Prioritizing National Security: A Prerequisite for Growth and Development in Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Review Article

ABSTRACT

This article examines and analyzes concrete issues that undermine national security, growth and development in Nigeria. The paper maintained that national security is under serious threats emanating from the nature and character of the Nigerian State. The Nigerian State is reduced to a means of production by the hegemonic ruling faction, which is why the abundant human and natural resources have never been a spring board for socio-economic and political development, unable to liberate the Nigerian people from the shackles of poverty, unemployment, ignorance and disease in the midst of abundance thereby, generating insecurity. Today, insecurity has enveloped everywhere as communities have been taken over by insurgents and bandits who see criminality as a means of livelihood and sustenance. The streets have been taken over by kidnappers who abduct innocent citizens and demand for huge ransoms at the slightest opportunity. Majority of the people have no hope and confidence in the Nigerian State which is a theatre of accumulation and a depot of corruption by the political elite, who keep development at bay. The paper however concluded that for Nigeria to enjoy national security and to realize her potentials, deliberate efforts must be made to curb corruption which has been a monster that halted development over the years. Economic resources should be equitably distributed among the different ethnic groups who constitute Nigeria.

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Government must uphold the rule of law and ensure that justice is served to all who deserve it. Elections must not only be free and fair, but must be seen to be free and fair. Enduring institutions must be built by the state to stimulate development necessary to curb poverty, unemployment and ignorance which are catalysts for security crises in Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of nation-states, national security has been a priority to all states. Nations make concerted efforts to protect and defend their territories and sovereignty. Equally important is the protection of lives and properties of the citizens which is considered sacrosanct. Furthermore, nations also make conscious and deliberate efforts to engender development which is necessary for national security. This is simply because; national security would remain a mirage without development. Development is fundamental in the pursuit of national security, and the two cannot be separated. This truism is buttressed by McNamara [1] who posited that:

> In a modernizing society, security means development. Security is not military force; though it may involve it; security is not military hardware; though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security. Therefore, nations have indeed recognized that security is fundamental as without security, there can be no development and conversely, without development, there can be no security.

In Sub-Saharan Africa and indeed Nigeria, the realities emanating from underdevelopment and the challenges of nation-building have made national security to be at its lowest ebb. Peace and development have eluded the people as the country is grappling with corruption, poverty, misery, ethno-religious and communal conflicts, banditry, kidnapping and above all, Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-Eastern part of the country due to inept leadership [2]. Today, in Nigeria, there is no state that is not under one form of security threat or the other. The land is gradually been taking over by criminals some of whom are more sophisticated than the security agencies.

Buttressing this, Otu [3] lamented that "at least three people somewhere in the country are killed, and as the reader goes through the paper, a head is being blown away, a stomach is being ripped open and a limb is being shattered by bullets whizzing off the barrels of an armed robber's gun. From Lagos to Abuja, Kaduna to Bida, Onitsha to Yola, armed hoodlums showing neither mercy nor pity have unleashed a reign of terror on Nigerians. They are all over towns and villages, in ghettos and Government Residential Areas (GRAs). No one is safe, no place is sacred and no security is inviolable. The armed hoodlums are not just daring, they are ruthless. They steal, they maim, they rape and they kill". Therefore in Nigeria today, the security agencies are overwhelmed by the spate of violence and criminality that abound in different communities.

It is pertinent to note that, with the re-emergence of democracy in 1999, political class contestation for political power and the capture of the state have not helped matters. Politics in Nigeria is characterized by a cut-throat competition in a zero-sum game manner. In a bid to capture power, sentiment is whipped up; ethnic identities are negatively manipulated to achieve selfish and parochial objectives. Elections results are manipulated to pave way for government's anointed candidates leaving ethno-religious and communal violence and counter violence in its wake. Therefore, the youths who are the most productive segment of the population are reduced to pawns in the political chess board of their various politicians who seek power at all cost and show no restrain in using these youths to further their ambitions by doling out stipends to perpetrate violence. Furthermore, even in cases where there are mounting of evidence and the perpetrators' hands are found dripping in blood, they have many times evaded capture and punishment. This explains why the Nigerian State is witnessing endless cycle of inter–ethnic and religious violence as the government has failed woefully to enforce laws protecting its citizens from wanton violence [4]. All these generate serious tensions, distrust and even anarchy which is gradually tearing the Nigerian State apart due to the centrifugal tendencies this engenders. Experts however argued that, the nature and character of the Nigerian State as a

multi-ethnic and religious country with different ethnic nationalities struggling to access political power for parochial interest has been the bane of national security in Nigeria [5].

Furthermore, strong institutions of government that spur development are lacking instead, the polity is choked with "strong men" who determine the direction of public policies and who determine who gets what, when and how as well as how values are authoritatively allocated in the society. The growing reliance on powerful interest groups conspires to limit the range of policy choice open to the government, paralyzing the process of institutional and societal development. Thus, the State develops only institutional frameworks that encourage political leaders to pursue politically painless policy solutions at the detriments of the people [6]. Therefore, over the past five decades, what Nigerians have experienced is bad leadership, communal violence, collapse of critical infrastructure necessary for growth and development, leading to general disenchantment and disillusionment by the citizens. This is so much that Nigeria is reputed as the largest failed State in the world [7].

Under normal circumstances, leadership labors hard to build strong and long lasting institutions that will tackle the challenges of nation-building, generate development and foster unity in the society, but hardly this is the case in the Nigerian context because of greed and selfishness of the political elites who exploit these weakness for political gains of mal-governance and malfeasance. The State of Nigeria and its people are gradually but steadily sliding. Hopelessness, despair, poverty, misery, and deprivation have dominated the psyche of majority of Nigerians. These remain major national security concerns in Nigeria. Therefore, the assumption so readily made that there has been failure of development is misleading. The problem is not so much that development has failed as that it was never really on the agenda in the first place [8,9].

However, the paper is divided into several parts. Part one is an introduction. Part two gives a theoretical and conceptual analysis of development and national security in their broad sense, while part three narrows the discussion and analysis to concrete and specific national security issues. Part four looks at the specific fundamental threats to national security in Nigeria, and the final part is conclusion and recommendations.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING ON DEVELOPMENT

Throughout history, from traditional to modern societies, development is a desirable phenomenon. Development remains at the heart of leadership where efforts are made at mobilizing people and resources, in the realization that human's natural instinct is to make progress and improve their well-being. The lack of it has many consequences, one of which is insecurity. Therefore, development in human society is a many sided process. At the level of individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. At the level of social groups, therefore, development implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships [10]. Furthermore, economic development is a matter of an increasing capacity to produce, that is, the capacity for self-sustaining growth [10].

In his contribution to the meaning of development, Seers [11] posited that the questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all of the three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this is a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse especially if the entire three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capita doubled. Therefore, Seers conception of development is important because it centered on the improvement in the living conditions of individuals. By implication therefore, it means that the economy could grow without developing.

Further to this however, Todaro and Smith [12] maintained that development is a multi-dimensional process involving the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. This involves, in addition to improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as popular attitudes, customs, and beliefs. The main contention of this conception of development is that development is both a physical process and a state of mind. The transformation of institution

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is one aspect. The other aspect is that the thinking of people must change.

Accordingly, "development is about human beings. They need four things. First is water. It is the first thing needed to live. Without it plant or animal or a baby dies. Second is food. Without enough of it life is miserable and short. Third, is health-otherwise the human becomes sick. Fourth is education which helps one open new horizons and unlock new possibilities, and above all, peace and order. Without it none of the four basic needs can be sustained. Therefore, Development is the qualitative transformation of living condition of the people, which liberates the people from the shackles of poverty, unemployment, ignorance and disease" [13].

However, "the concept of sustainable development has come to dominate development discourse in recent times. Sustainable development has been described as that development that meets the needs and aspirations of the present generations, without compromising the ability to meet the need of future generations. Sustainable development strategy may therefore be seen as facilitator for balancing the conservation of nature's resources with the need for industrial and technological development and advancement. Put differently, it connotes the capacity to improve the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystem" [14].

2.1 An Overview of the Concept of National Security: A Critique

In conceptualizing national security, a fair observation needs to be made at the outset. First, there is the prevailing conception that is associated with the doctrine of military defense i.e. developing military capability to contend/deal with perceived external threats to the country's territorial integrity. It is in this context that in a major effort to re-examine for instance Nigeria's defense policy in the early 1990's, national security is conceptualized as having the following attributes:

1. Deter attack on the home front;
2. Defend the territorial integrity if deterrence fails;
3. Deter insurgency and deal with internal crisis;
4. Deter foreign military intervention in the country's neighboring states [15].

Similarly, Saliu [16] posited that national security in its traditional conception means absence of physical threats. It was perhaps for this reason that security in this sense was essentially predicated on military rationalizations. Thus, the military capability of a state, measured in terms of its combat readiness, sophistication of weapons in its arsenal, number of military personnel etc were considered as pivotal to the security of a state [16]. However, this perspective of national security is too militaristic. When the security of a state is measured in terms of sophisticated weapons and the number of military personnel, there are consequences. The health care system, the educational system, and other crucial infrastructures required for a country's development would be neglected in favor of buying weapons and ammunition. During the Cold War, this image was mainly in control and to blame for the "arms race" between the two ideological opponents, the United States and the former Soviet Union.

In the same vein, Ate and Akinterewa [17] maintained that national security has to do with the defense and protection of the sovereignty of the country and of its territorial and political jurisdictions against external and indeed internal threats. A critical assessment of this perspective of national security however, dismissed and down played the non-military dimensions, including economic security. The security of a nation to a very large extent is depended on the ability of the state to ensure that its citizens are protected from economic sabotage by other nations of the world. Nations of the world trade among themselves and any attempt by one nation to sabotage and frustrate the international economic activities of the other is considered a threat to national security. The United States of America and many other nations ensure the protection of the investments of their citizens abroad which helps in no small measure in boosting the GNP. Therefore, national security must encompass the promotion of the international economic interests of a nation-state and not only the preservation of a country's sovereignty in relation to others within the contemporary global system. Based on this, national security of a nation must take into cognizance the economic interests of its citizens and the survival of its institutions which are regarded as a duty of the government.

In his submission, Imobighe [18] sees national security as something that has to do with freedom from danger or with a nation's ability to

protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest, and enhance the well-being of its people. Furthermore, [18] contended that the military factor thus, ranked very high in the actualization of these pursuits for a very long time. A critical examination of these views also suggest that too much emphasis was given to the military or conventional aspect of national security which reduced national security only to the protection of a country's territorial integrity, while ignoring other critical aspects of security which include poverty reduction, employment generation and justice which are pre-conditions for peaceful co-existence in every nation of the world. National security therefore, refers to the protection of a nation-state, its institutions including the general well-being of its citizens. It is a fact that insurgency thrives on poverty and frustration where the state fails to meet the yearnings and aspirations of its citizens thereby generating security challenges within a state as experienced by the Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria today. To this end, a nation-state can enhance its security by striving hard to eliminate poverty and create opportunities for its citizens and not necessarily relying on military option.

Similarly, Mbachu [19] analyzed national security to include the protection of a nation from all types of external aggression, espionage, hostile reconnaissance, sabotage, subversion, annoyance and other inimical influences. However, a careful analysis of this view shows that it is externally oriented and ignored the dynamics of internal contradictions within a State which can engender national security challenges. In other words, this perspective emphasizes the inviolability of the nation vis-à-vis other nations and relegates internal rebellion within nations emanating from deep seated grievances. It is pertinent to note that since the end of the Cold War, the narrative of international security has changed from war among States to wars within States (Civil Wars). Therefore, nations of the world now pay more attentions to internal aggression emanating from insurgency and terrorism within the State which have undermined security of lives and properties. Contribution to national security discourse, Paleri [20] argued that national security is the measurable state of the capacity of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of State policy through governance…and is extendable to global security

by variables external to it. National security is therefore, the requirement to maintain the survival of a nation-state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power.

Furthermore, Barry [21] enunciated that national security of a state depends on political security. That is, the stability of the social order. Thus, national security is also dependent on among other factors, effective political inclusion of different groups in the polity. However, a critical appraisal of this perspective of national security suggests that it is too limited as it only emphasized political dimension of national security. The perspective failed to pay attention to other aspects of national security such as environmental degradation. There is no gain saying that, nations of the world are threatened by environmental degradation both natural and man-made. For instance, desertification has uprooted and exposed a lot of people in the Sahel region to hardship and death, lakes which used to be means of livelihoods for millions are drying up, gully erosions are expanding and flood disasters are commonplace. Furthermore, multinational oil corporations are spilling oil as a result of oil production, and gas flaring has not abated thereby destroying flaura and fauna. These are national security concerns that attention has not been paid to. Further to this, cyber crimes are everywhere as a lot of people have lost billions to hackers who access different accounts the world over. Therefore, national security is enhanced when a nation builds technologies to protect its citizens from environmental degradation, international financial crimes, piracy among others, and not necessarily dependent only on the stability of the political order.

Nevertheless, Kegley [22] submitted that national security has to do with a country's capacity to resist external or internal threats to physical survival or its core values. Thus, national security has come under serious threat under the present age of globalization which encourages the movement of people across international borders thereby generating a lot of security concerns as national boundaries are less important. Hence, insecurity is commonplace as a result of melting borders and migration, as poverty is on the increase as a result of unemployment, inequality, and the utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), all of which undermine global security. Furthermore, Kegley [22] contended that globalization has led to the

increase in transnational and organized crimes flow among nation-states. There is the issue of arms/drugs smuggling, the spread of diseases, and general migration crises as a result of global travel. Also, there is the issue of international flow of finance to support terrorism, separatist groups and rebels, most especially in the third world societies with predominantly failed states. Thus, globalization has limited the ability of nation-states to be in total control of their security. Be that as it may, globalization has engendered wealth for millions of people the world over, as people sit in the comfort of their homes and make fortunes with the use of ICT. Indeed the inability of some nations to develop appropriate technologies to check the flip side of globalization is responsible for insecurity in these climes.

3. NATIONAL SECURITY: BEYOND TRADITIONAL ANALYSIS AND ROMANTICISM

The end of the Cold War has heralded a redefinition of security from strategic military perspective to non-strategic perspective. This may be due to the fact that the conception of security in strategic/military considerations alone is not only reductionist, but also self-defeatist. For, there are certainly several other sources of threats and dimensions to security at all levels - individual, nation-state, and international - that go beyond strategic understanding. These include: sustainable economic growth and development, food security, environmental degradation/ protection, human rights issues including that of the minorities, gender balance etc. As a matter of fact, the strengthening of the military dimension of security is not only inimical to the actualization of these other dimensions of security, but also a viable source of threat to them. This is because by emphasizing the military elements, which are usually at a very high cost, available resources for other dimensions become very limited-a development that ends up compromising them. It is on this premise that Ibeanu [23] argued that security means the capacity of groups (and individuals as their agents) to provide their physical and psychological needs and livelihoods. This means a progressive elimination of objective conditions that limit this capacity, as well as reduction of fears and anxieties about their abilities to meet these needs. In this sense, Ibeanu [23] further explained that security has to do with protection from poverty, exploitation, disease, bio-chemical contamination, injustice and the likes. Thus, national security is now widely understood to include energy security, food security, environmental security, cyber security etc. Similarly, national security risks include, in addition to actions of other nation-states, actions by violent non-state actors, narcotic cartels, multinational corporations and effects of natural disasters. Governments rely on range of measures including political, economic and military power as well as diplomacy to enforce national security. Government may also act to build the conditions of security regionally and internationally by reducing transnational causes of insecurity, such as climate change, economic inequality, political exclusion, and nuclear proliferation.

In the same vein, Mbachu and Sokoto [24] stressed that security has now encompassed the basic principles and core values associated with a better quality of life, freedom, social justice, prosperity and development but poverty, disease, ignorance and inequality can undermine security and development of a society thus, creating grievances which can be exploited by violent extremists. It is in the context of this broader conceptualization and holistic approach that national security can essentially be seen in terms of the protection and defense of a country's territorial integrity, promotion of peaceful co-existence in the polity, containing/eliminating threats to internal security, ensuring systemic stability and bringing about sustainable and equitable socio-economic development. This suggests why there is now a growing tendency to define national security to include not just military defense of territory, but also internal stability and socio-economic development.

Analyzing this further, Mcnamara [1] explained that there is no question but that there is evidence of a relationship between violence and economic backwardness. Thus, security of any nation lies not solely or even primarily in its military capability but equally in developing relatively stable patterns of economic and political growth and development. Indeed it is not just the physical survival of the people and the state which is at the issue, but also the satisfaction of their needs for food, clothing, education and shelter. Therefore, it can be deduced that without development, there is no security. Security is tied to technology, economic development and employment opportunities.

In a nutshell therefore, security is seen as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which includes the protection of lives and property, freedom from

fear and wants as well as the freedom to live in dignity. Hence, the concept of security in the 21st century transcends the conventional security approach, to human security approach which incorporates aspects of physical security, economic security and social security. It implies that peace can be achieved once government is able to address the structural inequalities that come as products of poor governance, lack of democracy, absence of the rule of law and level playing field for citizens to work and earn a living, as well as the associated violence these produce in the society. To this end, the imperative of national security is basically in terms of protection of life, property and economic resources of a country by constituted authorities, using the security agencies [19].

4. FUNDAMENTAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

It is true that Nigeria is grappling with myriad of security threats. However, there are threats that appear to defy solutions and have constituted an albatross in the quest for socio-economic development and nation-building in Nigeria. These threats have slowed down development and are challenging the very foundation of the fragile Nigerian State that if left unchecked, can destroy the Nigerian State and the gains so far made. Therefore, for the purpose of clarity, they are analyzed one after the other.

4.1 Ethno-Religious/Communal Conflicts as Bane of National Security in Nigeria

It's truism that Nigeria is a heterogeneous society. It's a cultural mix country with a very large population (the largest in Africa). In addition to the three major ethnic nationalities, there are several other ethnic groups numbering over (300) three hundred. Nigeria is also a multi-religious State with a substantial population professing Christianity and Islam and a host of indigenous religions. By virtue of its composition therefore, Nigeria has been described by scholars and writers as a conglomerate society characterized by diverse types of socio-ethnic communities ranging from tribe to multi-national groups with different ways of life which are expressed in different institutional systems [25]. From this description therefore, Nigeria is an embodiment of cultural pluralism.

It is instructive to note that Nigeria's composition has been a fundamental challenge in the process of nation-building, development and national security. Since the attainment of independence in 1960, the Nigerian State had battled with the issue of ethnic conflicts, and all efforts to bring together people of different ethnic nationalities to push the Nigerian project of nation-building forward has been a monumental fiasco as majority of Nigerians are more committed to their respective regions, religions and tribes than the nation [26]. The national anthem is a verse-in-pretension as the Nigerian State exists only on paper, and not in the consciousness of the people who make up the polity. These characteristics engendered crisis of different sort which include but not limited to crisis of identity, crisis of participation, crisis of legitimacy and penetration which are challenging national security [27].

As a result of these, lawlessness, insecurity and disorder are common features of the Nigerian State. The Nigerian State has been reduced to almost a failed state perpetually at war with itself, as neither the compound majority ethnic groups nor those politically referred to as minority ethnic groups are comfortable with Nigeria federal system. Hence, allegations and counter allegations, various demands and counter demands, agitations and counter agitations spearheaded and co-ordinated by the politically, incoherent elites have become the main features of the federal system. The federal system which was adopted as a framework specifically to address the challenges of multiculturalism has been turned into a national security problem [25].

However, "the inception of democratic government in 1999 seemed to have opened the floodgates of ethnic conflicts and proliferation of ethnic militia groups in Nigeria. It has become usual to view the various ethnic strives and political violence in Nigeria as a fallout from the opening–up occasioned by the return to democratic rule after a very long period of military rule, during which feelings come to be bottled-up. With the democratic opening, the space now exists for the pent-up feelings to come to the fore, often leading to clashes among the various groups inhabiting the country. Although Nigeria has witnessed a transition from military to democratic rule since 1999, it has not been able to address the numerous and fundamental causes of inter-ethnic conflicts that have in no small measure, contributed to the undermining of her democratic experiment, the subversion of the goal of nationhood and national security. Democracy instead of yielding

peace, stability and security to lives and properties, it seems to have yielded a return, full circle to the spate of ethnic conflicts and violent eruptions which characterize military regime. Where conflicts have not occurred or have abated, associated tensions have heightened with all the attendant consequences" [15].

Analyzing this, Ake [8] asserted that in Nigeria, political power is everything. It is not only the access to wealth, but also a means to security and general well-being. For anyone outside the hegemonic faction of political elite, it is generally futile to harbor any illusions of becoming wealthy by entrepreneurial activities or to even take personal safety for granted. For anyone who is part of the ruling faction, entrepreneurial activities is unnecessary, for one could appropriate surplus with less risk or less trouble. In post-colonial Africa, and indeed Nigeria, the premium on political power is exceptionally high and the mechanisms for moderating political competition are lacking. As a result, political competition tends to assume the character of warfare and the struggle for political power is regarded as a matter of life and death issue because the State controls the means of acquiring wealth [8]. Thus, denying one group access to power which by implication, access to wealth and all the advantages it brings is more often than not met with violence because of the premium attached to political power.

Buttressing this, Jega [15] submitted that the ruling class in Nigeria derives both its origin and wealth from the State, around which it gravitates, using every available means to secure power and access. Hence, in the competition and struggles for State power, especially in the period of economic crisis, identity politics becomes heightened and tend to assume primacy. The State tends to resort to politics of identity for its legitimation, while those excluded tend to resort to identity politics to contest this exclusion. The State thus is projected as a critical variable in identity transformation, and the resurgence of identity politics. Fundamentally therefore, perception of domination and marginalization of one group by the other always engenders conflicts in Nigeria.

Hence, the chaos enveloping Nigeria is due to the incompetence of Nigerian ruling class, who has a poor grasp of history and finds it difficult to appreciate and grapple with Nigeria's ethnic and political complexity [4]. "This clique, stunted by ineptitude, distracted by power games and the

pursuit of material comforts is incapable of saving the people from ethnic conflicts and their devastating consequences. Thus, the Nigerian State is trapped in the contradictions of primordial sentiments unable to manage inter-ethnic conflicts that are tearing the already tattered fabrics of the Nigerian State. Consequently, aggravated hostilities, tensions, heightened fear and suspicion between the various ethnic groups have become permanent features of the Nigerian State, thereby compounding the task of political and economic transformation necessary for national development and security" [15].

4.2 The Dynamics of Poverty in Nigeria's National Security Challenges

"Poverty in Nigeria presents a startling paradox. It is daily worsening and painful reality to majority of the population as majority of Nigerians are living below poverty line. The social condition of many in Nigeria is appalling. In spite of a robust endowment in natural and human resources, the level of the poverty of her people stands in contrast to the country's vast wealth [28]. For decades, the Nigerian State has struggled with the issue of socio-economic development which has remained in the decline in the phase of increasing revenue from crude oil. The deepening incidence and dynamics of poverty in Nigeria have stratified and polarized the Nigeria society between the haves and have not, between the North and South, between the educated and uneducated; poor parents beget poor off-springs creating a kind of dynasty of the poor" [28]. "The impoverished majority live in slums far away from the extremely few wealthy and corrupt individuals. Children of the rich attend expensive private schools from kindergarten to the university, while the poor children roam about in public schools, which are just shadows of themselves because of government neglect over the years. The rich and the poor hardly mingle reminiscent of apartheid South Africa. The only difference between Apartheid South Africa and Nigeria is that here you have a group of blacks who do not make up ten percent of the population but control the economy, while the majority are poor" [7].

Furthermore, majority of Nigerians have succumbed to hopelessness as the resources to revamp the country's critical infrastructure necessary for empowerment are daily looted and stashed in Western banks. The people are worst-

off now than 30 years ago [7]. "The worst hit of this situation are the women and young people as they rely on their husbands, parents, and others who themselves do not have access to any economic activity. More so, the youth in rural areas who are supposed to be the back bone of the work force, resort to massive migration to urban centers in search of white collar jobs and this situation does not only create labor shortage in rural communities and family farmlands, but adds further emotional turmoil and burden to women and elderly who are often left behind in villages. This has adverse effect on decline in agricultural production in rural areas and population explosion in cities which resulted to increase in begging, violence, conflicts, kidnapping, banditry, terror and self-help" [7].

"Therefore, despite billions of dollars of oil revenue that accrued into Nigeria since the discovery of oil in the late 1950's, the economy still remains mono-cultural. The Nigeria ruling and governing class failed to diversify the economy in such a way that the various sectors can be vibrant to contribute to the GDP and poverty reduction. The oil sector alone cannot cater for the development needs of Nigeria. Agriculture still remains the mainstay of the economy despite the dominance of oil. Apart from contributing the largest share of GDP, it is the largest employer of labor and a key contributor to wealth creation and poverty alleviation as a large percentage of the population derive their income from agriculture and related activities" [28]. "Despite this contribution, agricultural sector remains in shambles and underdeveloped. Agriculture is still rain fed with little or no mechanization. Crude implements still dominate production which cannot satisfy the daily demands of a fast growing population. As a result, the government resorted to importation of food which increases unemployment and poverty in the country. Today, unemployment and poverty are threatening social cohesion, security and democracy as the land is been taken over by religions extremist, bandits (Boko Haram) and the Niger Delta Militants-our very own anarchy" [26].

However, in a bit to tackle poverty by the past military and civilian governments in Nigeria so as to enhance national security, different crash poverty alleviation programmes were adopted to improve the standard of living of the Nigeria populace. Selectively, these programmes include: Universal Primary Education (UPE), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), National Directorate for Employment (NDE) Directorate for Food, Road, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life/Family Support Programme (BLP/FSP), the establishment of Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Community Banks, to provide loans at reasonable terms to low income individuals for investment. Unfortunately, loans were given to the rich at the detriment of the rural poor [29].

Most recently, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) and National Poverty Eradication Programme were created with the return to democracy in 1999. These programmes, individually or collectively, have failed to impact meaningfully on the lives of the Nigeria poor who continue to swim in the ocean of misery and deprivation due to politicization of programmes, lack of capacity building, and inconsistency in policies, low social values and above all, corruption [30]. Therefore, poverty reduction in the country only benefited those who designed and implemented them, while the poor are left "drier". The fact is that the various programmes Better life For Rural Women, Family Support Programme etc primarily bettered, supported, and advanced the monetary and property urge and interest of the wives of Heads of State, State Governors and Local Government Chairmen who embezzled and stole the vast resources for poverty reduction in Nigeria during the past three to four decades. Therefore, poverty reduction is the most difficult challenge facing Nigeria and its citizens. It is also the major hurdle that must be overcome in the pursuit of peace, stability and socio-economic growth and development in Nigeria [30].

4.3 Corruption and National Security Crisis in Nigeria

Corruption in all its extensions and ramifications remains the bane of the Nigerian State. Corruption and abuse of positions and privilege have long been features of Nigeria's economic and political landscape. It remains the greatest evil that hijacked and slowed down development in Nigeria over the years. For several years, inflation of government contracts and the whole challenge of systemic corruption, low levels of transparency and accountability have been major sources of development failures and by extension, national security crises. Illicit activities like Advance fee fraud (a.k.a 419), money laundering and other forms of economics and

financial crimes have equally brought great harm to the fabric of the Nigerian society [28]. Other forms of corruption in Nigeria includes, but are not limited to unconventional and fraudulent trade practices, misappropriation or diversion of funds, kickbacks, under and over-invoicing, bribery, false declarations, abuse of office, and collection of illegal tolls. The country is rated as one of the most corrupt on earth.

In their submission however, Ibrahim and Odekunle [31] argued that corruption festers in Nigeria and indeed so many African countries because there is opportunity to engage in corruption with impunity, a situation that led to the disappearance of 12.5 billion dollars of oil windfall in Nigeria in the early 1990s. Again, weakness of the Nigerian state as well as poor law enforcement, pervasive poverty, morbid greed and materialism, cultural lag and moral decay also contribute to corruption in the society. Today, the situation is even worst as public resources meant for development of critical infrastructure, poverty reduction and improvement of national security are looted on an industrial scale by the political class living the people worst-off in all development indices than ever before.

Nevertheless, Otite [32] identified five major types of corruption in Nigeria with their security implications. First is *Political corruption* which manifests in the activities connected with election and succession, and the manipulation of people and institutions in order to retain power and office as political positions are scarce and the prize of office are high. Second is *economic corruption* which is commonplace in the economic and business world. Businessmen have been known to bid for favors to any level provided the economic cost of such favors does not exceed the returns and the value made possible by such corrupt acts. Third is *Bureaucratic corruption* which involves buying favors from bureaucrats who formulate and administer government economic and political policies in areas such as acquisition of foreign exchange, import licenses, avoidance of tax and so on. Fourth is *Judicial corruption* as reflected in allegations of corruption against law enforcement agencies and the courts, both indigenous and modern; and fifth is *moral corruption* which is reflected in the desire for employment, the wish to show wealth through the acquisition of women, the arrogant and flamboyant display of material wealth in the ocean of social poverty, and the exploitation of man by man [32].

Today, Nigeria is clearly a nation where dishonesty is extolled while honesty is normally and usually at a discount. Bemoaning this situation, Chuba Okadigbo, former Nigeria Senate President presented the vicious cycle of bribery in Nigeria when he asserted that:

> Bribe the messenger, if you may see his boss. Bribe the clerk, if your file moves up. Bribe the chief clerk, if you want a form. Bribe the executive, if you want to be considered for a job or a contract, bribe the permanent secretary, if you may be short-listed for contracting, bribe the minister when you get the award and pay some advance bribe before you get that contract. Bribe the customs man, if your goods may be cleared. Bribe the gateman, if the cleared goods may get out of the wharf. Bribe the policeman if you may ride on the streets with your ware... Bribe the investigator, if you may inquire about your goods, when stolen. Bribe the prosecutor to facilitate the trial of the thief. Bribe the jailer to make sure he stays in jail and pays his dues as thought fit by the state. And so on [33].

The above illustration demonstrates how corruption has been institutionalized in Nigeria which subverts and affects development and national security over the years. The pattern and degree of corruption in Nigeria is quite varied, and it is extremely difficult to find areas free from corruption. Politicians and civil servants who are blamed as corrupt are perhaps guiltier (in degree) than the mass of the people. Corruption is pervasive in Nigeria because of the growing spirit of materialism and craze for wealth [34]. It is found and practiced by the rich and the poor, the high and the lowly. Nigeria instead of being a role model to other countries of the world, the country has been reduced to a laughing stock among the comity of nations thereby denying Nigeria its rightful place, because leadership has failed to tackle the hydra-headed monster called corruption which constitutes the greatest waste of human and natural resources.

Explaining this point further, Achebe [35] demonstrated how Nigeria's collective patrimony in the 70's and 80's was squandered by the military and political elites and he asserted that:

> The countless billions that a generous providence poured into our national coffers in the last ten years 1972- 82 would have been enough to launch this nation into the middle-rank of developed nations and

transformed the lives of our poor and needy. But what have we done with it? Stolen and salted away by people in power and their accomplices. Squandered in uncontrolled importation of all kinds of useless consumer merchandise from every corner of the globe. Embezzled through inflated contracts to an increasing army of party loyalists who have neither the desire nor the competence to execute their contracts. Consumed in the escalating salaries of a grossly overstaffed and unproductive public service and so on ad infinitum.

Therefore, Nigeria now appears to be unprecedentedly permissive as far as the question of corruption is concerned. Corruption is not only permissible but also tacitly encouraged with wanton recklessness right from the corridor of power. Furthermore, it is instructive to note that, many Governors, Ministers and other top public officers have at one time or the other been accused of large scale fraud (sometimes with alarming evidence) yet nothing happened to them at least as far as Nigerians know. To the astonishment of Nigerians, some of the suspected fraudulent men were in fact redeployed and/or promoted. All these, are creating social tension and avoidable conflicts and decay in Nigeria, as public money is directed to private use by both military and political elites who control State power [34].

It is worthy of note that in a bid to tackle corruption which remains an unmitigated disaster in Nigeria, past military and present civilian administrations introduced one measure or the other to fight it but little or no result was achieved because corruption in Nigeria as indeed everywhere has a way of fighting back. However, General Yakubu Gowon embarked on campaign in the mass media to halt corruption, to massive retirement of corrupt officers and the setting up of institution such as the Public Complain Commission (P.C.C) and the Probe Panel (P.P) by General Murtala Mohammed, and to mere declaration such as Obasanjo's Jaji Declaration, to the call for Ethical Revolution (E.R) by ex-President Shehu Shagari, and Buhari–Idiagbon's War Against Indiscipline W.A.I [34]. All these efforts could not stem the tide of corruption in Nigeria as the monster has eaten deep into the fabric of the society far beyond anybody's imagination. More so, with the inception of democratic rule in 1999, and the understanding that new vista for economic growth, development and national security cannot be achieved in a

corruption infested society like Nigeria, the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo set some machinery in motion to herald a new transparent, accountable and low corruption Nigeria, which include:

a. The establishment of the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligent Unit (BMPIU) with specific mandate of promoting transparency in financial transactions in the government, as well as open and competitive tenders arrangements for government contracts through due process;
b. The establishment of Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) as a deterrent–promoting institution against corruption by public officers;
c. The establishment of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which has the mandate of tackling financial crimes, money laundering, arresting fraudster and other economic misconducts that had created difficulty for the country's development over the years;
d. The establishment of Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), aimed at encouraging the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and other oil companies to make full disclosure of revenue and cost of operations [28].

These structures or institutions are the watch dogs for the fight against corruption by successive administrations in Nigeria since 1999, and are very much on ground performing their statutory responsibilities. However, while a section of the society has expressed confidence and support on the institution on the way and manner they fight corruption, other see them as instruments of vendetta, a political machine or tool in the hands of incumbent most especially the President, to oppress opposition in the polity.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDA-TIONS

National security is a very complex issue. It is all encompassing as it has to do with all aspects of life. To this end, the concept of national security means different things to different people but fundamentally, national security has to do with the survival and safety of the nation-state, its people, including but not limited to the exercise of military, economic, political and diplomatic powers in the society. To achieve national

security, deliberate policies are enacted by the government to ensure the continued survival of the state to enable the citizens to carry out their daily legitimate activities.

However, national security in Nigeria is an expensive commodity as the country is confronted with myriad of security issues. Some experts have attributed the national security challenges bedeviling the country to high level poverty, misery and unemployment created and sustained over the years by greedy political elite, as the issue is not so much that development has failed, but it is not on the agenda, as the elite are preoccupied with primitive accumulation even by terror. Yet, others analyzed national security crises from the fact that strong institutions that stir development are lacking as the polity is chocked with strong men who appear bigger than the State. Thus, the rule of law is replaced by the rule of men causing serious disaffection in the polity with their attendant consequences on peace and development. All these issues are challenging peace, growth, development and above all, national security in Nigeria. In any case, the inability of the government to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the citizens has generated frustration making it extremely difficult for the government to enjoy the loyalty and support of the citizenry in the society.

Under the current democratic rule, competitive partisan political activities are being used as avenues through which groups are exploited and identities rigidly reinforced. Periodic national elections are largely a sham as it is characterized by selection of candidates leaving behind deep seated grievances by those who feel excluded, shortchanged and marginalized in the power equation leading to violence and counter violence. In the light of this, violent youth gangs and militia are formed and armed, and ethnic tension and conflicts are thereby facilitated as the political elites pursue their zero-sum political engagement where all means including violent one's are used to achieve narrowly defined ends.

Furthermore, policies of government that should revolve around the promotion of common good of the citizenry have been hijacked by the cabal who have little or no concern about the welfare of the populace who wallow in the vortex of poverty, unemployment, ignorance and disease in the means of abundant human and natural resources which if tapped, have the potential of transforming the country. Political elites are only preoccupied with access to political power which is an instrument for primitive accumulation.

In summary therefore, since independence up until now, the Nigerian State suffers seriously from challenges of governance. The vast majority of the leaders, if not all have lost their bearing. They have deliberately created security problems which solutions are not in sight. Today, these problems which include chauvinism, regionalism and religious bigotry have taken the center stage in Nigeria and they have continued to grow in lips and bounds in the country threatening the very foundation of the Nigerian State. The high hopes and optimism that greeted the attainment of independence had since evaporated because the Nigeria State has failed to improve the lots of its citizens over the years.

In view of the above, national security, peace and development in Nigeria can only be realized if the government tackles poverty which is ravaging the Nigerian society today. Poverty and unemployment are at the heart of instability and violent conflicts in Nigeria. There can never be peace when over half of the population is living below poverty line in a country that is so endowed. Vulnerable Nigerians deserve social safety net where basic needs of food, clothes, accommodation would be provided. Unfortunately, these vulnerable Nigerians are allowed to roam the streets eking out a living by all means including kidnapping, thuggery, banditry, armed robbery and general self-help which remain the bane of national security in Nigeria.

Justice and the rule of law are fundamental in ensuring national security. Therefore, justice must be served to all who deserve it. Justice must not be for the highest bidder. The administration of justice must be done in a manner that those who feel aggrieved when their rights are violated obtain compensations to discourage them from taking the law in their hands through self-help. A lot of security crises in Nigeria emanated from injustice and lack of adherence to the rule of law which created atmosphere and opportunity for revenge and perpetual violence and counter violence. Therefore, those who violate the law must be punished to serve as deterrence to others.

Elections must be free and fair so that those who lost would accept defeat in good fate. Where elections are marred by irregularities, violent conflicts will always ensue. Again, money politics must be de-emphasized, and politics must not be seen as a zero-sum game where the winner takes all and the loser gets nothing. In Nigeria,

the premium attached to political office is too high, and this informed why politicians stop at nothing to obtain victory including violence because with political power, one is sure of his security and general well-being including primitive accumulation of collective patrimony which is done with ease at the expense of development and general welfare of the people.

Furthermore, there is the need for the government to embark upon serious value re-orientation by discouraging ethnic chauvinism and religious bigotry which have eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian society. An ecumenical engagement should be encouraged where leaders of different religions would meet and educate their adherents on the need for religious tolerance, and also educate them on the fact that there is strength in diversity. The wanton destruction of lives and properties will be discouraged once ethnic and religious leaders co-exist openly with one another in a true and free manner, where things are shared in common without suspicion. This will trickle down to followers who always look up to their leaders whom they see as role models.

Nevertheless, there is the need for the security agencies to be encouraged to do their jobs through motivation and the provision of adequate facilities. More often than not, security personnel are overwhelmed by the superior fire power of criminals which are more sophisticated than those of the security agents. Therefore, the government must invest heavily in the procurement of modern and sophisticated arms and ammunition and equally train the security personnel for effective performance of their duties. Again, the government should invest heavily on education. Education remains the mother's milk in the quest for socio-economic and political development in all societies. Functional and vocational education should be encouraged to engage young Nigerians who constitute chunk of the population. Invention and innovation should be emphasized for national growth and development.

Additionally, agriculture should be given its pride of place. Food security is sine qua non to national security, peace and development. Mechanization must be taken seriously to increase food production necessary for the growing population. Nigerian youths should be given incentive to engage in agriculture to fight hunger. Rural-urban migration in search of white-collar jobs must be discouraged by building infrastructure in rural areas for descent living.

Finally, corruption must be fought to a standstill. As pernicious as corruption is, it is pervasive in Nigeria. It is at the very heart of developmental failure and challenges in Nigeria since independence in 1960 to date. Corruption has denied the people good roads, good hospitals, good schools and above all, electricity which are necessary for industrialization, job creation and poverty reduction. Therefore, the Nigeria people must be mobilized and constitute themselves as watch dogs against corrupt practices, with the orientation that socio-economic and political transformation which the people yearn for, can never be realized if the monster of corruption continues to stand in the way. Transparency and accountability must be made a culture, and every body's sources of wealth must be known by the state to ensure that those who make money through fraudulent and criminal means are shamed and the monies returned to government coffers to promote development and national security in Nigeria.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/103665