

**NATIONAL SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE
DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

After the Second World War in 1945, the concept of national security developed in the United States of America and spread to all emerging nation-states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Its defense has been used as an excuse for enthroning military regimes in these emerging states. National security falls within the primary interest of a state. Initially, its focus was limited to military power and activities, recently, scholars have given it a very comprehensive connotation to suit the challenges of modernity; to embrace military, economic, political, diplomatic and environmental facets. In Nigeria the emergence of military regimes are always justified as a measure to defend Nigeria national security. The national security of a nation is very essential to the sustainability of its status quo. After the independence of most African, Asia and Latin American countries, most of them have been traumatized with internal crises, civil wars, military dictatorship and some environmental challenges that have inhibited sustainable democracy in these countries.

This study argues that both national security and sustainable democracy are two interrelated political and dependable factors that compliment the stability of each other in a nation state, it seeks to examine the concept of national security, unravel threats to national security in Nigeria and establish the nexus between national security and sustainable democracy.

INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War, there was an international understanding on the decolonization of Africa, Asia and Latin American countries. Ever since the agitation for self rule and sustainable democracy has been one of the greatest challenges of these emerging nation-states. A lot of these emerging nation- states have been challenged with

a lot of national security cases such as: political crises, military intervention, internal civil wars, etc which often lead to the dethronement of democracy. Some of the causes of these disabilities can be attributed to the less importance attached to issues bordering on national security. According to Nuhu Ribadu "after about half a century of independence, the inability to realize the great vision of modernity and effective governance is directly related to our inability to ensure the security of lives and properties of the people" (The Nation on Sunday, December 26, 2010,p.4). It is the position of this paper to establish the nexus between national security and sustainable democracy. A country that desires sustainable democracy should take seriously issues bordering on her national security.

According to Onochie-Igbidu (2001) "there are questions and challenges, central among which is the challenge to sustain and maintain democracy and turn it into a culture and way of life acceptable and workable for the largest majority of our people. This involves managing internal tendencies, especially security issues and problem that could impinge on the survival of democracy". This matter should be seen to be very paramount by all concerned the Nigeria project because of the level of insecurity in the country today. Most of the insecurity problems are the offshoot of election exercises.

It is worthy to note that, since the return to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria is said to have witnessed over ninety violent ethno-religious communal political etc conflicts of varying intensities and magnitude (Elaigwu: 2005pp. 57-76). As a result of the declaration of the May 2011 results, thousands of persons were brutally murdered in some parts of the country including ten youth corpsers. This elicited a wide range of reactions from the populace, and the Nigerian state too (Mohammed: 2005 in Mijah 2007:p.1).

In recent times and especially since the commencement of the present political dispensation, Nigeria has witnessed increasing number of security problems and developments that constitute threats to the maintenance and survival of its democratic political system. These security concerns are diverse and complex ranging from political disagreements to kidnapping with alarming dimensions and consequences.

Therefore, this paper is essentially appropriate at present especially when majority of Nigerians are now convinced that, for democracy to be sustained, the issue of insecurity and crime should be adequately addressed to enhance development. This paper

is aimed at making relevant contributions to the enthronement of sustainable democracy in Nigeria. The study shall review the concept of national security, sustainable democracy, and threat to national security in Nigeria. It will establish the nexus between national security and sustainable democracy in Nigeria. This paper further contends that, sustainable democracy is the foundation of economic growth and sustainable development of any state.

The researcher will use historical and descriptive methods to solicit information and data to analyze the content of this paper.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

For a better understanding of this paper, the definition of national security and sustainable development has to be explained precisely although there are no universally accepted definitions of these terms.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Imobighe (1992) conceive security as freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well-being of its people. Implied in this freedom is the fact that security manifests at the levels of nation-states, individuals etc and also has internal and external dimensions.

National security means peace and stability in the community. The concept would seem to relate to measures enacted with a view to safeguarding territorial integrity and national independence from any external threat. It covers any activity prejudicial to the very existence of the State. Nevertheless, this requirement should not be used as a pretext for imposition arbitrary limitations or restrictions on the exercise of human right and freedoms (United Nations publication "Freedom of the Individual under Law: an Analysis of Article 29 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights"). National security is concerned with ensuring that state legal codes are not transgressed, the prevention of attacks on public infrastructures and their personnel by implementing civil defense and emergency preparedness measures (including anti-terrorism legislation), and ensuring the resilience and redundancy of critical infrastructure. This also includes using counter-intelligence or secret services to protect the nation from internal threats sponsored from outside.

Internal security may be conceived as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could attenuate internal cohesion and the corporate existence of the nation and its ability for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic, objectives as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. Finally, internal security also implies freedom from danger of life and property and the presence of the conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate interest within the society (Imobighe: Ibid 224).

Internal security is also the management of national finances free from economic problems that can lead to large scale public dissatisfaction with the government, and public disorder through protests.

External national security is generally the scope more often associated with national security in democratic states. It encompasses national border security as a means of immigration control, national environment security where the environmental threat originates from sources external to national territory, territorial waters and airspace, and assurance of international trade safety through the state borders ("[http://en. wikipedia .org/wiki | National Security](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security)" 2009).

Security by Mc Namara (1968:125) also fits in here and is also all encompassing:

'In modernizing society, security means development it is not military force though it may involve it; security is not traditional military hardware _ though it may' include it security is development and without which there is no security'.

Narrowly, security is being conceived from the human perspective. But from a broader perspective, security could imply the maturation of the structures and processes that can engender and guarantee political space and sufficient conditions for the realization of, among other things, personal group, national etc, aspirations. Kofi Anan (1998:13) admits that:

"Today we know that "security" means more than the absence of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broad vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy, and human rights, protections against environmental degradation, and the proliferation of deadly weapons. We know that we cannot be secure amidst starvation, that 'We cannot build peace

without alleviating poverty, and that we cannot build freedom on the foundations of injustice. These pillars of what we know, understand as the people-centered concept of human security are inter-related and mutually reinforcing”.

Corroborating the broader conception, Nigeria's Former President Chief Olu-Obasanjo (1999:93) submitted that national security be conceived to come under the purview of the security of the interests of individuals political entities and other groups in the country, and the prosperity of individuals and corporate Nigerian institutions within the system or society.

SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

Democracy like security is also a concept. According to Jega (2002; 12) there is not only a multiplicity of conceptions which often are contradictory, but also democracy is used to mean "different things to different people". However, despite the differences in historical and social settings, which often manifest in the various definitions or conceptions of democracy, democracy can be said to refer to a political practice or a mode of governance based on the principles of popular sovereignty, the rule of law, accountability, participation and leadership renewal or change (Nzongola-Nta laga; 2001).

Diamond (1995;49) posits that democratic sustenance involves behavioral and institutional changes that normalized democratic policy and narrow its certainty. This normalization requires the expansion of citizens access to development, democratic citizenship and culture, broadening of leadership recruitment and training and other functions that the civil society performs. For democracy to be sustainable, it must become internalized in the society. It must become a way of life manifesting itself, at all levels of the social and political system.

One central theme to the various notions about national security and sustainable democracy is accountability. It has been described by Akanbi (2004:154) as the right of the people in a democratic setting to hold their leaders responsible for their actions.

However, in the recent past; there has been growing concern with the increasing decline of the efficacy of traditional security strategies for ensuring the goals of orderly, secured and safe society therefore informs the need for, and the increasing adoption by such countries, of new models and philosophy of security to enhance national peace and sustainability of democracy.

NIGERIA NATIONAL SECURITY

Safeguarding the sovereign independence and territorial integrity of the state is the central pillar of Nigerian national security policy. Other guiding principles are African unity and independence, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, and regional economic development and security cooperation. Subordinate goals include military self sufficiency and regional leadership. In pursuing these goals, Nigeria is an active participant in the United Nations Organization (UNO), the African Union and Economic Community of West African States.

THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

The core interest of Nigeria's national defense policy is to ensure the nation's survival and security. National security entails a condition, in which citizens of a country enjoy a free, peaceful, and safe environment and have access to resources which will enable them to enjoy the basic necessities of life; thus, the security of a state directly translates to its ability to protect its citizens from external threats. It also facilitates individuals and groups in carrying out their legitimate businesses without any significant undue hindrance. A nation's security may be undermined by either external or internal conflicts or violence resulting from social, political, religious and economic misunderstandings.

In Nigeria, as in other societies, there is evidence of correlation between democratic governance and the state of security in the country. From 1999 to date, Nigeria has witnessed considerable erosion of domestic security. We are of the opinion that, the state of relative insecurity in Nigeria is the result of the deficit democratic governance in the country.

Some of the major security problems currently confronting the nation have been identified to include: political and electioneering conflicts, socio-economic agitations, ethno-religious crises, ethnic militia's terrorism, boundary disputes, cultism, criminality, organized crimes and corruption. These problems individually and collectively constitute threats to the peace, security and development of the country. Invariably, they have implications for the continuity and survival of the nation's nascent democracy. On the other hand, we also need to explore how democracy can itself be deliberately strengthened as a positive response to these problems.

For the better part of the forty-four years of Nigeria as a nation, the country was under military administration resulting from military takeover of the democratic and constitutional structures of the state.

The military emergence is a security breach resulting from a wide range of reasons, sometimes as a culmination of a number of security and political developments. The security, political and sometimes socio-economic developments -are security concerns that were not addressed or managed by the existing state structure at the time.

Apart from military coups there are other security threats that have threatened and indeed, rattled the democratic political system. Among them, is civil or organized rebellion resulting from a number of socio-political developments including ethnic disagreements, national resource contentions and religious conflicts.

The Nigeria Civil War is an example of such security breakdown resulting from failure to manage ethnic and social problems. Recent international debates have also raised the need to see security in the broader sense as the struggle to secure the most basic necessities of life: food, fuel, medicine, shelter and clothing. Electoral fraud poses a major challenge to democracy in Nigeria and by implication, poses a threat to the security of the nation. Electoral fraud desecrates the sanctity of democracy and weakens its capacity as an instrument for the mobilization of national, human and material resources for the development of the people and the state. And in an environment, where development is security and security is development, the consequences of such acts catch up very quickly with the system.

Another serious threat to Nigerian security is the **structural imbalance** in the ethnic, religious and regional composition of Nigeria and the manipulation of such identities. This can be said to be responsible for the various ethno-religious and even communal conflicts in Nigeria, especially in the more heterogeneous northern part of the country. It also explains the attacks, in the past decade and recently on the Igbos in the North on one hand and the reprisal attacks on Northerners (Hausa) in the East. Similarly, the various ethno/religious conflicts in Kaduna State (Kafanchan (1987), Zango Kataf (1992) Kaduna (2001) and (2003, Jos (2002), Numan (2003/2004), " (Mijah; 2006, 379-380) and currently the terrorism of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria.

Corruption is yet another serious threat to internal security of Nigeria and also one of the major challenges of democratic consolidation. According to the national anti graft commission, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), politicians are the single largest perpetrators of corruption (The Guardians; 14:04:06).; To date, at least two state governors, an inspector General of Police,-Ministers, top Government functionaries have lost their posts for offences related to official corruption.

Recently, the immediate, past Speaker, Demeji Bankole and the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly were detained for the embezzlement of billions of naira belonging to the state. Akinyemi (2004; 8) rightly pointed out the complexity and adverse effects of corruption in Nigeria when he observed that "there is a symbiotic relationship between crime and corruption. Crime breeds and feeds on corruption, just as corruption breeds and feeds on crime". Indeed, the potent threats posed to internal security and democratic consolidation in a society cannot be exaggerated.

This type of situation undermines the integrity and credibility of the democratic process and makes governance much more difficult. It generates resistance from the populace because they feel cheated. The anger and frustration heightens when they see these corrupt officials living very comfortably while they languish in abject poverty; people then resort to violence and crime, such as kidnapping, bombing etc. to register' their displeasure with the system.

Lack of Energy Security: Energy is an essential element for a nation to develop her industrial and economic power. It will be more useful to create self employment and reduce idleness of the Nigerian youths without self employment alternatives. Lack of

energy security is a very serious challenge for Nigerians to overcome to increase her national power and enhance her national security. A situation where the government cannot provide the best for her citizens is a threat to national security.

National Morale: This is one of the elements of national power; it exposes the relationship between government and her citizens. The feelings that citizens have over their government especially in terms of conformity and compliance to government directives or challenges. In the event of an external aggression, can one volunteer to fight or easily be mobilized to fight for your country? According to Morgenthau (1973) in the form of public opinion, national morale, provides an intangible factor without whose support no government, 'democratic or autocratic, is able to pursue its policies with full effectiveness if it is able to pursue them at all. When the national morale of youths is low, it could lead them to frustration. This is a situation where a nation-state could face the challenge of a "failed nation state".

Government needs to periodically carry out deliberate policies that will boost the National Morale of her citizens, so as to enhance compliance and social order.

*****THE NEXUS BETWEEN NATIONAL SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY**

The security context of any society determines the sustainability of its democracy and by extension its political development. For instance, if there is widespread insecurity in a country, the expectant result of it is break down of law and order and chaos, leading to underdevelopment and anarchy.

National security, as a more specific concept, implies the absence of threat to life , property, and socio-economic well being of a nation and its people. It is described by Imobighe, as freedom from danger, or from threats to a nation's ability to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. Accordingly, it embraces not only the establishment of protective measures to safeguard persons, property and information from every form of danger, but also to guarantee the peace and tranquility as well as the welfare of its citizens.

National security (Adekanye 2001 :23) entails a condition, citizens of a country enjoy a free, peaceful, and safe environment and have access to resources which will

enable them to enjoy the basic necessities of life, and all these are the beauty of sustainable democracy.

Therefore, for national security and sustainable democracy to be strengthened, the following must be put in place:

1. Pro-active approach to crisis management. This connotes those measures adopted towards preventing the eruption of crisis and measure aimed to ensuring that, crisis is resolved satisfactorily.
2. The formation of the nation's economic and political foundations, that will require a people inspired and people centered constitution.
3. The leaders must be accountable to the people they are leading. And this will only be achieved through transparent election.
4. The electoral umpire Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) should encourage political education, monitor political campaigns and provide rules and regulations which shall govern the political parties.
5. The various security agencies must be provided with modern security gargets and train regularly on modern security challenges.
Security agents should desist from being used to perpetuate electoral fraud and manipulation.
6. Government at all levels must intensify efforts in successfully waging a war against the protracted disease of corruption. This can be done through strengthening the existing institutions Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Due process, and Economic Finance Corrupt Commission (EFFC) to investigate arrest and prosecute corrupt public servants irrespective of their status. Building special, regional detention centers for corruption related offenders.
7. Creation of job opportunities for the youths and engaging them in meaningful ventures, so that they will be occupied and focused rather than being idle and destructive.
8. The Federal Government should have a strong price control institution that should checkmate the incessant and arbitrary increase of the price of commodities.

CONCLUSION

We started by attempting to draw a line between democratic rule in Nigeria and its effect on the nations' security. From our findings, we discovered that democratic rule especially from 1999 till date posed a serious challenge to national security and if not properly checked will have a negative effect on democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

It is our view that, for democracy to be achieved and sustained in Nigeria, proactive measures should be taken by the government, and some of these measures include, a people-oriented constitution that will correct the imbalance in the Nigerian federation. Also a policy that will create massive jobs for the unemployed youth should be put in place, elimination of corruption in Nigeria.

Lastly, the issue of Nigeria national security should not be perceived as the sole function of the security agents. Every Nigerian should be seen as a security agent, he should be security conscious of his environment and activities happening within his immediate environment. Neighbourhood Security consciousness should be inculcated into every growing Nigerian.

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