

Nigeria in Search of Peace and Security: Analysis and Action

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary Nigeria, the signs of a security dilemma and lack of a peaceful co-existence are there for all to see. Poverty, unemployment, abuse of power by a coterie of political, elites, unconcealed corruption, nepotism, favoritism, the ostentatious display of wealth and resource struggles, to mention just a few contributory factors responsible for lack of peace, security of insecurity and insecurity of security, are boiling over into ethnic and religious violence in various parts of the six geo-political zones of the country. Can Nigeria survive another century as a corporate entity? This paper examines the issues of peace and security in Nigeria and recommends some policy options for the country's citizens either to live together or sink together.

Keywords: *Nigeria, Peace, Security, System Survival, Corporate Entity, Peaceful Co-existence or Lack of it.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1914, the Protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria were amalgamated with the Colony (Lagos) by Lord Lugard under colonialism, imperialism with all their types-political – political imperialism, economic imperialism, cultural imperialism, communication imperialism, military imperialism etc. to form what is now known as Nigeria. Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960. (Olayiwola, 2012)

Fifty nine (59) years after independence, we have been in undated with one crisis or the other. We talk of insecurity crisis, economic crisis, political crisis, social crisis, religious crisis, crisis of peaceful co-existence, poverty and inequality crisis, the crisis of legitimacy, cultural crisis, ideological crisis, education crisis, health crisis, agricultural crisis, food crisis, industrial crisis, moral crisis and the crisis of ecology and environment, to mention just a

few (Olayiwola, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015). There is virtually no part of Nigeria that is peaceful.

The national objectives enunciated many decades ago in Nigeria's Second National Development Plan (1970-1974) have eluded the country and will continue to be more problematic and more insurmountable to achieve unless the issues of Lack of peaceful co-existence and insecurity are addressed to the letter. The objectives being referred to are:

- A United, strong and self-reliant nation;
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all its citizens;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A free and democratic society (Olayiwola, 2015)

In the same vein, lack of peace and security has militated against Nigeria's ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Millennium Development Goals were adopted by United Nations Millennium Declaration by 189 member countries including Nigeria as a signatory in their 2000 summit together with some international organizations.

The eight goals were expected to have been achieved by the year 2015:

- Eradication of extreme hunger and poverty;
- Achieving universal primary education;
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women;
- Reducing child mortality rate;
- Improving maternal health;
- Combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensuring environmental sustainability; and
- Developing a global partnership for development (Tella, 2014)

Theoretical Anchor

Our clearly delineated appropriate theoretical framework for this study is a combination of eclectic, empirical and structural functionalism from sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists. Simply put, the framework submits that there is a universality of functions that all systems all over the world should perform with structures to perform them. This is to ensure system maintenance, adaptation, integration and survival including peace and security,

We argue that the inability of Nigeria's socio-political and economic systems to install institutions and structures capable of performing those functions adequately and effectively have meant that peace and security have eluded Nigeria since independence.

The functions are:

- Interest articulation;
- Interest aggregation;
- Political communication;
- Political socialization;
- Political recruitment;
- Rule-making;
- Rule-application; and
- Rule-adjudication (Amond, 1966)

The Central Objectives of the Study

This study interrogates the problems of lack of peaceful co-existence and security in Nigeria

since independence and offers solutions that can help the country's people to achieve peace and security.

In January 2014, Nigeria celebrated its one hundred years of existence as a 'Nation'/ 'Country'. And in October of every year, Nigeria celebrates its years of political/ 'flag' independence. Despite these epoch-making events, Nigeria knows no peace and security.

Why has it been difficult to have peace and security in Nigeria? Why has it been an herculean/uphill task to have a 'United States of Nigeria'? How can Nigeria achieve peace and security? What factors have contributed to insecurity, lack of peace, coups and counter coups, abortive coups, demands for coups, rumors of coups, insurgencies and counter insurgencies, violence disagreements, ethnic and religious riots all of which endanger peace and security? This study attempts some answers. As our methodology, we have used multi-disciplinary approach, government records, interviews, informal all discussions, newspapers and other media, journals, periodicals, library sources etc.

The Problems

The seeds of lack of peace and security have been planted by political class members before independence, at independence, after independence, during all the successive, Republics democracies (democratizes) and military interregna in the country. As Kirk-Greene, 1971, puts it; "In the final analysis, the Nigerian tragedy has been bedeviled by a set of oppositions – generalized, stereotyped, not necessarily of the same order and may be imaginary, yet each widening the wound and reducing the hopes of healing it; North vs South; Islam vs Christianity, alleged feudalism vs assumed socialism, federal vs unitary preferences, traditional authority vs achieved elitism, haves vs have-nots; each with sinister undertones of tension, irreconcilability and threatened withdrawal.

None was quite entirely accurate. Nevertheless, each opposing set had sufficient seeds of truth within it to permit, and even fertilize the growth of feared fact from the semi-fiction of its existence".

Awolowo; 1947, Said

"Nigeria is not a nation, argues, Awolowo. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no "Nigerians" in the same sense as there are "English" "Welsh" or "French". The word Nigeria is merely a distinctive appellation to

distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not. (Awolowo, 1947:47-48).

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa First Prime Minister of Nigeria Concur

“Since 1914, the British government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves, are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite” Abubakar Tafawa Balewa lamented “Nigerian Unity was only a British intention for the country” (In Coleman, 1958).

Also as Billy J. Dudley Noted

“Unlike the central Government, which had no representatives outside Nigeria, the Regional Governments had separate “offices” abroad, for instance the Eastern, Western and Northern Nigeria Offices in Britain”. Not inappropriately, the popular slogan of the day became ‘East for the Easterners West for the westerners, north for the Northerners, and Nigeria for nobody’. (Dudley, 1968, 1983, 1973)

“Many (Nigerians) deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one ... particularly some of the press people ... This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside this chamber (Balewa in Nigeria Legislative Council Debate, 4 March, 1948:227)”

Balewa Also Said

“The southern tribes ... now pouring into the north do not mix with Northern people ... we in North see them as ‘invaders’ (Whitaker and Sklar, 1966)

We submit that to overcome these perennial and endemic problems of lack of peace and security, the thing that must be striven for, first and foremost is peace followed by security.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON PEACE AND SECURITY

Let us begin by asking a few key questions. What do we mean by peace? What is security? What is the relationship/nexus between peace and security? What impact do peace and security have on whether Nigerians can live together or sink together?

Peace is about how conflicts are managed to ensure relative stability, law and order in order to enable human beings carry out their daily activities. Peace is a societal condition which ensures relative social stability and order

through the dispensation of justice, fairness and opportunities for accommodation by formal and informal institutions, practices and norms (Miller, undated).

Peace is an ideal of freedom, peace and happiness among and within all nations and/or people. Peace as a term is sometimes used to refer to a cessation of all hostilities among all humanity. Peace is a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area (Horn by, 1997).

The international Day of Peace is observed annually on 21 September. The day is dedicated to Peace, absence of war and violence. The 1st was celebrated in 1982 and since then, the day has been kept by many nations, political groups, military groups, non-governmental organizations and peoples (Olayiwola, 2015).

Security is the first order of the state-for without security, peace and/or law and order all other functions of the state as mentioned earlier cannot be effectively carried out.

For decades, the term national security has meant-by and large-military security; this meaning has increasingly been called into question (Romm, J. 1993). The question of national security is not merely a question of the Army and Navy. We have to take into account our whole potential for war, our mines, industry, manpower, research, and all the activities that go into the normal civilian life.

An eminent Political Scientist Arnold Wolfers in his 1962 essay “National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol”, wrote of the phrases “national security” and “national interest”,

“They may not mean the same things to different people. They may not have any precise meaning at all. Thus, while appearing to offer guidance and a basis of broad consensus, they may be permitting everyone to label whatever policy he favors with an attractive and possibly deceptive name” (Wolfers, A. 1962)

In part, this ambiguity came from the inherent subjectivity in determining the threats to any nation’s security. More recently, the British Scholar Barry Buzan has argued that another reason national security remains a “weekly conceptualized, ambiguously defined, but politically powerful concept” is that “for the practitioners of state policy, compelling reasons exist for maintaining its symbolic ambiguity ... an undefined notion of national security offers scope for power-maximizing strategies of

political and military elites, because of the considerable leverage over domestic affairs which can be obtained by invoking it. (Buzan, B, 1976)

Walter Lippmann (1943) Says

“A nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war.”

Arnold Wolfers (1962) Says

“Security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.”

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968) describes it as: “The ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats”

Amos Jordan and William Taylor (1981) define it thus: “National security, however, has a more extensive meaning than protection from physical harm; it also implies protection, through a variety of means, of vital economic and political interests, the loss of which could threaten fundamental values and the vitality of the state.”

Charles Maier (1990) says: “National security ... is best defined as the capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community believes necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity and well-being.”

It is now widely acknowledged that without a safe and secure environment, there can be neither sustainable, poverty reducing economic and social development nor political development.

In the same vein, there are other key issues relating to sound security. They include the following:

- security as a public good;
- comprehensive approach to security sector transformation;
- coherent external interventions;
- commitment of national leadership to a reform process;
- local ownership and capacity;
- confidence building measures, and
- importance of a long-term perspective, to mention just a few

Also to be covered are security sector and security community. The totality of the actors that affect the security of the state and its population constitutes the “security community”. The official actors within the security community comprise the “security sector”.

Security sector can be divided into 3 main groupings:

- Organizations authorized to use force;
- Civil management and oversight bodies;
- Justice and law enforcement institutions (Olayiwola, 2013)

ANALYSIS, ACTION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We have discussed the problems of lack of peace and security since Nigeria’s amalgamation in 1914 and eventual/subsequent independence in 1960. We argued that peace and security have eluded Nigeria due to factors enumerated earlier. We suggest the following to achieve peace and security, failing which Nigeria may not survive another century as a corporate entity.

There is a need to make the country’s constitutional provisions justifiable. Section 14(1) of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) states that; “the security and welfare of the people shall be a primary purpose of government”. Also, the motto of the country shall be unity and faith, peace and progress (Olayiwola, 2012).

- There is a need to re-examine the foundations of Nigerian federalism and make a structural adjustment of the country’s federation. We can look at the practice of comparative federal systems of other countries such as Canada, India, Belgium, Italy, South Africa, United States of America, Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia and Cyprus to mention just a few
- Factors that contribute to compliment and supplement lack of peace and security should be addressed – poverty, injustice, unemployment, inequitable distribution of resources and fundamentally, the flawed nature of Nigeria’s federalism.
- Re-branding Nigeria is an exercise in futility. The government should first expedite action in addressing developmental, political, social, and economic and security problems

confronting the nation. The issue goes beyond noise-making or propaganda. The government needs to dissipate its energy on energy, address the problem of epileptic supply of electricity, fix deplorable death trap roads, channel resources to combat insecurity problems, armed robbery, kidnapping, Boko haram, herdsmen insurgency, bombing and improve primary health care, education, accommodation, communication, medication, transport etc. (Olayiwola, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

- The fundamental imbalance in Nigeria's Federal Political structure and the asymmetric power relationship. Many Nigerian politicians are convinced that the fall of civilian regimes in Nigeria has partly been a function of the unequal size of the states and this has been the greatest threat to Nigerian unity, peace and security, Azikiwe, (1965), who was President of Nigeria from 1963 to 1966, took the opportunity of the crisis of 1964 and 1965 to state that:

In order to evolve into a near perfect union, the whole of Nigeria should be divided and so demarcated geographically and demographically that no one region would be in a position to dominate the rest.

In the same vein, Awolowo, (1966) argued that: The abnormal imbalance in the constituents of the federation was one of the evils that afflicted Nigeria and brought about the ruin of the First Republic.

Obasanjo (2006) Says

“The primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interest and objectives; to contain instability; control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth, and improve the welfare and well-being and quality of life of the citizenry.”

Observance of the rule of law, equality/qualitarianism/egalitarianism, protection of fundamental human rights and adherence to the supremacy of the constitution should be cornerstones of governance. Deliberate manipulation of Ethnic and Religious Identities must be criminalized

Partisanship of Security Agencies must be outlawed and there is a need for state and community policing *pari passu*.

There is a need for leaders-political, economic, charismatic, traditional, legal etc to fear God, respect all and sundry and love the country as patriots.

There is a need for poverty alleviation, eradication and economic empowerment of all citizens, men and women, young and old, able bodied or physically challenged. Greater job opportunities for the youth will discourage them from recruitment by politicians or criminal gangs as militia. Politicians should also obey the rules of the game when they win or lose political contests and comply with the constitutional provisions which they always swear to uphold but refuse to adhere to the oaths and pledges after wards.

Methods of social control through law need to be intensified. There are seven techniques used in modern law to achieve these:

- The Penal Technique;
- The Grievance – Remedial Technique;
- The Private Arranging Technique;
- The Constitutive Technique;
- The Administrative Regulatory Technique;
- The Fiscal Technique; and
- The Public Benefit Conferral Technique (Olayiwola, 2017)

There is a need to pay particular attentions to the regionalization and globalization of insecurity. Insecurity is sustained by individual, group, regional, national, continental, international, intercontinental and global flows of resources and weapons.

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