

Review

Fifty years after: Rethinking security/national security discourse and practice to reinvent its future

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Fifty years after independence, the discourse and practice of security/national security in Nigeria needs re-examination. Security is a contested terrain amongst nation at different stages of development. At the moment, the contest is over the referent-state or people. Have Nigerians ever face national security threat of the scale in countries of the North that threatened the existence of the state in the last fifty years? Have not we faced national security threats of the scale not peculiar with countries of the North that has continuously threatened the existence of the state in the last fifty years? More Nigerians are threatened by government policies than by neighbouring armies. What were the objectives, priorities and methods of national security in discourse and practice? Have we not been discussing and practicing security and national security wrongly thus endangering the very basis of security-the people? What do we mean when we talk about security and national security? Or when we make policies to protect and advance national security? This paper surveys the discourse and practice of national security in Nigeria using papers presented at the Historical Society of Nigeria congress on "Historicizing National Security, Order and Rule of Law".It examined the understanding of national security arguing that the ambiguity evident in the term sanctioned and legitimised similar disposition in its use by policy makers. It called for the people of Nigeria to be the referent object of security rather than the interest of the elite subsumed for the state.

Keywords: Security, national security, state, human beings, scholars.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, Nigeria celebrated fifty years of self governance and if Nigeria is to last another fifty years, there is the need to review the national understanding of security and national security. The changes evident in the world necessitate this re-examination. Over twenty years ago, the cold war ended producing a dominant United States, the 9-11 attacks and the war against terror. These developments compounded Nigeria's governance problem

including the received understanding of security and within it, national security. Security became a growth industry especially since the 1980s as peopemade reference to security and in particular national security. The period recorded major post colonial state crisis evident in the virulence of military rule, governance decay, economic downturn and the interventions of the Bank and the Fund. The consequent social crisis elevated security

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discourse onto the national agenda. In fact, it was politically correct to talk security among the political class, bureaucrats, academics, security establishment and lay people. However, what do they mean when they talk and do security? At what point in history did security become burning national issue National security represents a convergence of different current. To effectively tackle the term we must first agree on what is security and what constitutes national in security. The definition is divisive among scholars and policy makers and this is all the more evident when set, in the latter case, in a military regime where the defence-security option was preferred or in the civil regime where the power-security option prevailed. Indeed, the defence-security and power-security perspective was indistinguishable in a military regime. In this context what comes to mind is its International Relation and state-centric context, but above all its alien application in the Nigerian context. Its hegemonic application excludes the necessary role of local knowledge and capability and, played into the hands of the military institution that dominated government. Once we agree on what is security and this is unlikely, we will proceed to examining its ideological connotation and application in everyday policy. What is security/national security? Of the different groups who left their imprint on the discourse of security/national security, policy makers especially in a military regime and academics top the list.

The paper examines this view using selected articles presented in the 53rd Congress of the HSN conference on the theme and drawing attention to a scene of orchestrated confusion evident by this that profited the dominant tradition. The work is divided into introduction, conceptualization of security and national security, situating the discourse in historical context, examining the papers within the discourse, practice of security and national security under militarily dominated mentality, reaffirming the need to embrace human security whose neglect created the security condition bringing about the conceptual and policy sophistry and the conclusion.

A critique of security and national security

A contentious issue in the attempt to broaden and deepen security studies is the question of whether the state or human being should be the referent. Since security studies are sub-field in international relation; the state is the preeminent referent in the relation between countries (Buzan, 1991). This view fits the pattern of relations in the developed world. In the developing world and in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, this view has come under intense scrutiny especially after the cold War (UNDP, 1994). This is largely the result of the mess governments made of governance and its consequences on human beings.

Thus the argument that people should be the referent is borne of this realisation. The realisation is that the state is

the major source of insecurity to people in sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike in the developed world that guarantees some level of material comfort for its people thus paving the way to pursuing other forms of security, poor governance in sub-Saharan Africa threaten peoples' security. This explains governments focus on the survival of the state or regimes to the detriment of people. Poor governance within countries threatens more lives than soldiers from neighbouring countries. This explains why the focus on the state should give way to people. Nigeria is not an exception. Security in Nigeria should not be limited to what military regimes bequeathed. It should be re-conceptualised and refocused on the people to address their deprivation (Booth, 2007). The welfare of the people is as important as the survival of the state. In the last fifty years of statehood and in particular, the last thirty years, the neglect of the welfare of Nigerians is the single most important threat to the state.

Some of the definitions of security provided are culture-specific, value laden and development bound. Jozsef Balazs sees security as determined by the internal and external security of the various social systems, by the extent, in general, to which system identity depends on external circumstances. For him, social security is internal security. The essential function is to ensure the political and economic power of a given ruling class, or the survival of the social system and an adequate degree of public security (Buzan, 1991:16). Ian (1981:102) located security in relative freedom from war, coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur. In Lippmann's conception, a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war (Wolfers, 1962: 150). Wolfers categorises security as objective and subjective. Security, in any objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. Martin (1983: 12) defines security as assurance of future well being and Mroz (1980: 105) situated security in the relative freedom from harmful threats. To Waever (1989), security is a speech act. It is the utterance itself that is the act. Thus a state representative moves a particular case into a specific area "claiming a special right to use the means necessary to block this development".

Most, if not all of these definitions, pointed to IR influence and development level of the definers. For instance, Balazs situated security in the "international context and determined basically by the internal and external security of the various social systems, by the extent, in general, to which system identity depends on external circumstances". The availability of social security provides the type of material protection that is lacking in Nigeria. Unlike the developed world where threat is more or less from external sources, the threat in Nigeria is from

within and emanates from the people. The welfare of the ruling class in Nigeria has been the priority of security. Bellamy (1981) detailed war, values, future and freedom as security issues. War is a dominant theme in the evolution of International Studies and within it is the sub field of security and was a common theme in the affairs of nations in the last century. War is not part of the consideration in Nigerian because there has never been any significant threat to the survival of the country from outside. Most threats come from within. On values, future and freedom, there is a correlation between material comfort and consciousness of abstract issues such as values, freedom and plan to secure the future. These definitions are culture and development specific to Europe and North America.

Waever's definition of security as a speech act came to acquire prominence for the power elite not only in Nigeria but in most sub Saharan African countries. Military rule and global economic crisis created condition that made the application of security in its most diverse phases feasible. The military's position of securing the territorial integrity of Nigeria came into conflict with its assumption of governance. In this case as the representative of the state, it held the wisdom in designating an issue security thus "claiming a special right to use the means necessary to block this development". Thus military regime and the political class it cloned elevated the wishes of Nigerians to have a better life, expressed in the protests and demonstrations over its poor governance, as threat to security.

Thus it is necessary to arrive at a definition of security that is local, interested, contextual, and historically specific. Security is peoples' relative feeling of being secure from economic, political, social, cultural and psychological fear. Insecurity is peoples' relative feeling of the presence of economic, political, social, cultural and psychological fear. Economic insecurity such as the lack of jobs and access opportunity in all fields spawned other forms of insecurity. It is the absence of these that create conditions of political, cultural and psychological exclusion detrimental to state security. Essentially therefore while values, institutions and survival of the state could constitute referents of security of developed societies having attained the necessary material comfort for their people, the lack of the latter for Nigerians is the major threat to security. Thus in order to achieve this, it is necessary to raise the material level of the people to attain security.

It is within this premise that the question of national security comes into centre stage. The definition contains two words--national and security. National security is a common word in discourse that cut across all strata of society just as the meaning and usage also differs. When does a threat constitute national security? Who elevates the threat to national level? Hartland-Thunberg defined national security as the ability of a nation to pursue successfully its national interest, as it sees them, any

place in the world (Buzan, 1991: 17). Louw thinks it includes traditional defence policy and the non-military actions of a state to ensure its total capacity to survive as a political entity in order to exert influence and to carry out its internal and international objectives. For Luciani, it is the ability to withstand aggression from abroad. The NDC sees it as the preservation of a way of life acceptable to the people and compatible with the needs and legitimate aspirations of others (Buzan, 1991). Trager and Simonie (1973) describe national security as that part of government policy having as its objective the creation of national international political conditions favourable to the protection or extension of vital national values against existing and potential adversaries. To Ullman (1983), a threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that threatens drastically and over a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private, non-governmental entities within the state.

The definitions stresses pursuit of national interest anywhere in the world, of internal and international objectives, withstanding aggression from abroad, preservation of life, freedom and protection of values; other seek to preserve vital national values against existing and potential adversaries, prevent the degrading of quality of life of inhabitants and against narrowing the range of policy choices available to government and private institutions within a state. Embedded in them are ideological issues specific to the places where these views emanate and may not necessarily apply to the Nigerian environment. The basis for attaining these objectives has been put in place. The precondition in question is the preservation of way of life acceptable to the people. Fifty years after independence the existing pattern of living is unacceptable to most Nigerians and not worth preserving hence the expression of discontent. National security is invoked to preserve the way of life of the dominant minority who view the expression of discontent as detrimental to their hold on power. The inclusion of 'national' sums the urgency and patriotism of the appeal and appropriation of resources.

Public officials and the academia have used national security to describe manifestation of disagreement by the people with policies of government. The crisis in Niger Delta and Central Nigeria, both resource rich areas, elicits response in national security language. This is because the non- military conception of national security differs from that of the military that has two roles to play. One, as a member of the national defence establishment, issues of security is regarded as their area of specific competence. Definition outside this technical competence is unacceptable intrusion. Two, the military's usurpation of power left its impression of security on others. Indeed the latter milieu colours the academia's independent appreciation of security and what is national in security.

Situating discourse and practice of security/national security in historical context

We can situate the pull of insecurity in the country and thus the discourse on security. From the 1960s to 1970s, we had relative security because there were fewer persons, commensurate infrastructure, opportunities and a thriving agriculture base, reliant on healthy regional competition which prevented rural-urban migration. Military intervention and oil economy change the trend of relative security to rising insecurity.

The population grew as work place culture engendered mass migration from the rural into the insufficient urban economy. The crisis reached zenith with civil rule profligacy and oil price collapse of the 1980s. Insecurity moved from relative to absolute term in human and infrastructural areas. The intervention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) established insecurity as a perpetual development issue in Nigeria. This spawn chicanery and charlatans of all type including what BBC described as "useful idiots"-- intellectuals who upturned reality in their attempt to burnish the different dictatorships. It is within this condition that the conceptual confusion about security and what constitute national security emerged.

Every decade in Nigeria from the 1980s onward represented decay in the living conditions of Nigerians. The enactment of the National Economic Stabilization Act (Olukoshi, 1991) announced the birth of reforms. The essence of the Act was to reduce government's expenditure and capital imports using import restrictions, monetary controls, and financial policies. This measure was applied selectively to party officials and elite on the one hand and Nigerians on the other. This manifest dual standard was a reflection of the crisis of governance compounded by the inordinate ambition of members of the ruling party to return to power. The 1983 election was a replay of 1964-65 elections as soldiers used the excuse to return to power. For the ruling elite, security or national security was the interest of the party and not the welfare and safety of Nigerians.

The military government defined security in line with the war against indiscipline. Soldiers were role out into the street to enforce the regime's regulation against the discredited politicians and what they considered immorality of Nigerians. They clamp down on the press, labour and professional unions and the international communities. The campaign against corruption and moral laxity took precedence over declining economic wellbeing of Nigerians. Increasingly, the regime became alienated from Nigerians and from section of the armed forces. It was removed from power on 27th August, 1985.

The new regime unveiled economic and political programme of action with a populist bend. It coincided with changes that would significantly alter the theory and practice of governance worldwide. The international

dimension of change was the introduction of perestroika and glasnost by Mikhail Gorbachev. In Nigeria, the country committed itself to adopting home-grown measure of economic reform even as the government proceeded through the backdoor to inviting the IMF. According to Mkandawire and Olukoshi (1995), the introduction of structural adjustment programme affected Nigerians in ways that all previous economic reform did not. The immediate impact of the SAP was as unsettling for the state as for the various social forces in society and whose ultimate aim was to fundamentally alter the structural basis of Nigerian economy.

It has been argued that economic and political reforms go simultaneously. Diamond (2004) was of the view that in so far as the market reform programmes of the IMF and WB help to streamline the over-extended post-colonial African state and encourage the emergence of a genuinely productive domestic bourgeoisie able to cope with the discipline of the market, they are bound to be beneficial to Africa's democratic prospects. In Nigeria, the application produced disastrous result as its unleashed social forces of the dimension never experienced before. Indeed as it became evident everywhere in Africa, the initial success of the implementation of the SAP could only have occurred in an authoritarian political space. The state in Nigeria became increasingly authoritarian as the implementation of the programme unfolded. According to Olukoshi (1993), the formal adoption of adjustment witnessed the most widespread and passionate contestation of the adjustment programme by various social groups adversely affected. It was a period of unprecedented hardship for many Nigerians at a time when most had not been able to devise mechanisms for coping with the adverse effects of the market reforms which the government was attempting to push through. The main immediate avenue available to most groups to defend their interests was by exerting pressure on the state, often in the form of spontaneous and violent protests.

This is the pressure that was interpreted as security or national security threat. It was treated in relation to the survival of the regime relying on the expertise of the military. The regime was not only confronted with power security threat but also defence security threat. It therefore invoked the speech act view of security in designating every act of protest against the SAP as threat to national security and often used it to silence its critics. Indeed it was on record that the head of the regime described the 1989 SAP demonstrations as the civilian equivalent of a military coup d'état. The regime treated the symptom rather than the disease that bred insecurity. It was at war with itself and with Nigerians and thus upped its perception of insecurity. It justified its intervention on the division created by the political logjam that permeated all facets of society including the armed forces.

Perhaps it was the post SAP debasement of being

human and the post cold war paradigm shift that necessitated the re-evaluation of past focus on security. The emerging security paradigm focused on human being (UNDP, 1994) rather than the state. Human security means, 'first, safety from such chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. Ensuring human security requires seven-pronged approach addressing economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political security (Kerr, 2010:122). Thus military spending means loss of opportunity to rescue disappearing social services and disintegrating infrastructures (Ake, 2000:145). The human cost of military expenditure is not only high but it also produces the insecurity with which the regime is forced to justify its measure. The level of poverty in Nigeria is so high that the struggle for social existence is waged on a level of physical immediacy so absorbing and debilitating that it is hostile to the condition of security.

Examining discourse of security and national security using selected papers from the 53rd HSN Congress

According to Onoja (2010), with an environment dominated by security challenges created by military regime type, it was not surprising that the state centric view of security became the prevalent one. If any regime type shapes the behaviours of Nigerians, the military, by virtue of their dominance of politics, policies and society, did. This domination was all encompassing. The short bout of civilian regimes did little to extricate itself from this pervasive milieu. With the return of retired military men as members of the executive and legislature in 1999, the opportunity to begin a process of demilitarization of the polity receded further.

Of the generation that were born from the 1970s down to the end of the 1990s, the most familiar system of government for them was the military (Survey, 2010). Militaries often function as societies within societies by having their own military communities, economies, education, medicine, language (Ojo, 1999) and other aspects of a functioning civilian society. Socialisation is the process by which individuals learn the culture of their society (Haralambos, 1983:4-5). Apart from the family, peer group, educational system, work setting, the military institution was one of the unofficial agencies of socialization in Nigeria. The military's brand of socialization entrenched as Nigeria was transformed into one big garrison comparable, perhaps, only to the colonial period. The colonial regime was, for the subjects, an arbitrary power, as it could not engender any legitimacy even though it made rules and laws profusely and propagated its values (Ake, 1996:3). This scenario permeated the

military establishment as it attempted to utilise the same instrument to confer legitimacy on its rule. What was different was that the institution did enjoy some form of legitimacy from some section of the political class and the citizens once it successfully established itself in power.

We noted that the obsession with insecurity under the military increased with new round of military rule, pressure from outside and within and the governments' wrong diagnosis and hence solution to deteriorating human condition. Discourses on security thus differ in say the regime of Babangida and Abacha while sharing the similarity of regime survival. In the former, it was induced by the SAP demonstrations. It was insufficient palliative that triggered the Jos crisis after the appointment of a 'non indigene' as coordinator of the poverty alleviation programme. Deteriorating standard of living awakens consciousness of self and environment producing exclusion strategies. Thus, for Babangida, insecurity was largely the failure of his economic and political programme. Crisis became rife in hot spots such as the south west, central Nigeria and the Niger Delta.

It is this environment that produces the intellectual legitimisation of discourse on security and national security. This is because the discourse remained vague as to the definition of the terms. Indeed should intellectual be vague in their use of terms? Should they be overwhelmed by the prevalent view sanctioned by the regime type? Should the definition of security and national security not conform to changing reality? Should it be based on the realist conception of the term? Should the Nigerian reality not inform the definitions? How has Nigerian intellectual discussed security?

One forum where this came to light was the 53rd congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria held in Gombe in 2008. The theme was "historicising national security, order and the rule of law". Most of the papers presented at the conference attempted to address issues from the security and national security perspective without putting into context what these terms meant. Does it connote power security or regime survival as regimes in Nigeria would rather have it? Does it connote defence security as the military conceives national security and thus their pre- eminent role in it? Is it the state centred perspective hence focusing on external dimension of the threat? Does it draw attention to the human angle thus internal threat?

Submissions include 'Media and National Security/ Insecurity in Nigeria', 'Youth, Rule of Law, Order and National Security in the Niger-Delta Region Since 1966', 'Oil as a National Question in Nigeria; 'Militancy' or 'Criminality': Implications for National Security since the End of Military Dictatorship in 1999', 'New Approaches to National Threats and Security', 'The Economy and National Security in Nigeria (1995-2005): The Impact of Food Insecurity', 'National Question and National Security in Nigeria', 'Security Consciousness and Awareness in

Support of National Security: The Nigerian Situation', 'Historical Perceptions of Nigeria's National Security 1600-2008', 'Is Religion a Threat or Strength to National Security', 'National Security and Sustainable Development: The Challenges from the Niger Delta Region', 'A Historical Analysis of Oil Base Conflicts and the Threat to Nigeria's National Security', 'Islam, Democracy and the Sharia Question in Nigeria: Implication to National Security', 'The Character of the Nigerian State and the Contradiction of National Security', 'Politics, the State and National Security in Nigeria', 'Ethno-Religious Crises and Threats to National Security in Historical Perspective', 'Drug Trafficking and Challenges to National Security' and 'Ethnic Militias and Conflicts: Its Implications for the National Security of the Nigerian State since 1999'.

Against past practice of security, these perspectives ought to come out with concise conceptualisation of security and national security. What comes to mind in the absence of clear clarification is its ambiguousness and in part its attempt at 'seeing like a state' (Scott, 1998). It is evident that most of the paper appreciated the deteriorating human condition as threatening to security but overall it has not been able to say whose national security it threatened. For instance, the paper on 'national questions and national security in Nigeria' opined that:

Security of a state or nation cannot therefore exist without due provision of adequate national security. Aggressive and repressive states are major source of human insecurity and a greater cause of human suffering. Thus, national security is concerned about governmental institutions that seek to ensure the physical protection and safety of citizens, their equal access to the law and protection from abuse. There are two main sets of government systems and institutions concerned with national security, the traditional instruments of national security, namely: the criminal justice system (police, justice and correctional services/prisons), the military and the intelligence community and the most important, been the nature of governance, its institutions and the rules, norms and values which underpin it as well as, the efficacy thereof (HSN, 2008).

In stressing the institutions of the state, the perspective burrowed into the realist paradigm which sought to strengthened instruments of repression against external attacks. However, in the Nigerian case internal threats engendered by deprivation of all kinds became the focus of repression. While giving pre-eminence to what it termed traditional instruments of national security, it underscored the nature of governance as another important component of national security. The paper's conception of 'nature of governance' is vague as reference to institutions, rules, norms and values could be interpreted differently.

The paper 'media and national security/insecurity in Nigeria' did not lose sight of the self preservation angle

embedded in the usage of national security in Nigeria. Excerpt:

National security is of utmost importance to every country and no responsible government can sit about and watch the security of its nation being trifled with... This is because it affects not only the satisfaction of the needs of the inhabitants, but also and perhaps more importantly, the fundamental issue of the nation's survival as a viable entity... From the dawn of colonialism to date, the history of Nigeria on media and national security most especially during military government regimes has been one of serious contention because the media are constantly being accused of undermining national security... The media in Nigeria, as well as in most African states, tend to pose as threats to the selfish interest of those in power that have substituted their individual security for national security and consider any challenge to their tenacious grip on power as a threat to national security... Since national security should occupy the highest priority, it is "non-negotiable", and does not permit "undue compromise" by any individual or group... (HSN, 2008)

However, the paper did not define what it meant by national security other than examining some of the travails of media houses in the hand of the government. It advises media houses to "come to equity with clean hands by adhering to their codes and ethics, preserving the nation at all cost and to operate as patriotic institutions and join hand with government to protect national security for the benefit of all the citizens of the nation" (HSN, 2008). The paper did not say who should define the national security that the media houses would join hands in advancing and protecting.

The lack of clear focus on what constitutes security and national security was revealed by the paper 'Ethnic Militias and Conflicts: Its Implications for the National Security of the Nigerian State since 1999'. The paper contends that "these militias groups in the light of their ethnic/religious linings... generated conflicts in the polity... and the "measurement of the implications is basically viewed from the various segments of the society that guarantees security, in essence, national security"; that the "activities of militia group have greatly altered the security base and have affected negatively, the national security of the Nigerian State since the return of democratic governance in 1999..." (HSN, 2008). In what seemed like an answer to the attempt by the previous paper to protect the Nigerian state, the paper noted 'the character of the Nigerian state and the contradictions of national security' and sought to situate the rising insecurity in Nigeria to "peripheral nature of the Nigerian state, the implication of primitive accumulation of wealth and votes and the attendant agitation..." This it blames on the "retrenchment of state from the management of public services" when Nigeria embraced neo-liberal orthodoxy (HSN, 2008). In suggesting ways of "boosting

national security in Nigeria”, the article remained did not say what constitute national security even though it could be deduced that the reference to the lack of social services provisioning by the state was what eroded national security and by implication defines this.

Nor did ‘politics, the state and national security in Nigeria’ do a better job of fleshing the national security dilemma. It began by defining politics, state and security and connecting the first two with the latter in arriving at the “process, functions and public expectations of government in Nigeria” (HSN, 2008). Except for the latter indication, the implication of the argument remained ambiguous to the extent that what constitute national security was interpreted by the dominant power to mean regime survival and enhancement. The state remained the primary focus of this viewpoint. Military regime in Nigeria was no disinterested observer in areas it considered its primary field. The definition of security and national security, bereft of its people centeredness, did not take into cognizance the local, interested, contextual and historical connotation of the terms. Thus most of the papers merely included security or national security without fully conceptualizing them while in most cases the direction of their argument were either contained in the title, part of the content or lost in articulation. This is the case with ‘national security and sustainable development: the challenges from the Niger Delta Region’. It left the issue of national security and attempted to draw out the importance of oil, environmental degradation and its effect on the people thus engendering militancy and threatening national security. It was unlike ‘a historical analysis of oil base conflicts and the threat to Nigeria’s national security’ that question “historical context of a statist conception of national security bereft of ecological and socio-economic considerations...” thus producing conflict. It considered this as “narrow statist cum military perspective to the security question and demonstrates how the persistence of oil based conflicts contradicts this model” (HSN, 2008).

It is this state centric security (Buzan, 1991) that benefits the Nigerian environment oppressively shaped by the military’s pre-eminence in governance that needs to be reviewed in discourses by intellectual in support of the human security model (Booth, 2007).

Practising security and national security

The military promoted security milieu left its mark on Nigerians (Survey, 2010) including the intellectuals. For the military, what emerged can be equated to what Buzan (1991:272-273) called the defence dilemma. This is the contradiction between military defence and national security. Armed forces are justified principally by their necessity for national security, and it is therefore politically expedient to assume that military might is positively correlated with national security. As the Nigerian military

discovered, this was not always the case since their definition of national security with time developed into the symbolic ambiguity type. In their case, defence and security began to work against each other. Their focus on defence or regime survival compromised other security objectives including the welfare of the people. In this case, the defence measure adopted by the government was inappropriate and irrelevant to the security need of the country. The government was oblivious of the armament versus development debate in national security. In this case, more serious economic, political and ecological security issues are not dealt with because too many resources are put into dealing with less serious military threats (Buzan, 1991:273). In Nigeria, even the so called resources voted for the military did not reach them as the rot within the system subsequently revealed. It was a ploy to prevent the emergence of armed forces that would threaten the regime in power.

Thus military government in Nigeria was fascinated by the speech act and political/ regime security. The crises in the economy (Onoh, 1983; Caccia, 1983; Bangura et al, 1992) peaked in the late 1980s with the introduction of the structural adjustment programme. The growth of discontent among the populace provided the enabling environment for the development of security scare. The SAP platforms provided for deregulation, subsidy removal, retrenchment, currency devaluation and the scheme of privatization and commercialisation. The consequences were protest, demonstration, opposition, growth of civil society, armed robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution and incessant plots in the military. This is where the military’s defence expertise as guardian of ‘national security’ came to prominence. Being the dominant regime type in the period, the preferred defence oriented security took centre stage. The military was at war with Nigerians and with itself.

In the first instance, the military’s solution to the problem of discontents was to create the outfit known as joint military-police patrol with the military in the lead. All states in Nigeria had this outfit and have, even with the return of civilian rule, remained a prominent feature of security against law breakers. The existence of the outfit was a vote of no confidence in the marginalised police force. It would be recalled that when the military overthrew the civilian government in 1983, it proceeded to de-emphasising the prominence of the police especially the mobile police or anti- riot squad. The police profile declined in crime control and restoration of public order with every military regime.

Secondly, individual and group prefer soldiers in dispute resolution. Individuals with relation in the services or who can afford to hire soldiers deployed them into settling disputes at home, school and in pubs. Nigerians embraced marshal culture including camouflage, tainted car windows, use of siren and in everyday language. The military’s lack of civility was experienced in the streets,

public places and on the screen of television. The military profession was the most preferred occupation for young men and women. For the latter, marrying military men was the surest way of becoming first ladies.

Military incursion into African political life is a major challenge in democratic transition which worsened the problem generated by authoritarianism. The military has impacted on society in its anti-social and anti-political value (Chole and Ibrahim, 1995; Ojo, 1999:193-215). The military has been trained to believe that power could be wielded and conserved on the basis of the force that resides within the military institution itself, and even those elements that have had access to higher education have remained at the mental level of 'barrack boys'. We have seen the traits repeatedly demonstrated in the executive dominated by ex-military men and the legislature and in the relations between civilians socialised in this culture for the better part of their life. The militarisation of politics in the spate of assassination, murder and violence in the 2007 general elections was evidence of this. Retired military men have remained committed, impervious or even insensitive to the erosion of civil relations, democratic norms and the banalisation of the culture of violence out of corporate self-interest and greed.

Thirdly, with the growing conflict in the society, the rating of soldiers in containing conflict increases in the eye of Nigerians. The pattern of deployment of services into conflict areas leaves this impression on Nigerians. The first to be deployed is the regular police whose performance rating plummeted with every bout of military rule. When they failed, as they were usually programmed to fail, the mobile police were deployed. They, unlike the regular police, garnered some respect from the public because of their notoriety in the 1989 SAP riot and on campuses in Nigerian universities. When the mobile police failed, soldiers were deployed to finish the job. Their tactics is to shot to kill and for Nigerian, this brings order into the conflict. The very ploy of staged deployment indicated that by the time the soldiers arrived the scene, the belligerents were tired and ready for truce.

The manipulation of intelligence for political and individual gains which was heightened by the centralization of power and the ambiguities in the Nigerian constitution made the deployment of police and soldiers the responsibility of the presidency. The state governors as chief security officers do not control any security outfit to deploy. Thus from the start, the process was bound to fail because of interest and bureaucracy in The presidency, police and military headquarters in Abuja to activate the command process (Akowe, 2010:4). By the time orders came, one side had gained advantage over the other while the state chief security officer watch (Constitution, 1999: section 214 subsection 3 and 4). The scenario compound post conflict reconciliation and facilitate a vicious cycle of revenge.

Fourthly, the pursuit of narrow security objective by the

military unleashed a Frankenstein monster. The Directorate of Military Intelligence was notorious in orchestrating and persecuting enemies of the regimes whether real or imagined (Hutchful, 1998:613). It was common in the regime of General Abacha. The spectre of illegal retirements of officers caught in the web of intrigue became a significant 'national security' problem to the government. To curtail incidence of disloyalty and to maintain his grip on power, General Babangida politicised the services by creating slush funds, extra ministerial bodies, task forces and external missions to keep them quiet. Indeed General Babangida became obsessed with his personal safety and survival (Omoruyi, 1999:171-172). He distrusted the army that he created the National Guard. He was confronted by three rival generations of officers with their political and military solution to the problem created by the annulment. They included General Sani Abacha, Lt. General Joshua Dogonyaro and representing the 'boys' was Brigadier General David Mark (Omoruyi, 1999: 205). If General Babangida was coy in handling restive men in the service, his successor General Abacha improvised a novel way of dealing with element likely to pose threat to him. The Directorate of Military Intelligence and other outfits under his government fabricated coups, alleged coups and bomb explosions to flush out enemies from the service. Those who were lucky were sent to prisons or to their villages and those who were not so lucky were taken out by the regime's hit men.

The regimes preoccupation with its own survival neglected the greater security threat posed by the over eighty percent of Nigerians whose economic fortune declined as the incompetence of the government grew. For the regime, security also included the surreptitious increase of the emolument of members of the armed forces through numerous welfare programmes. This was what the regime described as security. The process enveloped the nation in corruption of a scale unique only to the military government of the period. Fifthly, retirement created a battalion strength of not-too-tired officers. In seeking to apply a slightly modified version of the accommodationist strategies (Ake, 2000:52) when the preventive strategies failed and when the clamour for democracy became intense, the Nigerian military, the midwife of democracy, succeeded in transferring power to its counterpart in retirements who were evidently vocal (Hutchful, 1998:612) and informed participants in the process. The struggle for democracy in Nigeria is largely a struggle against the military. But it was a struggle that the military, using its control of state, economic resources and manipulation of the transition programme (Momoh and Adejumbi, 1999; Okpeh, 2005; Onuoha and Fadakinte, 2002; Sagay, 2002; Jinadu and Oyovbaire, 1993; Oyovbaire and Olagunju, 1996; Omoruyi et al., 1994) converted to its advantage in order to safeguard its corporate interests by transferring power to retired military men.

The speed with which the military divested itself of formal political power and subsequently reinvented itself is a product of long hold on power, understanding of the Nigerian dynamics and internal and external developments. Internally the military had run into credibility problem when its numerous transition programmes failed to deliver an orderly transfer of power. The annulled election of 1993 was the climax (Omoruyi, 1999). Externally, the end of the cold war left democracy as the only option. Thus external interest and forces which had hitherto collaborated with the various status quo forces in the country was now very active in search of a virile democratic alternative (Olowu et al., 1995: ix).

The success of the military in reinventing itself and force of its socialization on Nigerians has set in motion the continuation of its domineering premise on security. The leading contenders for the presidency in 1999 were all former military officers. They all believed that the problem of insecurity of lives and property was in equipping and unleashing troops on the streets. Even the leading civilian contender among them who was a product of military socialization shares this view.

The post 2007 scenario did not break with this tradition as the military played prominent role in the affair of the government of late President Yar'adua. President Jonathan was quoted as praising the restrained and professional manner the military handled the crisis that engulfed the country following the vacuum created by President Yar'adua's health problem. The impression did not leave anyone in doubt about the hovering threat of the military in governance. For instance, the reform and provision of equipment to the police and other security outfits (Oluwasegun, 2008) were the hall mark of the regime's solution to insecurity while it retained the order of deployment of services to conflict area preferring soldiers as the joker in the pack. In following the line of the previous regime, the present administration is blivious of the view that the nature and character of the state in any country provides the socio-political environment of the police and how this colour their basic mentality, occupational culture and performance. In that order, members of the public get the police they deserve (Souryal, 1977:8). The order by late President Yar'adua that maximum force be used by soldiers in quelling the Boko Haram sect was indicative of this process. The deployment of troops to Maiduguri in the wake of the sect's activity represents the continuation of the policy.

Conclusion: Reconceptualising Discourse and Practice towards Human Security

It is discourse and practice like this that legitimises the dominant tradition on security. It is important to conceive security and what is national in security in human being. The advancement of human welfare as centrepiece of

enduring security was sacrificed to advancing those that benefitted the governing class. Human centred security is wholesome and focuses on economic wellbeing through creating opportunities and infrastructures to support individual and group self actualisation. It supports the creation of sustainable political, social, educational, health and psychological environment for people. Unlike defence inclined security that focus on the national military establishment with priority on the armed forces, the human centred security focus on people and sees the former as complementing the latter in its effort to secure the welfare of the people.

The re-socialization of the leaderships, citizens and institutions from defence to human oriented security should be the task of nongovernmental and civil society organisations. This is expressly contained in Chapter II of the 1999 constitution. Section 14 subsection 2 (b) of the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy declared "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" (Constitution, 1999). Sections 15, 16, 17 and 18 are explicit on the obligation of the state to Nigerian people. A state that accomplishes most of this provision need not fear for its security as citizens will guarantee this. The military dominated regime in Nigeria failed to guarantee these rights hence it expended energy in protecting itself against Nigerians. The removal of the ambiguities in the constitution is one step to democratising persons and institutions. The constitution of the country is riddled with contradictions. The constitution of Nigeria has the imprimatur of the military. Nigeria requires a federal constitution with decentralised powers across all levels including a reduced presidential power and enhance security role for governors.

By focusing on human needs through expanding the economy to absorb growing population, expanding infrastructures to enable people fulfil their creative and productive capacity to complement government effort and returning to the era of short, medium and long term development plans, the government would not need to rely on force as it will enjoy the support of the citizens. This environment will support the pursuit of foreign investment. Thus the task before intellectuals, people and government of Nigeria is to free security and national security from its state centric and hence the centrality of the military to human being and being human.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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