the nation.

Unemployment Factor

Idle hand, they say is the devil workshop so as the rate of unemployment continues to rise so does the wave of crime and its attendant effect. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) cited in Ogah *et al.,* (2011) puts unemployment in Nigeria at 23.9 per cent and still raising. These unemployed people now employ themselves by engaging in illegal activities such as kidnapping, robbery, bunkering, and other nefarious activities.

Jobs Racketeering Factor

Today in Nigeria, jobs are for sales and only for the highest bidders. Jobseekers to this extent have continued to suffer great losses, as often a lot of money has been collected from them without getting the promised jobs. For instance, recently job seekers filled online application for recruitment into the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) and were asked to pay certain amount of money into designated bank accounts or cash to some persons who claimed to be consultants to the Corps (Vanguard, 2013).

On job racketeering also, the erstwhile Comptroller-General of Immigration (CGI), Mrs. Rose Uzoma, was sacked over alleged job racketeering at the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS). This has brought to the fore the shady deals that permeate recruitment exercises in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. Reports had it that the recruitment scandal was blown open when a House of Representatives Committee probed the CGI for carrying out a recruitment exercise without advertising it in the media as was usually the practice (sunnewsonline, 2013). The Senate Committees on Federal Character and Inter-governmental Affairs has noted with dismay the irregularities which pervade employment at the Nigerian Immigration Services, Nigerian Customs Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Nigeria.

Other reasons may include- growing poverty, poor infrastructural facilities, high illiteracy level (especially in

northern Nigeria), social dislocation as a result of rural/urban migration and the breakdown of societal values, community unrest and the inefficient and ineffective security agents which are saddled with the responsibility of guaranteeing security to the citizens (Daniel, 2011).

Level of Insecurity and Security Degeneration in Nigeria

Insecurity paranoia is continuing to haunt all inhabitants of Nigeria as it is already fast dawning on them that government cannot effectively guarantee the security of lives and properties. The state security agents who are saddled with the responsibility for the security of life and property which include- the police, state security agencies, the military, immigration, and prison service have all performed abysmally in the discharge of their duties. The level of insecurity in Nigeria is multifaceted as such one cannot accurately categorise the patterns of insecurity. Agomuo (2013) posits regarding the nature of insecurity in Nigeria that

> At different times in the past, these different groups have held the Nigerian nation to ransom. In each of these different times, the groups reigned, the nation's security agencies were unable to deal with them or quell their lawless conduct through superior fire power. The government has always reached a form of settlement with these organisations. The trend is that each time the government reached a compromise with these lawless groups, it became weaker and new groups emerged to use violent means to extract a commitment from government. In a typical behaviour of a nation that thrives on a rent economy, the government has always sought to buy peace and always ended with the peace of the graveyard like the current situation in the Niger Delta where former militants have been transformed into either top level government contractors or emergency crude oil refiners in the creeks or kidnap merchants, despite an amnesty programme that still costs the government billions of Naira every year (Agomuo, http://businessdayonline.com, 2013).

There are different forms of insecurity in Nigeria. For example in the South-West geo-political zone, armed robbery is prevalent especially in cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Akure and Abeokuta; in the South-South and South-East which is the oil base of the nation, kidnapping is rampant and the activities cover every part of the zone with victims of all ages and all walks of life; in the North, robbery across the border coupled with Boko Haram insurgence is the security challenge. The menace of the Boko Haram for sometime now has constituted a thorn in the flesh of Nigerians; from the first time they struck in Borno State part of Nigeria in 2009, over 4000 people including Nigeria citizens as well as expatriates has been killed in violent deadly attacks targeting Christian churches, police, a few mosques, military installations, Western-type educational institutions with innocent students and even children (Edukugho, 2012). They have also carried out a series of deadly and costly bombing campaigns in the country - the Independence anniversary bombing, the bombing of the United Nations office in Abuja, the bombing of the Police Headquarters in Abuja, the bombing of the military base in Kaduna (cited in Egbewole, 2013).

Security Challenges and Governmental Efforts at Fostering Peace

The government has made several efforts at putting an end to this menace of insecurity. One of which is the inauguration of the security outfit known as the Joint Task Force (JTF) with the singular aim of quenching the activities of robbers, ethnic Militia, kidnappers as well as terrorism. Furthermore, in the Niger-Delta government has granted amnesty to the erstwhile militants as well as setting up rehabilitation programmes for them. Government has also set up several extra-ministerial bodies such as the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Technical Committees, Ministry of the Niger Delta, and the National Council of Niger Delta (NCND).

Insecurity: Implications for Human Wellbeing and Economic Development

Although the cost of the prevalent insecurity in Nigeria is difficult to measure in monetary or real terms, however it is clear to observers that it has cost Nigerians enormous human and material resources. Security plays a major role in the existence and sustenance of human being. In this wise Coupland (2007) observed that insecurity has a far reaching impact on people's lives and well-being and for this singular reason the government has to be alive to its responsibility of guaranteeing security. When people's security are guaranteed, it gives them the freedom, physically and mentally to get on with the business of building their lives without fear of molestation or violent death. Thus, to experience a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being security is essential (Meddings, 2001), without security, there can be no stable society rather there will be prevalent fear and danger from violent death (Hobbes 1651, cited in Coupland, ibid).

There are links between human security and health as insecurity leads to the collapse in the health care delivery which has concomitant effect on the people's well being (Mori, Meddings and Bettcher, 2004). There are also

the associated effects of insecurity which include fear, coercion, displacement and deprivation of basic daily needs such as drinking-water, food and health care. Human security entails access to food, nutrition, clean drinking water, hygiene and sanitation and housing which could only be got through peace. For instance, displaced populations are subject to a variety of health risks and are prone to a high mortality rate. This is largely because they are dispossessed of food, clean water, proper sanitation, and possibilities of providing economic security for themselves. Malnutrition, overcrowding, and lack of sanitation frequently combine to facilitate the emergence of epidemics of transmissible disease in such populations. Often, children and the elderly are the population groups most susceptible to death from such causes. Thus, where basic conditions of peace and development are met, good health can be attained as part of human security (Meddings, ibid; Ghobarah, Huth and Russett, 2004; Mori, *et al.,* 2004; Bhadelia, 2005).

In addition, insecurity can also inhibit health care system as such facilities are often destroyed leaving no place for people to seek treatment. Furthermore, governments spend more money on fighting the insurgents and so allocate less money in health services hence we see deteriorating health infrastructures (Dodge, 1990). In this situation, medical supplies and equipments become scarce and skilled doctors and nurses flee to more stable areas leading to the spread of communicable disease (Mori, *et al.,* ibid). A vivid example is the recent case of health workers who were designated to immunize children against polio who lost their lives in the cause of discharging their duties in different parts of northern Nigeria. The unfortunate resultant effect was that the immunisation activity was put on hold as health workers stayed away for their safety. Also, the series of bombings has cost citizens vital organs of their body such as noses, ears, and eyes turning them into dependants. Some have had their hands or legs amputated, while others have incurred different forms of ailment such as high blood pressure, shock, due to the loss of relatives, breadwinners and valuable properties or means of livelihood. Besides many people due to security deterioration are living in perpetual fear while some are practically 'living deads' with no hope for the future having lost everything in the pervading insecurity.

On the impact of insecurity on the economy, the productive aspect of most manufacturing business depends largely on the availability and regular supply of raw materials for production. Insecurity has cut off the supply of such raw materials hence, jeopardizing production activities. Besides this, insecurity affects marketing of finished product as there is a continuous exodus from areas of insecurity. There is also an increase in security spending as most business organisations operating in Nigeria spend a lot in maintaining private security outfits. The destruction of their business building, properties and equipment is tantamount to loss of capital which has ruined not a few businesses in Nigeria. Thus, security is critical for the nation's development and its absence of security means that economic growth and development cannot be achieved (Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro, 2013).

Insecurity is a risk factor which business owners and managers dread and avoid by relocating their businesses elsewhere. In the case of Nigeria, there is also evidence of some businessmen and manufacturing companies having to relocate particularly from the North in recent times to other peaceful parts of the country (Nwagboso, 2012). Many of the Igbos and Yorubas from Southern Nigeria who are engaged in various businesses in Northern Nigeria have had to return to their home states to avoid the violence orchestrated by the terrorist group Boko Haram (Suleiman, 2012). Thus the Boko Haram insurgency which begun in Maiduguri, Borno State, in 2009, has badly affected the economy of the North as major consumer goods and the companies which produce these consumer goods have withdrawn from the region. A good example are the telecommunication companies which have been forced to close down as their telecommunication apparatuses were repeatedly destroyed; media houses were equally attacked as well as having some of their staff killed; banks too were not spared from the destruction as some branches of the banks were attacked and robbed. Thus the resources which could have been used in strengthening the infrastructural amenities are increasingly being diverted to fund the security system, therefore constituting a drain on the nation resources (Nwagboso, 2012).

Oil production per day has also drastically declined as a result of kidnappings of oil workers in the region. Nigeria is therefore estimated to be losing about 600,000 barrels of crude oil on daily basis to illegal bunkers which amounts to about N3.7 trillion yearly (The Punch, May 20, 2011, cited in Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2012). Besides, the wave of kidnapping in some parts of Nigeria has forced investors, businessmen and manufacturing companies to relocate to other peaceful cities in Nigeria or even to leave the country entirely. In Aba for example, the Nigeria Breweries Limited (NBL), Seven- Up PLC, UNILEVER PLC, Paterson Zochonis (PZ) PLC relocated to Enugu largely due to constant kidnapping of their expatriate staff (Nwagboso, 2012). Thus the decline in foreign investment in Nigeria as a result of insecurity when combined with the effects of global economic showdown has caused the closing down of tens of thousands of factories in Nigeria (Omoyibo and Akpomera, ibid).

Conclusion

Security without doubt is sine qua non for the sound existence of human beings, a nation, its unity and economic

prosperity as well as political stability. Security entails the presence of peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources. All threats to human security are also challenges to health and consequently are detrimental to the physical, psychological and over all well being of the individual. Thus, we note that insecurity leads to illnesses, low life expectancy rate, low quality of life and even death.

The productive sector of the economy which depends largely on the availability and regular supply of raw materials is suffering from the cutting off of the supply of raw materials and also facing untold difficulty in the marketing of finished product. In the area of finance, insecurity has increased security or defense spending as the country and most business organisations now spend a lot in maintaining security outfits. Insecurity has thus, become a drain on national resources as the resources expended on security could have been otherwise deployed in developing national infrastructure. Finally and perhaps most importantly to Nigeria, insecurity has significantly affected oil production as a result of kidnappings and the hostage taking of oil workers and this has adversely reduced government revenue.

Therefore, this paper suggests that there should be an open dialogue among Nigerians cutting across all ethnic groups in order to negotiate and proffer ways of living together harmoniously so that Nigeria would be able to overcome its security challenges.

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