

BORDER SECURITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The protection of a state's territory against any potential threats depends on the level of its ability or capability to achieve effective border security or control. Therefore, this paper critically examined the issue of border security and national security in Nigeria. The main objectives of this work are to ascertain the effects of poor border security on Nigeria's national security and identify the challenge of effective border security in Nigeria. Theory of transnationalism was adopted as a framework for analysis. This work sourced data through secondary sources and the data were analyzed qualitatively. This paper observed that the problem of achieving effective border security has posed a great threat to Nigerian national security because it has contributed to infiltration of terrorists/ insurgency; loss of government revenue; smuggling or trafficking of illegal goods etc. In addition, it was revealed that the issue of corruption; poor technological gadgets, porous nature of the borders etc serve as strong challenge to effective border security in Nigeria. This paper suggested that adequate provision of funds; use of modern technological gadgets; adequate training of security personnel; strengthening of Multinational Joint Task Force etc, will go a long way in achieving effective border security in Nigeria in order to promote national security and development.

Keywords: Border, Border Security, National Security, Cross-border activities.

Introduction

The extent to which states protect their territory against any potential aggressors or threat depends on the level of their ability or capability to achieve adequate border security. Border security is very essential for the protection against any potential threat to national security and sovereignty of a nation-state. Spencer (2007, p. 110) viewed that "the border is the first line of defence against terrorism and last line of a nation's territorial integrity." In contemporary nation-state, well-defined borders are not only a key element of the definition of statehood, but their consolidation has been identified as essential for building stable states and societies while unconsolidated borders have been seen as recipes for instability and conflict (Ikome, 2012). States are recognized under international law based on their capability to secure their borders/territories and protect its citizens. The classification of whether a state is a weak, strong and failed state depends on the level of its capability to

protect its borders (Okumu, 2011).

Nigeria is a vast country that covers 923,768 square kilometers with about 36,450 kilometers of land and waters/maritime borders (Okeke, Orji & Okechukwu, 2015; Danfulani, 2014). Nigeria is situated in the Gulf of Guinea and shares border with Benin Republic in the West, Niger and Chad in the North and Cameroon in the North-east and South-south. It shares lake borders with Chad and Niger and Maritime borders with the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria has Sea; air and land borders with land entry points constituting over 99% of the borders and followed by airports (Danfulani, 2014). The Vastness of Nigeria's border necessitates the need for effective management and control of her borders for national security.

Nigeria and other African borders have a poor reputation and considered as porous. The African boundaries have been seen as arbitrary and artificial colonial constructs, that is imposed on unwilling African peoples who have either suffered dearly from their impact or simply ignored them (Ikome, 2012). There have been a wide spread perception that Nigerian government has been confronted with the problem of ensuring effective border security. The ineffective control and management of Nigeria's national border has been a serious concern to deal with. This situation has led to the rise of transnational crimes like smuggling of illegal goods, illegal movement of persons, trafficking of persons, money laundering, theft, kidnapping and even terrorism. (Temisan, 2015).

This paper is set to examine the effects of poor border security on Nigeria's national security. It also set to identify the challenges of effective border security in Nigeria and proffer suitable solutions on how to ensure effective border security in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

1. **Border Security:** Border security is the control of cross-border movement of people with the main goal of reducing illegal flows and not (unduly) limiting legal flows (Predd, Davis & Brown, 2010). Nelson, Conley, Schaffer, Bodurian, Kraut, Cipolette Walker (2010) defined border security as "managing the flow of people, goods, and other tangible items across national boundaries." Okumu (2011) views that generally, border security include:

- i. Geophysical control of a boundary through patrol by the military or special border patrol protection force.
- ii. Immigration by internally enforcing laws.
- iii. Migration by controlling the transnational movement of people.
- iv. Enhancing enforcement of the immigration and migration law by asking questions that assist in screening people using the border
- v. Enhancing inspections through searches to ensure that harmful products or individuals do not enter into a country
- vi. Enhancing management of institutions and systems that contribute to border security
- vii. Detecting and preventing criminals and illegal persons, goods, drugs and

weapons as well as other prohibited items, from entering a country.

Here we refer border security as the state of protecting the country against any illegal cross-border flows like illegal drugs, illegal migration, illegal arms etc that pose a threat to the survival of a state. In other words, border security means the prevention of illegal movement of goods and persons across borders, which can pose a threat to national security and development.

2. National Security: National security covers critical dimensions viz: economic security, food security, personal security, community security, political security (Adenbaken & Raimi, 2012) In addition, Nte (2011) defined national security as “the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from internal and external threats. Thus for all practical purpose includes securing the individual against war, poverty, disease, loss of income and other health hazard. There must be national preservation and equilibrium in the economic, social, political and environment spheres”. In this work, our focus on national security is based on state’s ability to protect lives and property, ensures economic development (increase in revenue and high standard of living), protection from harm, control of crimes and violent attacks.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Transnationalism

The theory of transnationalism was popularized in the early 20th century by Randolph Bourne which grown out of the increased interconnectivity between people and receding economic and social significance of boundaries among nation-state (Transnationalism, 2016). Transnationalism talks about the process where immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and that of their host country (Rosemberg, Boutain & Mohammed, 2016). It is based on increased functional integration and multiple interaction or links of people, states and institutions across borders or beyond state boundaries, which can affect the capability of states. This increased interaction is facilitated by globalization.

This theory viewed that the increase in interaction between non-state actors (as a result of globalization) across borders has led to several impact on the capability of states. Therefore, the constant cross border activities or interactions affect the domestic policies of state actors (which can reduce the importance of states). This transnational interaction can take place in one country while the effects are seen in another country (Soehi & Waldinger, 2012). This theory or approach “emphasizes the ways in which nations are no longer able to contain or control the disputes or negotiation through which social groups annex a global dimension to their meaningful practices, the notion of diaspora brings to the fore the racial dynamics underlying the international division of labour and the economic turmoil of global capital” (Transnationalism, 2016). The theory of transnationalism has the following assumptions:

- i. Persons are not bound to place, as much, as they are to space and technologies of place.

- ii. There is cultural connectivity and reproduction and human mobility. Meaning that individuals or immigrants maintained cultural ties with their parent country and reproduce these cultural-related activities in their host country when the need arises.
- iii. Some immigrants stay abreast of and influence the political-related occurrences of both their home and host country.
- iv. The increased cross-border activities and interactions affect the capability of states. (Rosemberg et al, 2016).

This theory is relevant or can be applied to this study because there has existed several increased relations or interaction between people or non-state actors beyond Nigerian borders. With the help of globalization, Nigerian citizens have maintained ties with citizens in other countries with ease. These interactions can be in form of economic, social, cultural and political interaction. The constant ties or interactions of people from different countries within and across Nigerian borders most times serves as a problem to state's capability on how to ensure effective border security and national security in Nigeria. As people interact across borders by engaging in illegal or illicit trade activities and other organized crimes, they most times devise several means on how to sustain such relations across borders. This can lead to several challenges to state's capability to control and manage its borders from unnecessary infiltrations that can pose a threat to sovereignty and survival of the state.

Methodology

This research is descriptive in nature because it is based on describing and analyzing the issue of border security in Nigeria and its effects on national security. The data were sourced through secondary sources because the researcher consulted materials from journals, newspapers, textbooks etc. The qualitative method was used to analyze the data or information collected.

Effects of Poor Border Security on National Security in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the problems of achieving effective border security have negative effects on national security. Therefore, impacts of the poor border security on Nigeria's national security are:

1. Infiltration of terrorists/Rebels: The poor border security has gone a long way to aid the operation of the terrorist group like Boko Haram which is a threat to national security. (Bearzotti et al, 2015; Adetula, 2015). The Boko Haram has devised or used both transnational and national trafficking of arms and weapons to cause terror and fear to Nigerian citizens (Onuoha, 2013). The problem of securing Nigeria border helps the Boko Haram to adequately launch several successful attacks in Nigeria and other neighbouring countries killing thousands of people and displaced millions of people (Menner, 2014; Temisan, 2015; Bearzotti et al, 2015; Adetula, 2015; Mailabari & Hamidu, 2015). The porous nature of the border has enabled the

terrorists to purchase or traffic weapons and travel to other neighbouring countries for other assistance. This has led to several training camps in Chad, Niger Republic and Cameroon. This is why Okumu (2011) “viewed that insecure borders have greatly contributed to severe security threats such as insurrection, incursion and terrorist activity.

2. Challenge to Economic Development: The border insecurity in Nigeria has also posed a serious challenge or threat to the economic development (economy). The process of smuggling of goods and persons into the country has contributed to high loss of government revenue, threat to domestic and foreign direct investment, problem of unemployment etc (Akinyemi, 2013; Tesimina, 2015; Ering, 2011; Hoffmann & Melly, 2015).

In the aspect of loss of government revenue, the poor border control has encouraged a lot of illegal activities in Nigeria, especially oil bunkering, smuggling of illicit goods. In oil bunkering, oil is often stolen and sent across the border, which has contributed to a huge loss to Nigerian wealth. It was reported that 300, 000 barrels are illegally exported per day along the Benin-Nigeria border which is seen as the major acting zone (Ahmed & Chilaka, 2013). In addition, It was also reported that the figure of illegal oil bunkering is between 150, 000 to 200, 000 barrel per day and which may be sold between 10 to 25 dollar per barrel amounting to 2 million dollar per day and 750 million dollar annually (Garuba, 2010). Furthermore, the Nigerian Navy discovered that Nigeria loses about 20 billion dollars annually to crude oil theft and estimated 55, 210 barrels of oil per day or monthly average of 1, 656, 281 barrels was stolen in 2013 (This day, 2014). The loss of revenue from this illegal oil bunkering has amounted to estimate of one billion dollars which rivals GNP of Cape Verde and Sierra Leone (African Economic Development Institute, 2015). Evidence shows that the informal trade across African borders has recorded much loss of government revenues, which could account for as much as 64% of Nigeria’s GDP. This is because Nigerian state loses direct tax revenues that would be generated from formal cross-border trade. (Hoffmann & Melly, 2015).

In the aspect of domestic and foreign investment, it has shown that the cross-border criminal activities have posed a serious threat to growth of domestic investment and manufactures in Nigeria. Hoffmann and Melly (2015) noted, “Nigerian-made goods are already competing with Chinese products across West African region. But many of these goods are exported through informal channels thereby excluding manufacturers from most support on offer whether from government..... or from institutions.....” Furthermore, the increase in all these informal and illegal smuggling of goods and infiltration of terrorist in Nigeria has also contributed to low level of foreign direct investment and high unemployment rate (Hoffmann & Melly, 2015; Akinyemi, 2013).

3. Apart from terrorist activities, the unsecured border insecurity in Nigeria has encouraged the rise in certain criminal gangs, that engage in armed robbery attacks and other criminal activities which posed a serious threat to national security.

Especially automobile hijacking by gangs of robbers who normally snatch expensive cars from their owners in Nigeria and take them to neighbouring countries like Benin, Togo and Chad (Alemika, 2013; Ahmed & Chilaka, 2013). Apart from armed robbery, our porous borders have encouraged other trans-national criminal activities like trafficking of small and light weapons, narcotizes and human beings, cars etc (Nte, 2011; Onuoha, 2013; Blum, 2014; Ani, 2012). In trafficking of arms, about 70% and 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa were reported to flow into Nigeria through neighbouring states. (Onuoha, 2013). The United Nation office on Drugs and Crimes noted that Nigeria is among the top eight countries with the highest human trafficking rates in the world (Austral, 2014). These persons trafficked are subjected to all forms of victimization that violates fundamental human rights. In addition, there has been overwhelming evidence that drug trade remains one of the greatest of Nigerian criminal activity (UNDOC cited in Nte, 2011). Also, the porous nature of Nigeria-Benin border has brought a lot of cross-border raids and attacks based on pastoral dispute between the herdsmen and farmers (Mailabari & Hamidu, 2015). All these activities posed a threat to national security.

4. Health problems: The increase in smuggling of illegal drugs, trafficking of person has shown a high tendency of spread of disease especially those into prostitution (Nte, 2011; Blum, 2014). It has been reported that about two-third of the reported HIV/AIDS cases in Nigeria are females that are often migrated/trafficked to other countries. The increase in the trafficking of women from Nigeria to other countries and vice versa through the Nigeria-Benin border has to a large extent contributed to high rate of HIV prevalence (Nte, 2011). Furthermore, the smuggling of illegal goods contributes to health risk because most of the drugs illegally transported (smuggled) into Nigeria have high tendency to cause damage to human health.

The Challenges of Effective Border Security in Nigeria

Even though efforts have been made to secure Nigeria border, it has been discovered that certain factors appear to pose a problem or challenge to effective border security in Nigeria.

1. The Porous Nature of the Borders: Studies have shown that there is high rate of porous borders in Nigeria and it has been assumed to be the major challenge to effective border security. This can be as a result of the vastness of Nigerian border (Menner, 2014; Gbemre, 2016). It has been indicated that Nigerian has 147 irregular and 84 regular routes as movement were done through irregular routes. (Maro, cited in Akinyemi, 2013; Menner, 2014) Adams (2012) viewed that there is existence of 1475 official border sites and estimate of 2000 un-official border sites across Nigeria borders. Musa (2015) identified that there are presence of 250 footprints from Damaturu/Maiduguri axis that link the Cameroon, Chad and Niger that are not known to Nigerian Security Agencies.

The porosity of Nigeria's border can be seen or indicated in the use of dried tree, oil drum, tyres etc to demarcate national borders which makes the borders highly disorganized (Gbemre, 2016). The existence of large number of illegal routes have made it easy for all sort of transnational crimes like movement or smuggling of illegal goods, trafficking of persons, theft and terrorist and other violent activities etc.

2. Corruption: The issue of corruption is another problem to effective border security in Nigeria. It has been discovered that most security agencies are often compromised to allow illegal flow of goods and people (Akinyemi, 2013; Nte, 2011; Gibemre, 2016). According to Onuoha (2013)

Since corruption is endemic and systemic in Nigeria, cross border arms trafficking is sometimes facilitated by security agents. In May for instance, a senior custom personnel was arrested for allegedly assisting Boko Haram insurgents to smuggle trucks loaded with huge cache of arms and ammunitions into Nigeria.

Gbemre (2016) noted that some checkpoints are not meant to check passport but to extort money from people. Hahonou (2016) indicated that recent anthropological research shows that regular traders, transporters and passengers that moves along West African states usually provide various kinds of informal payment to state agents in order to escape taxation of goods and certain procedures. Report also maintained that along the Niger-Benin-Nigeria border, there is no positive relation between a higher number of checkpoints and an increased level of control because security agents create fake offices and checkpoints to increase the number of opportunity for taking bribes and racketing citizens (Hahonou, 2016).

3. Issue of Facilities & Logistics: The problem of adequate facilities and other logistics serve as a problem to effective border security in Nigeria. There have been reported cases of low operational facilities like: poor border barrack or substandard office; lack of or insufficient communication or technological gadgets or facilities; inadequate patrol vehicles etc (Akpomera & Omoyibo, 2013; Akinyemi, 2014; Danfulani, 2014; Bearzotti, Geranio, Keresztes & Mullerova, 2015). Lamptey (2015) stated that "the work of border security officials is hampered by logistic and poor government remuneration, creating avenues for corruptions." There is no how effective border security can be achieved without adequate facilities and logistics.

4. Abuse of ECOWAS Protocol: The establishment of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons and goods among states is meant to ensure free movement of persons or citizens of member states in order to achieve development in the region. The abuse of this protocol has contributed much infiltration of illegal goods and persons. According to Temisan, (2015) "this protocol on free movement has however become a subject of abuse particularly by criminal and terrorists that engage on

smuggling of arms, ammunitions and other items into Nigeria.” In addition, Akinyemi (2013) stated that

This protocol allows the movement of criminals across the border and also engages in cross border activities under the pretext of this protocol. It is important to note that border has become a safe passage for people without identities as ECOWAS protocol on free movement has been abused to mean an entry without valid document

Opanike and Aduloju (2015) added that

The challenges of the protocol have not helped the security landscape of the sub-region. Even though ECOWAS prides itself as the first region in Africa with the free movement initiative, the protocol is poorly implemented constituting more security concern than boosting regional trade and economic development... ECOWAS does not have instituted mechanism for checking the entry of illegal immigration, people who carry out nefarious activities have exploited the opportunity to their advantage laundering money, trafficking in human, drugs, illegal arm etc.

Therefore, the poor mechanism of ECOWAS for checking illegal immigrants has led a serious border insecurity in Nigeria and other West African regions (Temison, 2015; Opanike & Aduloju, 2015).

5. Problem of globalization: Despite the positive effect of globalization, it still poses a threat to effective border security in Nigeria. Through the advancement of information and communication technology and transformation of international relations caused by globalization has increased the challenges of African states to manage their borders (Okumu, 2011). Studies has pointed out that there is a relationship between globalization and trans-border (economic) crimes because the logic of time and space have been become speed up and condensed which deterritorialize boundaries and undermines sovereignty leading to increasing speed and sophistication of criminal activities and networks (Garuba, 2010). The present globalization serves as a problem to Nigerian border security because it has aided criminal to engage on illegal business without necessarily crossing the border. This is done through the cyberspace with the use of information and communication technology. The use of ICT has also enhanced terrorist activities in Nigeria and other trans-border crimes (Nosiri, 2016; Nwanyi & Orji, 2015).

6. Problem of Manpower/Personnel: Issue of personnel is also a great challenge towards securing Nigerian borders. The presence of inadequate manpower / security personnel has made it difficult for security operatives to effectively maim the borders.

Evidence has shown the availability of security personnel is not enough for management of both regular/official and irregular/unofficial route in Nigeria (Bodunde, Ola & Afolabi, 2014; Dafulani, 2014; Gbemre, 2016). This contributed to high rate of smuggling or infiltration of illegal goods and persons.

7. Conflict/ inadequate Co-operations Among Security Agencies: Adam (2012) viewed that “the lack of or absence of integrated security efforts also provides criminal smuggling and other illicit networks.” The poor co-operation and co-ordination between security agents within Nigeria and other neighbouring countries have undermined border security in Nigeria. (Idowu, 2014; Babtunde, 2009; Temisan, 2015; Menner, 2014). Temisan (2015) noted that there is poor co-operation between the security agencies (mainly the NCS and NIS) in joint patrol arrangement at the borders. Even though the multinational Joint Task Force has been improving its efforts to ensure security mainly at the borders, there has been problem of collaboration, co-ordination and co-operation between security agencies of other countries (Menner, 2014). In addition, the conflict or poor cooperation and coordination can be as a result of suspicion, problem of information and intelligence sharing, disagreement on standard to follow, adhoc operations of some joint patrol etc. (Babatunde, 2009; Idowu, 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The understanding on how to achieve national security also requires the question of how to ensure effective border security. Therefore, border security is a very essential for the actualization of consolidated statehood, enhancement of sovereignty and national security. Nigeria has been experiencing the problem of how to effectively secure its borders from all sort of transnational crimes that serve as a threat to national security. Despite certain efforts put in place to strengthen Nigerian borders, certain factors have contributed to serious challenge to border security such as corruption; poor technological gadgets and other facilities/ logistics; issues of globalization; porous nature of the border; inadequate cooperation or coordination between security agencies etc. Therefore, to ensure effective border security, the following measures need to put in place

1. Adequate provision and use of ICT facilities or the technological gadgets such as the geographical information system, surveillance drones, biometrics etc are very essential in order to effectively track down the activities of trans-border criminals like terrorist, robbers, arm dealers etc. The use of ICT or technological gadgets will help to complement the physical border control.
2. Apart from provision of technological gadgets, provisions of other facilities like good accommodations, offices and logistics (like patrol vehicles, aircraft) to security agencies is very necessary in order to curb the activities of trans-border criminal activities.
3. There is need for the government to construct adequate fences, auto-gates or border plazas. This will help to reduce the size of illegal migration,

- smuggling of goods and trafficking of persons.
4. Strengthening the cooperation, collaboration and coordination between states is very essential. Nigeria and its neighbouring countries need to strengthen their cooperation especially, through the Multi-National Joint Task Force; Joint Border Control Commissions with Niger, Chad, Benin Republic and Cameroon to ensure effective border security.
 5. There is urgent need to address the problem of corruption among security agencies in order to reduce the rate of trans-border criminal activities.
 6. There is need for adequate training and remuneration of security officials or agents responsible for border patrol in order to ensure effective border security and control.
 7. There is need to strengthen the cooperation and coordination of Nigerian security agencies involved in border control or management. A well-coordinated effort and intelligent sharing between security agencies like the Police, Customs, Immigration, Civil Defence Corps, the Military etc will go a long to ensure effective border security.
 8. Encouragement of community engagement for border and security control is very important. There should be proper involvement of local communities in terms of information and intelligent sharing. This can be achieved through effective or functional border community policing.

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