

The Role of Security Agents on Economic Development and Growth in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *Nigeria security over the years has been a source of concern for scholars and keen observers of the Nations security situation. Of recent, the security situation of Nigeria has been called to question severally from political unrest to incessant religious and terrorist groups making havoc on the Nation. Having at the centre of this discourse is the role of security agents on the economic development and growth of the Nigerian nation. To what extent are they relevant and effective in curbing the excesses of securing threat and terrorist groups in Nigeria? This paper looks at the role of security agents and their relevance and contribution to economic growth and development in Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Economic development and growth, Nigeria, Security.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of security or national security has received attention from scholars both as a concept and as a field of study. The concept of security has a number of connotations as it were; Berkowitz and Bock (1968:40) describe security as encompassing not just the ability of a nation to protect its internal and external values from threats and external attacks. They also add that the way and manner in which Nations plan, make and evaluate decisions, policies and issues in order to lesson their vulnerability to threat and increase the stability. The primary role of every government is the provision of security which include life and property. This paper will analyses the role of security agents on the economic development of Nigeria. Taking into cognizance the importance of security to the wellbeing and development of any nation, this relevance of security agents can not be over emphasized.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF SECURITY

The word security has been interpreted differently by difference scholars and observers. According to Nweke (1999:36) National security means, guidance against internal and external threats, regime maintenance, achievement of an acceptable level of economic viability, in short, national security primarily means all those things that lead to the safety of lives and property of people living within a geographical location. Security agents provide security for the nation. The guest to make the environment safe and secure for every Nigerian is a desired development.

AKinjide (1982:24) defines Nigerian security thus:

“The maintenance of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its organs as by law established. So that any threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria or any arm of government duly set up by the constitution should be seen as a threat to public security. Equally any threat to the economic and social structure of Nigeria such as conflicts, sabotage of our national resources i.e., oil, water, electricity e.t.c amount to undermining Nigeria’s public security”.

This definition appears to be legislative, but we argue that any definition of Nigerian security will be meaningless if it fails to include the security of the aggregate people within the country. In fact the Nigerian constitution clearly defined Nigerian security from the perspective of the people when it states that “sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government derives all the powers and authority” adding that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”.

Abba and et-al (1996:34) argue that Nigerian security means:

“The protection of the lives, rights of the citizens and resources, territory, sovereignty and lawful institution of the country only in so far as these institutions are utilizing the resources of the nation for the provision of secure, just and equitable living conditions for all the citizens of the country.

The substance of this definition is that anything that threatens the lives of citizens, their dignity, their property, resources, territory, sovereignty and lawful institutions of Nigeria is a security risk. It therefore goes to suggest that Nigerian security is guaranteed when these factors are free from danger. It then becomes obvious that there are issues or problems both internal and external that are likely to affect security of Nigeria. From these we can deduce that Nigeria's security could mean the survival of the Nigerian state, its components and the lives and property of the people living within its territory.

III. CONCEPT OF SECURITY AGENTS

By security agents we mean all the personal responsible for the prosecution and security, such as the police, military, state security service (SSS), Para-military organization, etc. to Abba (1996:23) every citizen is supposed to be security conscious and alert. That means the tenants of guiding against threat to security should not be left to security agents alone. But whether this is the case or not is beyond the purpose of this paper, since we are more concern with the role of security agents and the contribution to economic development of the Nigeria nation.

According to Nweke (1999:58) security agents are those officers and personnel on active duty or watches against threats to internal and external peace and unity of a country. To him, these personnel make up of the military, para-military, police, security details etc. To him, security is a serious business and as such, every government invests in them for security personnel to help regulate peace and stability of that society for the overall development as the nation.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In out lining theoretical perspective to the research paper, several theoretical views comes to minds, these include the systems theory, the structural functionalism theory and the political economy theory, integration theory, political system theory among others.

The system theory by Gabriel Almond views the society as a system, were it is expected that every unit that move up the system should be able to carry out its functions for the survival of the society. This then brings the relevance structural functionalism theory, in which all the parts of the system carry out specific functions expected of it, through a process of inputs and outputs, as well as feed backs mechanism. If any part of the systems fails to carry out its functions the system may collapses and that is not good for progress and development. Relating this theory to our situation in this paper, the society can be view as a system, if there is a breach of peace or law and order, the society cannot develop to the desired level. That is why to Easton (1959:34) The political system constantly need the cooperation of every unit for the continuous survival and existence of an entity.

The indices of Nigerian security problems include insecurity of lives and property, poverty, unemployment, hunger, disease, and illiteracy among others. Threat to internal security can occur when there components units continue to be a problem in Nigeria. According to Fukuyama (1992:87) if the people are impoverished, the national security of Nigeria is thus threatened. It is in this lighter that we contend that the Nigeria state has to have all its components units working together for the over all development of the nation.

IV. CONTRIBUTION OF SECURITY AGENTS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN NIGERIA

We have stated that security agents provide very essential service of guiding against threat to peace and security of the society especially here in Nigeria with its numerous security problems and crisis. In contemporary times in Nigeria, there has been an upsurge of violence, conflicts, terrorism and general insecurity in the country which is mostly tied to terrorist attacks by a sect group called boko haram (an Arabic term meaning western education is evil). These actions couple with upheavals and ethnic clashes and violent destructions of lives and property in some parts of Nigeria such as Jos, Kaduna, Gombe, Yobe, Kano, Abuja and the Niger Delta agitation by militant etc has made the role of security agents even more relevant and glaring to the keen observer of security situation in the country.

The role of there various security agents helps to bring about confidence on the minds of the people, because, if the people are assured of security, the economy market will equally have their thrust and support which in turn win bring about progress and development, (Garuba 1997:34) is known to be an environment that safe and conflict free, tends to attack the peoples confidence and also integrate the various sectors of the economy. A feeling of happiness and general public contentment also springs up. It attracts investment to the country. No investor would want to invest in a trouble and conflict infested society. Nigeria currently experience bomb blast in various part of the country, the most recent devastating is that which bomb the UN building in Abuja. These situations surely will not boast investors' confidence or the general public at all. That is why the role of security agents in providing security cannot be over emphasized. If an environment is well

policed and secure or free from security crisis it tends to bring about economic development. This is because no society can develop where there are violence and constants threats to peace and stability (Gameni, 1990:24).

A censored look at Nigeria during crisis situation will further give credence to the importance of security and its agents to the wellbeing of the Nigeria society. During the hey days of the Niger delta agitation by militant over the issue of resource control, the nation witness a steady decline in revenue, foreign investors were shying away from investing in the area, but with renewed peace and confidence investors are steadily coming back. This goes to show the importance of peace and a stable environment on the economic development of Nigeria. The continued provision of security and security agents' reaction to stem down clashes and conflicts situations has been a great plus to economic progress of Nigeria.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Giving the importance of security agents in safeguarding lives and property, governments should do well in equipping our security personnel so as to help them brace up to the challenges of maintaining law and order in the society
- ii. More covert and advance technique in checking the activities of terrorist groups such as boko haram must be entrenched on our security agents. This also calls for training and retraining to better equip them with modern sophisticated technique of societal policing.
- iii. Nigeria national security policy must take full cognizance of the yearnings of minority groups whose continuous clamor have led to political tension in the country.
- iv. In spite of the economic perspective to national security is held in this paper, we posit and recommend that democracy just be nurtured with highly mobile and professional nurtured with highly mobile and professional armed forces to argument the non military security needs of Nigeria.
- v. The winner takes all syndrome in Nigerian politics should be reversed. Immediately, the government should also concentrate on providing for the welfare of the people. The so much premium attached to politics has only facilitated ethnic cleavages from those who feel alienated from government and the result is frequent civil unrest and conflicts that are a constantly breach of peace and security in the country.
- vi.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion we have outline the role and importance of security agents to the Nigeria economic development course. In doing the paper clearly outline the meaning of security and national security as well as their benefit to the nation. We conclude that the success of any nation is for the citizens to have absolute confidence in the government. It is only when there is confidence that the citizens can imbibe a new form of orientations towards their security duties and responsibilities. This cannot be possible unless the citizens are made to reap maximally, the dividends of democracy, devoid of marginalization repression and primitive accumulation of wealth.

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