NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE ARMED FORCES

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INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that a peaceful and secure environment is imperative for any meaningful and beneficial human activity to thrive. This places security and survival in the domain of man's primary concerns right from the prehistoric times (Armstrong 2001). Since the end of the Cold Wear (CW), the focus has shifted from traditional threats of conventional and nuclear warfare to non-conventional threats which could be referred to as 'Fourth Generation Warfare' (Lynn & Jeremy 2003).

In Nigeria today, a fundamental evolution in security threats has taken over national life. Non-traditional threats to national security has gained grounds and exacerbated within a short period. Issues which have raised serious security concerns in the country include but not limited to internal civil strife, socioeconomic and political instability, armed violence, arms and drug trafficking and kidnapping. Others include assassination, natural disasters, ethnic crisis and religious extremism, terrorism and criminality among others. The Nation now calls for Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF) to respond to different kinds of non-military contingencies largely due to the low performance of the law enforcement and other security agencies in curbing same.

The NAF has shown its ability to undertake multiple deployments at home and abroad though, these have stretched her beyond its limits as it struggles to define itself in the new security environment. Non-military role of the armed forces has thus assumed importance greater than its primary mission giving the changed nature of the security environment. Its enlarged function poses daunting training, logistics and doctrinal challenges in its bid to effectively respond to current national security issues.

Again, the NAF has responded to the changed environment by embarking on capacity building efforts to radically shape the military instrument to confront the new challenges. How far have these efforts assisted in repositioning the NAF in addressing the security problems? As it appears, the NAF is ill-prepared for the changed nature of threat due to its traditional ways of war fighting. How adequate is Nigeria's national security strategy to meet the diverse challenges as the military strength alone does not ensure national security? National security policies must

be in relation to current threat perception and analysis. The challenges the new security threats poses on the NAF, thus, demands fresh thinking and redefinition of doctrine, strategies, new ways and means of mitigating them.

Based on current developments it has become clearer that the armed forces must embark on a fundamental transformation of its structure and methods of operation. Thus, the need for a comprehensive review of the threats to national security in-tandem with the military capability in order to create a safe and stable Nigerian environment became altogether apparent.

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

National Security

Security, from a national perspective, is perhaps the most often examined and contentious concept. It is a concept with roots stemming from realist theory and the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which see the state as the primary actor (Canim 1993, p.4). This put the focus of national security on the protection of one's territorial boundaries and sovereignty. The nation-state often assumes the role of guarantor for individual, group and regional security. This is why King and Murray (2001, p.34-38) defined national security as "the entirety of conditions; political, economic, military, social and cultural, necessary to guarantee the sovereignty, independence, and promotion of national interest..."

Security from the military point of view is highly visible, and a nation will act when it is threatened militarily. Thus, national security refers to the ability of a sovereign state to defend itself from armed aggression. Realist theory in support of this position asserts that the fundamental duty of the state is to protect itself and its citizens from catastrophic effects of military invasion (King & Murray 2001). There is much more to these definitions when the issue of national security is closely observed.

Armed Forces

According to Engels (1977, p.180), armed forces refers to an "organized association of armed men maintained by a state for the purpose of offensive and defensive warfare". This latter definition is in line with that of military power given by Garnet (1987, p.71), who considers the concept as the legally sanctioned instrument of violence that governments use in their relations with each other, to protect their countries from external aggressions and internal subversions.



According to Garnet (1987, p.105), 'the overwhelming military approach to national security is founded on the assumption that the principal threat to security comes from other nations'. In the same vein, he observed that "...the urge to acquire armaments derives from a natural human response to the ever present sense of insecurity in a Hobbesian state of international chaos". Consequently, armed forces enable governments to ward off any attempt at occupation or destruction.

From the above discourse, the researcher's standpoint on armed forces refers to an instrument of power placed under the command and control of any given state. In peace time, or in the absence of any given threat to the territorial integrity, the armed forces comprised of skilled personnel, well trained, well equipped and committed, constitute a useful channel through which the legal authorities can address their problem of development.

Relationship between National Security and Armed Forces

A major criterion that has refocused national security is the phenomenon by which the privileged position of the state within the security discourse has been eroded. This refocusing of national security has three implications for the armed forces. First, the military is called to address contingencies for which they are not configured, equipped and trained. Secondly, the military is increasingly being required to support law enforcement, customs, border control agencies, search and rescue and provision of services, which have traditionally not been its responsibility. Thirdly, the military is increasingly undertaking non-military organizations' tasks like humanitarian relief, supply and development efforts aimed to provide basic services.

The reality is that the armed forces are mobilised to play in most cases lead role in countering non-military threats, which is not its core function. The relationship therefore, between national security and the NAF is that as long as the threats continue to escalate beyond the capacity and capability of the law enforcement agencies and is inimical to national security, the NAF would always be drawn in to perform its constitutional role of protecting the territorial integrity of the nation. Thus, the armed forces will always be involved in curbing threats which directly impact national security.

NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF THREATS

Arms Trafficking

The issue of arms trafficking is a serious security concern to the stability of Nigeria in view of the subsisting civil conflicts within the West African Sub-Region. The after effects of the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and 'Arab Spring' have fuelled the issue of small arms and light weapons (SALW) trafficking across the land borders of West African countries. Nigeria probably being a profitable destination to traffickers at present is of particular concern especially in relation to continued fierce armed violence in the country. The increasing activities of militants, terrorists and armed robbers in the country with particular reference to the recent militancy in the Niger Delta area and currently the terrorists' activities of Boko Haram Sect are clear examples.

There is the need to block illegal arms trafficking routes into the country, while also increasing vigilance across the country's borders with neighbouring African states. It suggests the need for stricter border management, monitoring and supervision, need for the desired platforms, border guards and patrols, surveillance of porous routes using unmanned aerial vehicles and helicopters among others.

Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking is another major Transnational Crime (TC) in Nigeria. Statistics from the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), 2011 show that cannabis, cocaine, heroin and psychotropic substances which are referred to as 'others' in Table 1 are the major drugs trafficked in Nigeria.

^{1.} Arab Spring is a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests occurring in the Arab world that began on 18 December 2010.



Drug seizures in Kilograms						Persons Prosecutions		
Year	Cannabis	Cocaine	Heroin	Others	Total	Prosecuted	Won by NDLEA	Lost by NDLEA
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(i)	(j)	(k)
1999	17,691.14	16.64	81.35	322.25	18,110.38	1474	1454	20
2000	272,260.02	53.42	56.6	234.28	272,604.32	1626	1624	2
2001	317,950.20	195.82	46.63	308.84	318,501.49	1172	1172	0
2002	506,846.09	35.35	55.62	791	507,728.06	870	870	0
2003	535,593.75	134.74	87.58	937.41	536,753.48	817	817	0
2004	68,310.07	124.47	90.94	233.83	68.759.31	853	853	0
2005	125,989	395.91	70.42	88.72	126,543.65	779	779	0
2006	192,368.30	14,435.88	33.09	515.57	207,352.84	1363	1362	1
2007	210,262.90	393,678	120.687	699.735	211,477.00	1508	1459	49
2008	348.759	318.93	11.18	348.6	1,027.469	2019	2015	4
2009	475.26	398.20	13.15	379.70	1,266.31	1997	1996	1
2010	401.50	256.70	9.25	365.90	1,037.35	1805	1800	5

Table 1 also shows that the high rate of success in convicting the drug traffickers prosecuted, averaging 99.3 percent (NDLEA Prosecution Records 1999-2010) did not abate drug trafficking. This situation is dangerous because drug trafficking has linkages to various crimes, which result in violence and insecurity in the society. Thus, there is the need to identify and clampdown on sources, routes and cartel involved in drug trafficking to address the problem of insecurity in Nigeria.

Islamic Fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence

Khuri (1990, p.43) in his study of understanding religion and sectarianism in Islam classified religion as (Din) judgment, faith and divine law, and sect (Ta'ifa),

which connotes a segregated group of persons who hold to certain fundamentals of the religion as platforms of belief and expression. Every religion is therefore inundated with different sectarian movements. That is the reason why Suberu (1996, p.50) said that 'Islam is a continuously interpretive revolution', which means that sectarian movements would continue to emerge as long as there is dynamism in religious thoughts and practices.

In Nigeria, religion plays a vital role in the society and has manifested itself as a potent force in the political development of the country. Several religious crises in Nigeria have often been caused by the different Islamic sects in the country. The activities of the sects are based on the ideologies, characteristics and behaviour of the Sunnis and the Shiites. The Maitatsine² and Boko Haram sectarian riots of December 1980 and July 2009 are clear examples. The NAF is currently conducting Internal Security (IS) operations in Borno, Yobe and Kano States to curtail Islamic fundamentalism and sectarian activities, which has continued to pose serious challenges to the military as it has remained in a protracted deployment since 2005.

Terrorism and Militancy

Terrorism is considered the most sophisticated form of global violence. Terrorist activities have continued to pose significant challenges to international peace and security and have compelled nations to place them as top security priorities. It often involves an individual or group with a common ideology unleashing violence on society to create fear and undermine government in order to achieve set goals (Buseni 2007, p.47).

Nigeria has not been immune to attacks by terrorist groups. The recent spate of violence and bombing Northern states and the Federal Capital Territory has confirmed the Nigeria's vulnerability and underscores the realities of terrorist intentions against the country. Terrorism is the most significant threat facing the country today.

Boko Haram is a threat to Nigeria's national security because it seeks to impose the Sharia³ legal system throughout the country. It's suspected links with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al-Shabaab, point to its influence in the global terrorist network. The tragic terrorists incidents carried out by

^{2.} Maitatsine is the nickname of Mohammed Marwa (died 1980), who was a controversial Islamic scholar in Nigeria. It is a Hausa (Nigerian local dialect) word meaning "the one who damns" and refers to his curse-laden public speeches against the Nigerian state.

^{3.} Sharia is the moral code and religious law of Islam Sharia which deals with many topics addressed by secular law, including crime, politics and economics, as well as personal matters such as sexual intercourse, hygiene, diet, prayer, and fasting etc.



Boko Haram Sect between 2010 and 2012 show that eliminating the threat of terrorism completely in Nigeria may be a long way off, though a lot can be done to minimize the threats. A positive step could be the immediate prosecution of all those already arrested in connection with acts of terrorism.

Poverty

Endemic poverty in most nations, as in the case of Nigeria, combined with bad governance, social injustice and political alienation create an environment that attracts religious fundamentalists to export their philosophy to find local support for their nefarious acts. It could be argued that the Boko Haram Sect is a result of the prevalent poverty in Nigeria because many of the jobless youths are ready to be recruited for the Sect. Poverty thus has a consequential effect on national security and would no doubt require government to put in place poverty reduction and eradication mechanisms.

IMPACT OF THREATS ON NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

Political Implications

The identified threats have potential to undermine Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and can lead to political instability and the truncation of the nation's nascent democracy. The current acts of terrorism unleashed by the Boko Haram Sect and its likes could affect the unity of Nigeria since it is agitating for a sovereign Islamic State. A nation that is constantly under terrorist attacks cannot be stable as the leadership will divert its attention to security matters, which would affect other socio-economic developmental programs. It, thus, necessitates that the FGN be responsive to the threats and initiate measures to mitigating them.

Impact on Economy

Oil and gas is the lifeline of the nation's revenues, economy and national survival as it accounts for about 40% of the Gross Domestic Product and 70% of the nation's revenues (Augustine 2005). The issue of insecurity in various parts of the country discourages Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) which is key to economic growth and development. This situation threatens national productivity, retards the rate of economic development and reduces employment opportunities, thus, affecting national security negatively.

CHALLENGES

Lack of an Elaborate National Security Policy

According to Rear Admiral Lokoson, Commandant national Defence Academy Nigeria, 'the lack of a clear document on national security policy has remained one of the major challenges confronting Nigeria (Tribune 2011). Nigeria needs to rethink and redesign its security policy to serve as a road map for effective management of the IS environment. It will also stipulate the roles of the various security agencies and the military in crises situations and forestall clash of jurisdictional control. Nigeria's current document on National Security Policy 2011, much as it is a step in the desired direction if not all comprehensive as it does not assess and address the threat of terrorism and does not codify the roles of the military in counter terrorism. This is a shortcoming and need to be addressed.

Poor Legal and Judicial System

The courts are charged with the responsibility of conducting trial of offenders charged to court and punishing those found guilty. However, the legal system faces problems of court congestion, corruption, slow pace of trial and frequent adjournment of cases among others. These problems lead to delay in determination of cases thereby giving room for criminals to sometimes free their agents or members by bribing corrupt agents to the detriment of national security. The Nigerian judicial system thus needs to be strengthened to minimize these lapses in the interest of national security.

Manpower

A criterion for determining the strength of a nation's armed forces is the perceived threat, and this must be sustainable by the national economy. The manpower of the NAF is 86,000 (0.0005% of country population of 166,629,000) all ranks. Nigeria ranks 164 out of 178 countries when the military and paramilitary and ratio per thousand inhabitants are compared (Wikipedia 2012). When compared with Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, which are equally oil rich nations, it is expected that Nigeria with a population of 166,629,000 can sustain a military manpower of 320,000 (0.19% of population) personnel. This opinion is further justified given that Bangladesh, which ranks 41 amongst the 42 poorest countries in the world (UN Human Development Report 2010), has a population of 161,083,804 and a military strength of 157,053 (0.001% of population) personnel (CIA World Fact Book 2012). It is desirable that the issue of increase in manpower for the military be examined.



Poorly Trained and Ill-Equipped Nigeria Police (NP)

The NP has not been able to effectively manage IS situations within the nation. This has been attributed to shortage of manpower, inadequate training and lack of necessary equipment. On so many occasions the police have proved incapable of containing crises situations in various parts of the country to the extent that the military had to be deployed to restore normalcy in those areas. The scenario has not changed today and the inability of the NP to perform its assigned role has been responsible for the continued deployment of the military in the cities and towns carrying out law enforcement duties. This calls for a review of the quality of training, provision of modern equipment and total transformation of the NP.

Inadequate Requisite Training in Counter Terrorism

The main focus training by the NAF since its existence in 1954 has been regular or conventional warfare and it has equipped its forces in this regard. The current threat confronting the force is Irregular Warfare (IW) for which it does not have the requisite training.

In its efforts on fight terrorism, the military introduced counter terrorism (CT) training at the Nigerian Army School of Infantry (NASI) in 1994 and also established the Counter Insurgency (COIN) Centre in 2011. Training at the centre is not comprehensive due to inadequate funding and lack of necessary platforms and equipment (Fesobi 2011). Also, training is still focused on kinetic capabilities rather than non-kinetic capabilities relevant to IW. Furthermore, joint and combined training and exercises for personnel of the military, police and other security agencies are insufficient. Thus the necessary blending and synergy required for successful counter terrorism operations is not attained.

Strategies for Formulation of an Elaborate National Security Policy

The basis for resolving security issues is dependent on the ability of the FGN to effectively employ coercive and non coercive components of IS management which can only be achieved through a robust national security policy. It is based on the requirements of the policy that military, NP and other security agencies will equip and train. The draft security policy need to be subjected to further analysis to capture current realities of national security in order to articulate a more realistic document.

Adequate Training and Equipment for the Nigeria Police

In order to facilitate the operational effectiveness of the NP, training needs to be enhanced, personnel strength needs to be increased and necessary equipment provided. The NP requires repositioning and transformation regarding law enforcement duties. This will enhance professionalism in the military and eradicate its negative perception by the citizenry.

Implementation of Recommendations of Boards of Inquiry

One of the major pitfalls in government handling of IS matters is lack of implementation of Board recommendations. Government has on many occasions set up panels but failed to utilize the recommendations of these panels. The reports of the recent inquiries into the Jos crisis of 2010 and the Kaduna North central crisis after the 2011 Presidential Elections have been submitted to the FGN of which their recommendations are yet to be implemented. The FGN needs to implement relevant portions of reports of boards of inquiry.

Strengthening Border Security

A major security concern in Nigeria is the ease with which persons enter and leave the country through borders. The porous nature of the borders has been responsible for all forms of transnational crimes. This will require strengthening border security. A good example of border security is the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) which is a para-military force under the Ministry of Home Affairs responsible for border security and anti-smuggling operations. Nigeria could consider an outfit of this nature. It is not in doubt that the BGB is a model for border guard security and is an area for further research for adoption by Nigeria.

Building Capacity for Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency Operations

The military has developed some level of CT and COIN capabilities and established a counter terrorist centre (CTC) at the Office of the National Security Adviser. A good example of a success story in COIN is that of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SAF) against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which was an armed insurgent group that waged a ruthless insurgency in 1971 to establish a separate state in Sri Lanka. This success story is obviously an area the Nigerian military could conduct further study of the strategies adopted by the Lankan Armed Forces (SAF) in defeating the LTTE to identify areas for adaptation in its fight on terrorism.



Increase in Manpower

Manpower increase for the military is not only desirable but necessary. The current manpower of 86,000 (0.0005% of country population) personnel in the military is grossly inadequate given the reality of dearth of manpower (AHQ 2011). The reality is that an increase in the manpower of the military to the acceptable ratio has the advantages of tackling the manpower challenge of the military due to its numerous commitments in IS and Peace Support Operation (PSO). It would also assist the FGN in the area of providing job opportunities for the masses of unemployed youths. The military would need to articulate this requirement and seek governments consent and appropriate legislation enacted to increase the strength of the military to 320,000 personnel which is about 0.2% of country population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- a. The FGN should immediately review the national security policy document to feature the security architecture for CT including role of the NAF and security agencies.
- b. The FGN should take urgent steps to reform and reposition the NP and the judiciary to effectively carry out their constitutional responsibilities.
- c. The FGN should implement the recommendations of boards of inquiry convened on various crises within the country, discourage religious fundamentalism and sectarian violence and initiate a social security system for the citizenry.
- d. The FGN should strengthen border security, while studying the BGB model for possible adoption.
- e. The FGN should provide the military with Unmanned Aerial Vehicies (UAVs), helicopters, bomb detectors and disposal equipment, and effective communication systems for CT operations.
- f. The NAF should build capacity on CT/COIN operations and non-kinetic capabilities in IW, while studying the SAF strategies on the LTTE for possible adoption.
- g. The NAF should make a presentation to the FGN on the need for manpower increase to 320,000 personnel (0.2% of country population).

CONCLUSION

This study identified and discussed the emerging new external and internal threats and its danger to Nigeria's peace and security and in particular the challenges they pose to the NAF. The threats include illicit arms and drug trafficking, Islamic fundamentalism and sectarian violence, terrorism and militancy, poverty and proliferation of SALW aided by porous borders. These threats have adversely affected national security and eroded the integrity and credibility of state security agencies and exacerbated domestic conflicts.

It was discovered that the identified threats have political implications, negative impact on the economy and has increased FGN expenditure on the military. The study established that the challenges confronting the NAF to include the lack of an elaborate national security policy, poor judicial system, use of military force in law enforcement duties, manpower shortage, poorly trained and ill equipped NP and poor intelligence among others.

The FGN would need to immediately review the current national security policy, reform and reposition the NP and the judiciary and implement the recommendations of boards of inquiry on various crises within the country. On border security and management, the BGB was suggested as a brilliant model which could be studied and adopted.

On terrorism and militancy, the FGN would need to provide the military with requisite platforms like UAVs, helicopters, bomb detection and disposal equipment and effective communications systems to enhance the fight on terrorism. The military would need to build capacity for CT and COIN operations and acquisition of non-kinetic capabilities in IW, while intensifying measures on intelligence acquisition and building capacity on information warfare. The strategy adopted by the SAF in the defeat of the LTTE was suggested as an area for further study and possible adoption by the NAF in dealing with terrorism in the country. Others strategies were the need for increase in manpower for the NAF to 320,000 personnel.

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