

INSECURITY MANTRA: THE PARADOX OF NIGERIAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Kingsley U. Omoyibo, PhD

Eddy Akpomera, PhD

Faculty of Social Sciences; University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

Abstract

The title of the paper is concise, unambiguous but very broad. This is because the issue of insecurity permeates all aspects of human endeavor and serves as a fundamental panacea to any society's growth and development. More so, it is tied to every society's social, political, economic and cultural growth. Consequently, the paper addresses the fundamental issue of the "management of insecurity" and its impact on national growth and development by taking a paradoxical perspective of the Nigerian context within the globalized world. Thus, in all entirety, the issue of security is now becoming a policy mantra to every existing nation.

Keywords: Development, Growth, Insecurity, Security, Paradox

Introduction

Today, it is important to note that security is a concept that is prior to the state, and the state is created in order to provide that concept. Thomas Hobbes (1996) argues that the state is in fact, the only way to provide security. Whether this is the case or not is often debatable in all scholarly and professional fora. Therefore, if the state fails to provide such security, it loses its *raison d'etre*.

The controversy in understanding state provision of security in society is attributed to the present day changes in security networking which has affected the position of the state. Waever (1998), for example, makes an attempt at compromise by arguing that security can be

divided into one, of society (concerned with the protection of identity) and two, of the state (which is concerned with the protection of its sovereignty). Negligence of this vital ingredient of development has led to all manner of social ills, including violent crimes such as armed robbery, ritual killings, child trafficking, kidnapping, terrorism, militancy, religious sectarianism and other crimes.

A United Nations study defined ‘security’ as a condition that prevent unauthorized persons from having access to official information that is safeguarded in the interest of national security or it can be a measure taken by military unit, activity or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to impair its effectiveness.

Public, corporate and government leaders with other security professionals have thought about how effectively security in general was approached. In Nigeria today, we are faced with many security challenges (insecurity). Since independence, Nigeria has witnessed crises caused mainly by political, social and religious factors. In recent times crises in Plateau, Taraba, Kano, Benue, Borno, Kaduna, Nasawara and the Niger – Delta have left us with image problem. (Gurama, 2010).

Global Perspective On Insecurity And The Nigerian State

The first duty of a government is to keep its citizens (or subjects) safe. We live in such relative safety that most of us have forgotten what the world was like for our ancestors and what it is like for too many people around the globe today. Many governments in history that kept their subjects safe were dictatorial and monstrous. Yet the devil they knew (the local tax collector or executioner) were better than the other devil they remembered all too well-thuggish-anarchy.

The Chinese, Iranians, and Russians remember well that when their central governments were weak or decline, warlords seized the opportunity to take land and war on each other until eventually one would become strong enough to form the next monarchy. If it were just a matter of one warlord against another, nobody would have cared. But it was not. These warlords made war on each others’ peasants. They trampled fields, destroyed crops, burnt villages, murdered and raped. That was total war well before development of weapons of mass destruction. Swords and warhorses were good enough to do the job.

Remember the image of the four horsemen of the apocalypse: War, Famine, Pestilence, and Death? These horsemen have been riding through different parts of Africa during the late 20th century. This is what the people of Darfur in Sudan endure—as have the Somalis and those in the Congo and before that in Rwanda and Liberia. It was like that in Afghanistan between the end of the Soviet invasion and the American invasion. But how does this apply to the United States today? Those four horsemen and their warlords are not prowling our borders. But we have other security issues—some far more urgent than others—and our political leaders must wrestle with them. Serious issues are: having sufficient energy to sustain our economy; successful agriculture and surplus food; a safe and plentiful water supply; an education system that can produce needed national talent for the future; and a health system that keeps a population vibrant and long lived. And one of the newest threats to us is how to protect our all-invasive computer networks and satellites. We are already in an anarchist cyber war launched by Wikileaks and Mr. Assange's cult followers. It is a national security threat indeed.

Less serious issues are dealing with terrorists, who today represent a culture that offers little more than a death cult to frighten us. Education in useful disciplines (beyond theology), entrepreneurship, gender equality, a decent system of governance and jurisprudence. They are fighting a rear guard action against the modern, secular world—and while they can plague us, they are essentially ineffectual and in their own death throes.

Because of our government's fear of being criticized for negligence whenever we have a terrorist attack, we are spending far too much money and effort to prevent these attacks. I would like to see Nigerians as brave as the Americans and the British were during those many years that they were under attack by terrorists and Irish terrorists respectively. On a global and foreign policy level, our national security is furthered by having the best relations we can muster with a large range of countries that share the preponderance of our values. Those countries that do not share these values must be watched, impeded when they become threatening (Iran, North Korea), and stopped when they are on the verge of nuclear mayhem.

We do not have to invade dangerous countries and then try to impose a modern democracy on them. This is not in the interest of National Security. We can manage relationships with countries that are not democracies, but are firmly governed. The bad social behavior of such countries can be better challenged by non-government human rights groups, the press, and the

media. Villains are notoriously thin-skinned about bad publicity. National Security should be an issue for public debate in subsequent lectures.

Security In The Context Of ‘Insecurity’ In National Growth And Development: The Nigerian Paradox

According to Orok Edem (2000), The Nigerian State is a confluence of nationalities made up of unreasonable people associating involuntarily in the pursuit of uncommon interests. It is characterized by the absence of justice and is held together with impunity by its armed forces, which are controlled by elements from two principal nationalities, bound together by a common agreement, sharing the national cake on certain unwritten principles. It lacks the essential ingredient of legitimacy i.e. certain nationalities have not consented to the association and the country is being ruled unjustly with elements within the three most populous nationalities showing an unbridled state of libido dominandi.

‘Secure’ means unable to escape, Security means the assurance of future well being and freedom from threat. It could be individual as in Nigeria where you put iron bars across your windows which prevents you from escaping in case of a fire outbreak, and the non functioning national pension fund system set up for the future well being of citizens. It could be international, when the actions or inactions of a foreign state e.g. Cameroon, constitutes a threat to the well being of Nigeria as in the Backasse Peninsula. It could be national where the effects are internal, and in the case of Nigeria where they are numerous nations within the state, threat is often amplified as an expression of dominant nationality.

Nigeria national security has two meanings, in a military regime-it means the maintenance and protection of the person of the current despot from harm or embarrassment- be it physical, sexual, spiritual, verbal or written. This makes Al-Mustapha, the former Abacha’s Chief Security Officer a failure. During a civilian regime as we now have, it is defined as the assurance and maintenance of the political and economic power of the ruling class within the two most dominant nationalities. National security should ideally be defined as the ability of the Nigerian State to successfully pursue her national interests, being able to protect the core values of the State and be able to maintain same through victory in case of a war. It should view individual, national and international security from a holistic perspective as there are interplays between all three. If the individual is not secure the state cannot be secure, and if the state is

under attack from an external source the state and the individual cannot be secure. The dilemma in Nigeria is that, the State has become so powerful as to become a threat to the individual and nationalities. The deportation of Shugaba, the frequent arrests of Fawehimi as a societal risk, the assassination of Rewane, and the assault on Odi, has created ambiguities and confused the perception of our security operatives as to the need to see the State as made up of a collection of citizens instead of dominant groups. These elements within state organs jostling for power, position and advantages have created a state of instability through their action or inactions e.g. the Bamaiyi and Diya's coup plot.

The paradox of Nigeria's security is that instead of the State being the framework of lawful order and the highest source of governing authority, it now constitutes the greatest threat to herself. The political and historical development of Nigeria since her inception could explain, yet not excuse, the virtual abandonment of sovereignty to a military and political cabal within the state. It is this usurpation of sovereignty by this group and the exercise of the authority it confers without legal recourse to the populace in lieu of an acceptable referendum and constitution, that makes an overview of the Nigerian state and its national security perspective a nightmare, because the state has become the greatest source of threat to its own survival as there are no core values to defend except corruption.

The Nigerian State should be viewed as an imperial state in which two of the nationalities the Habe/Fulbe hegemony, Yoruba's and to a lesser extent the Ibos dominate, in that order. These dominant nations try to overpower the rest and themselves through regular massacres, cultural and ethnic absorptions using the machinery of state and the cultivation of non national ideology like Islam and Christianity in order to achieve their objective. This has made it impossible to foist a Nigerian character on the Nigerian State as the third most populous group had to be forcefully coerced to remain in the union. Therefore, an appeal to nationalism is a waste of time; instead there is a re-course by the major political actors to appeal to mundane reasons as the importance of remaining in Nigeria, like the economy of scale involved, the cost of breaking up and the threat to the minority nations in going it alone. A state of vulnerability has thus been created in the Nigerian polity which poses a constant source of insecurity for the Nigerian State. This state of insecurity is influenced by military, political, economic, social and environmental factors. These factors are discussed underneath.

The Major Contentions in the Insecurity Paradigm in Nigeria

- **Military Security:** This involves the interplay of offensive and defensive capabilities of the Nigerian Armed forces to defend the state and prevent '*coup de etats*' or carry out same depending on the ruling elites definition of self interest.
- **Political Security:** This involves the organizational stability, systems and ideology that give the Nigerian State her legitimacy. The Nigerian state lacks an organized system and ideology which makes for certain level of illegitimacy. This poses a dilemma for the political actors when they try to justify the use of force in settling domestic conflicts as in the ultimatum to the Niger-Delta States.
- **Economic security:** This covers access of the State to resources and finance to provide welfare and sustain State power. The irony of the Nigerian economy is that it is mono cultural and based on oil, and this commodity happens to be found in commercial quantities in land and sea areas occupied by the minority nationalities. This is a blessing to the Nigerian state as it can easily suppress the yearnings of the people of these areas through the time tested divide and rule principle, via the location or creation of local governments and their capitals. Dangling of government largesse in form of development councils or bodies, eliminating their leaders e.g. Saro Wiwa and the actual threat and use of military force. Unfortunately for the State, there is no way to kill the spirit of freedom and justice in a people and here in lies the seed of distrust within the polity, because if oil was found amongst the major dominant groups, Nigeria would have long ceased to exist.
- **Societal security:** This covers the guarantee within acceptable limits of the expression of each indigenous culture, language, religion, custom and ethnic identity of each nationality. There is no Nigerian symbol named after a non member of the three most dominant groups. This ranges from currencies to airports to buildings. The fatuous attempt to force citizens to wear *agbada*, the stamping of images of individuals of the major nationalities on the national currency, the use of Arabic language on the national currency and as a motto of the Nigeria Army, the *yan Arewa* phenomenon in northern Nigeria, the foisting of emirate council on southern Kaduna. The Ijebu menace of the old western region and the fears of the minorities as enunciated at the Willinks Commission of Inquiry, have been identified as attempts by one dominant group to lord it over and assimilate lesser nationalities. This phenomenon tend to succeed for a time, but, therein

also lies the root for its failure, because the protagonist tend to lose any sense of balance and restraint, thereby fostering a sense of secondary citizenship in the victims and the creation of a residual resistant spirit to throw off the yoke of oppression. E.g. Tiv riots.

- **Environmental security:** This entails the maintenance of the local and surrounding biosphere from harm or contamination so as to support the Nigerian populace. There have been several cases of other nations dumping toxic waste in the Nigerian backyard e.g. Italy, but the greatest havoc has been caused by the oil industry. This sole source of Nigeria's foreign earnings has caused the destabilization of the fishing and farming economy of the Niger Delta, thereby creating a ready pool of jobless young who have become restive for their demands at restitution. Other industries like, the paper mill at Oku Iboku has devastated a large bank of the Cross River, through the effusion of mercuric waste into the river. The South Eastern areas are renowned for erosions, the Ogunpa stream overflows regularly and Lagos drowns anytime it rains. In terms of planetary biosphere Nigeria is hampered by the lack of technical know how so this should not even be considered. There are no institutions and precepts to enforce standards effectively, you have fuel contamination, drug contamination, pollution of airspace and waterways and even the Nigerian soul [if we have any] is contaminated. We urinate and defecate on our roadsides and gutters. Cars, trains, planes, buildings, roads and bridges are not properly maintained. We do not cover our foods in the market and public hygiene is a bygone word. Little wonder the average life expectancy rate is a little under 50. Yes, say it, it is the will of God.

Balancing 'Insecurity' And Growth/Development In The Nigerian Economy

Increase in country's productive capacity, as measured by comparing Gross National Product (GNP) in a year with the GNP in the previous year is considered economic growth. Also, increase in the capital stock, advances in technology, and improvement in the quality and level of literacy are considered to be principal causes of economic growth. In recent years, the idea of sustainable development has brought in additional factors such as environmentally sound processes that must be taken into account in growing an economy.

However, a steep decline in foreign investment in developing economies was one of the major consequences of the 2008 – 2009 financial crises. Projections indicated that global

investment in emerging markets will decline by 31 percent in 2009. Nigeria was not exempted from this decline in foreign investment. The decline in foreign investment in Nigeria combined with the other effects of the global economic showdown caused the closing of tens of thousands of factories in Nigeria. As a result labour protest broke out, leading to a number of clashes between labour unions and the government.

However, the fundamental reasons in the Nigeria case was due to the in-secured environment of the nation- militancy, corruption in the financial sector, religious crises, kidnapping, 419, piracy, terrorism, extensive criminal activities like armed robbery etc. contributed to the devolution in growth of the economy.

In fact, Nigeria is currently losing about 600, 000 barrels of crude oil per day to illegal bunkering which amount to N3.7 trillion yearly (Punch, 20th May, 2011). This was disclosed just as the senate might pass the controversial Maritime Security Agency Bill soonest (Before May 29th, 2011) as earlier purported.

Contextually, it is important to highlight some of the measures of economic performance (by extension development).

Measures of Economic Performance (Growth)

Economic Measures	Non Economic Measures
○ Inflation	Quality of life
○ Unemployment	Environment
○ Growth (GDP)	Health
○ Balance of Payment	-
○ Exchange Rate	Education etc.

Consequently, ‘growth’ in generic terms entails taking into consideration both economic and non-economic measures as indices for measuring development (in the context of improvement of the standard of living of the people).

Hence, the condition or quality of being insecure; lack of confidence, want of safety; danger, hazard etc. can hamper not only growth but also, development in society.

Security And National Development

A country cannot achieve development unless it first seeks to achieve human security. This is because human resources are essential to any country's development; but if the people are living in fear, then they cannot be productive or competent in any environment. Therefore, the first responsibility of any nation and its respective ports of entry is human security. Hence, the primary role of any state is to preserve the security of the people occupying its territory.

Accordingly, policies should focus on protecting homeland security, freeing people from fear and pushing forward with development, which must focus more on the type of progress and how people would benefit as opposed to how much development plans must be a country's capacity to respond to the needs and desires of its citizens. This development must also involve the people and bring them along in a way that they can relate to. This is because one of the main reasons why persons get involved in criminal activities such as kidnapping, militancy, religious sectarianism, cultism, child abuse, drug trafficking, prostitution, piracy, armed robbery, political thuggery etc. is because of money and the emphasis that society on a whole places on money.

It is important to note that while money is essential to development and human sources, sometimes too much emphasis or the wrong kind of emphasis is placed on money, which has led persons into criminal activity and by extension created high level of insecurity in society and eroded the basic values persons ascribe to and on which our societies are organized. It is therefore critical that people take a close look at what is going on in society and address these issues before they destroy all that is valuable and all that people have worked hard on to build up the region/nation.

Policy makers, law enforcement and other key stakeholders in judicial matters also have to examine what are the major causes; why "insecurity" is prevented in our society and sort out ways of alleviating the reasons why people tend to perpetuate the acts of insecurity. Thus, they should concentrate on strengthening the rule of law and building international judicial cooperation, otherwise, they would leave our country vulnerable for the "less desirable to rule our lives".

According to the World Bank's report released (2011) on "Conflict, Security and Development" – some 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by political and criminal violence – causing human misery and disrupting development. The new report findings are particularly poignant for Africa, home to 23 out of the world's most conflict- affected and fragile

economies. And conflict impacts negatively on development; Preliminary estimates suggest that cote d'ivoires conflict wasted over 1, 000 lives of men, women and children; displaced another 1 million; reduced Gross Domestic Products (GDP) by between 3 to 7 percent; pushed up poverty between 2.5 – 4 percentage point; and created additional fiscal needs of between 4 and 5 percent GDP. (Guardian, 2011:25).

In conclusion, building strong, legitimate institutions and governance that provide citizen security, justice and jobs are all crucial to break the cycles of insecurity and ensure growth and development. Thus, tackling corruption and violence is a generational task requiring sustained efforts, and is not for the weak or those prone to wavering. It crucially requires dogged commitment to improving confidence between citizens and the state. For governments, this means accepting, for example that ruling parties can not tackle insecurity successfully alone, but need to build citizen engagement and coalitions in support of change. That is also the reason we must continue to measure and promote progress as done by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance and its four indicators namely:

- Safety and Rule of Law
- Participation and Human Rights
- Sustainable Economic Opportunity and,
- Human Development

It is no coincidence that conflict-affected countries in Africa are relegated to the bottom of the index.

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