

EKPOMA  
JOURNAL  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

EKPOMA  
JOURNAL  
SOCIAL SCIENCES



# **EKPOMA** **JOURNAL OF** **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

VOLUME 6, NO. 2, SEPTEMBER, 2015      ISSN 1595-904X

**SPECIAL CONFERENCE EDITION**

**DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY:  
IMPLICATION FOR THE NIGERIAN STATE**

**OKONKWO N.S.**

**Department of Political Science  
College of Education, Agbor.  
08033820575**

**AND**

**MR. DAVIS EFEURHOBO**

**Department of Political Science  
College of Education, Agbor.  
Delta State  
07038643679**

**Abstract**

*The paper examines the hope and chances of development in the wake of the challenges of national security in Nigeria. Development is the fulcrum of the Nigerian economy and a nucleus in Nigerian political economy. With the prospect of realizing the socio-economic objectives of the nation, the country suffers severe national security crisis that tend to inhibit development. Notably, the insurgent in the North-East and militancy in the resource laden Niger Delta among other mind-boggling problems in the nation have threatened the peaceful co-existence of the nation. Situating the discourse within the prism of elite theory, the paper maintains that over the years, development has been frustrated by persistent national security challenges of different magnitude especially the use of light weapon. The paper recommends good governance among others as reliable panacea for national security challenges in order to achieve development.*

*Keyword: Development, Security, National Security, Prospects.*

**Development and National Security: Implication for the Nigerian State.**

**Introduction**

The prospects of development in Nigeria since its independence in 1960 has been encumbered or entangled by one challenge or the other. In recent time, it has been severely affected by security problems. This by implication has adversely affected the socio-economic progress of the country. In contemporary time, the set back witnessed has conspicuously revolved around insecurity of lives and property which to use the words of Thomas Hobbes, has made life to be short, nasty, solitary, poor and brutish. People are no longer sure of the next meal because of the fear of death. Almost everyone is now living in

perpetual fear of danger. This fear is most glaring in all facets of human endeavour. In the market place, in your homes, motor parks, offices, even in churches. It is that alarming. This is obviously because of the inability of the Nigeria government to adequately arrest this "monster" called insecurity. This paper is set out to possibly look into the causes of these security challenges in our country, their effects on the prospects of development with the hope of proffering valuable and sustainable recommendations on how this scourge can be permanently laid to rest. After all, it is only when there is peace, development and socio-economic activities can be actualized. This paper explores the various security challenges that have plagued Nigeria so as to tackle them appropriately and allow meaningful development to take place.

### **Conceptual Framework**

**Development:** Development implies the socio-economic transformation of a people towards improving their total quality of life within a specific period of time. Okowa (1996) sees development as hard work, skills, discipline, commitment and the intelligent utilization of the faculty of man over a fairly long period of time. At the level of individual, it implies increased social skill and capacity to interact efficiently with ones environment (Akinjaye, 1997). Development can equally be seen as a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capital incomes and level of living through more modern production, methods and improved social organization (Obi, 2006). Development must represent the whole gamut of change by which all entire social system turned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system (Obi, 2005). For Ake (2001) it is the process by which people create and reorient themselves and their lives and circumstances to realize high levels of civilization in accordance with their own choice and values.

One of the most sustaining and dependable definitions is the one offered by Seem (1969) when he opined that the questions to ask about a country's development should include; What is happening to poverty? What is happening to unemployment? What is happening to inequality? If all three of them have declined from high levels, beyond doubt this can be adjudged as a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central issues have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. However if none has declined, definitely development has not taken place.

**Security:** Security according to Odor (1996) means social order in which there is low level of violence both physical and administrative where individuals are safeguarded from abuse of landlords employers and officialdom. Individuals should have some part to play in the political process of the nation and that of freedom of expression and press is based on patriotism. It becomes imperative to argue that development is guaranteed in a society that is security conscious, a society that is devoid of threat to peaceful coexistence. Security means a state of existence, that is free from danger, fear, threat, anxiety and uncertainty. According to Metz (2000) security means protection and preservation of all the society considers to be important and valuable i.e. it involves the protection of individual and groups from physical

harm.

**National Security:** Until very recent, national security was understood broadly to mean the absence of insecurity emanating from external threat. In other words, the capacity to deter external states from attack, or in the event that attack becomes inevitable, the ability to withstand such and protect one's state preoccupied national political leader. National security or insecurity was seen purely from this perspective. Later, perspectives on national security expanded to accommodate internal order within nations. The role of the police force and other security agencies operating within the national boundaries became the focus of security scholars.

The dynamics of modern society have since altered that configuration of national security to now include consideration for societally generated crisis such as youth unemployment, hunger and poverty, riot and demonstration, terrorism, piracy, illegal oil bunkering, onshore and offshore kidnapping for ransom, religious interference, official corruption, religious fanaticism, inter and intra ethnic strife and a host of other social vices that threaten lives and property and indeed the peace and tranquility of the society.

Art (2001) states that national security also involves protection of the environment from irreversible degradation by combating among other things, acid rain, desertification, forest destruction, ozone pollution and global warming. Also very significant issue in national security debate is the clamour for the revival of the United Nations and the brighter prospect for collective security.

**Prospects:** Prospects implies hopes and chances of overcoming an existing challenge that appears to be preventing something from realizing its result or goals. It is a process or means that helps to make a very deplorable situation to be better, for instance, the security problem of the country which has very severely affected the pace of development in Nigeria. The prospects could be how this security lapses can be improved upon through the provision of jobs and good governance. This will prevent the proliferation of the guns in the hands of the jobless youths in the country.

#### **Development and National Security in Nigeria**

The pace of development in Nigeria is rather pathetic. Unfortunately, this trend cuts across Africa, except for few countries. The steady decline of development in areas such as the academic environment, existing institutions quality of research and the products of the institutions leaves one wondering as to what has gone wrong, and where we are going as a people. Morals have disappeared, the quality of education is often pedestrian and discourses are puerile. Today's situation according to Ekekwe (2009) is a far cry from the situation between political independence and the mid 1980s when dialogue and intellectual engagement were robust, vibrant and productive. The consistent security problems arising from poverty orchestrated by our ruling elites who wants to be in charge of virtually everything that will selfishly enhance and sustain their economic interest is one of the many existing factors largely responsible for the state of discourses today. As well, the brain drain to foreign lands and the private sector, the alteration of active politics and bad leadership

within the society have also contributed to poor leadership and infantile ideology dispositions that often confuse facts with reality, and theory with practice. We have become bound by a kind of extreme stupid poverty that sees a child die of hunger in a world of plenty or of a disease preventable by a well established, modern hospitals. The most challenging social problem in addition to the very existing ones that have incapacitated development as it were is the problem of insecurity of lives and property. This security problem sustained by Boko Haram in the North East, child trafficking in South East, kidnapping in the South-South and ethnic militia or consciousness in virtually all the sectors of the economy have very severely crippled development.

According to Sachs (2005), since September 11, 2001 the United States launched a war on terror, but it has neglected the deeper caused of global instability. Every morning our newspapers are inundated with reports of various magnitude; people perished yesterday of extreme poverty, children died of malaria, mothers and fathers died of tuberculosis, young adults died of AIDS and others died of diarrhea and the incessant killings of innocent human beings by blood thirsty Boko Haram insurgents.

Agreed that the desire for development is universal, but the rate at which security challenges have actually plagued development in Nigeria is an issue that gives cause for worry. The contradictions, coalitions and conflicts are so many. Yet, no serious attempt has been made to arrest this terrible and unpalatable situation. Our Chibok girls have been in captivity since April 14, 2014. There appear not to be light in the tunnel. How can people develop in a society that is so enmeshed in crisis of different magnitude? A competent source from Michika Adamawa State who escaped the insurgent attack very recently in North East has that to say: "He regretted that this has destabilized the economic fortune of the citizenry who has labored in this rainy reason but had to abandon their farmland (Vanguard, 2004).

The terrible implication of this is that most of us are so consumed with materialism without a corresponding effort to sustain this ostentatious life style. The fact remains that the existence and acceptance of this dangerous phenomena has had wider and profound consequence on and for the nation's social, political, economic security and military battle spaces and particularly on the authority, function and roles of the state.

While these deadly weapons play some very terrible roles in exacerbating conflicts with enormous human and economic cost, the causes of such conflicts however, lies in political, economic, ethnic and religious differences and disparities. These seeming factors often times are aggravated by governance. The deficiencies arising from government include exclusionary and irresponsible policies and the lack of or weakness of democratic institutions. The accesses to porous borders further compound the problems of widespread proliferations, illicit trafficking and criminal misuse of these weapons.

In Nigeria, the proliferation of arms has witnessed and even further continues to fuel the upsurge of ethnic and community conflicts as a result of years of pent up anger hitherto suppressed by years of military tyranny and misrule, which found vents as a result of the expansion of the democratic space in 1999.

### **Effects of Security Challenges on the Prospects of Development in Nigeria**

Domestically, the legacy of military rule as well as the creation and entrenchment of a

militarized national psyche and culture of violence has had its own tolls on the attitude and perception of Nigerians regarding the role of violence in the society in general and the free use of arms in particular. Thus, following the years of ethnic militia and youth violence, the Nigerian governmental institutions lost control of the monopoly of the means of coercion, as various groups within the polity increasingly sought military responses to internal squabbles and wrangling.

Very glaring perceived imbalances and discrepancies within the Nigerian political structure contributed fundamentally to this atmosphere of hostility and mutual suspicion vis a vis the very uncontrollable northern insurgency that appear to be defiling all possible solutions and palliative measures, among the various components (ethnic, religious, tribal, class etc) which makes up the federation. A perfect and glaring example is the ugly situation in the Niger Delta which is a symptomatic of what has been referred to as "criminal social neglect and ecological degradation". The immediate and adverse implication of this is that the region of the country which is primary responsible for roughly 70% of the country's income displays a degree of penury and poverty, a terrible state of impoverishment which stands in sharp contraction to the wealth it produces. This consequently has led to a high degree of militarized youth population with very high possession of deadly weapons like guns and improvised devices to carry out their nefarious and other deadly acts.

Ethno religious animosities have led to the phenomenon of armed ethnic militias in virtually all existing parts of the country. While it is correct to acknowledge the existence of this group during the military, they were by and large kept under military check. However, with the return to civil rule and the consequent expansion of the political space, these groups blossomed to the extent of representing and posing threats and alternatives to state security structure and almost attempting to overrun security apparatuses.

It is shocking to recognize that this arm proliferation in Nigeria which has threatened the peaceful coexistence of our national unity, has resulted to widespread poverty, despite Nigeria status as a major producer of oil.

Armed robbers and other criminals have also contributed to the proliferation of these groups of weapon. In some instance, they capture the weapons belonging to the state security services (courtesy of Boko Haram) and these weapons were often put into criminal uses. Local fabricators commonly referred to as blacksmith have traditionally been a source of supply for existing armed robbers. With the downturn of the economy it has become very difficult to curtail the proliferation of these weapons.

Insecurity of lives have very adversely reduce the life span of the people and brought untold hardship to the citizens of this country with the displacement of some people, particularly in the northern region of the country. Women, children and the elderly are mostly vulnerable. Refugees are the ultimate symptom of social disintegration. They are the last most obvious link in a chain of causes and effects that defines the extent of a country social and political breakdown as a result of these arms proliferations.

The effects, of security challenges on the prospects of development can equally be traced to escalating ethnic, religions, political and armed conflicts in the country. As a matter of fact, the upsurge of violence is as a result of the easy access to weapons. Shakespeare said the presence of a weapon encouraged the use of it. This phenomenon worsened the already

existing precarious security situation in the country. In most cases, the internal and communal conflicts in Nigeria, particularly among the herdsmen in the northern part of the country have led to the rise of human rights violation and threat to national security and development. According to (Edomwonyi, 2007), the easy availability of arms encourages urban violence, which in turn disrupts economic activities, causing colossal loss of revenue to government.

Insecurity arising from proliferation of arms can disrupt legislative and executive processes of democratic ideals, subverting popular will, eroding the legitimacy of the democratic political system, undermines citizens opinion and rights, enthrone the culture of violence, damage the legitimacy of electoral process, disrupt community bonds, produces nostalgia of military regimes (Saliu and Dokubo, 2005). Corroborating this position Akuyoma, 2003) say it fuels and sustains conflict in post-authoritarian and post-conflict states.

### **Conclusion**

The proliferation of different arms in the country as it were results in negative trends that have very debilitating implications on security of lives and property, which consequently has affected the pace of development in Nigeria. This unhealthy state of the nation arising from security lapses has retarded the efforts of so many patriotic people aimed at sustaining national development, peace and security as well as nation building and national cohesion. Except more proactive measures are adopted by the government of the day and the good ambassadors of this country, we are afraid the situation in this country might be more difficult to manage. How can development thrive in an environment or society that is severely enmeshed in very terrible security problems ranging from the insurgency in the North, child trafficking in the East, kidnapping in the resource Niger Delta and other negative trends that are capable of preventing development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where other existing nation-states are grappling with the socio-economic and political forces of scaling through the rubris of socio-economic woes.

### **Recommendations**

The way forward is primarily to enthrone good governance. Leaders must lead well and show some high degree of patriotism. Leaders must learn to know that leadership is all about service and the promotion of citizens' welfare.

A good leader must ensure that there is peaceful co-existence in the state and learn to guide the citizens towards the path of progress and prosperity. The leader must not be parochial in his thoughts and programmes. The negative trends arising from security lapse that have continuously affected the country's development is linked with the inability of the government to dispense excellent governance. When you have a good government in place, associated social vices will disappear.

More importantly, the youths should be provided with employment. This should be the collective effort of the government, private companies, and other stakeholders.

**References**

- Ake, C. (2001). *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Akuyoma, C. (2005). *Small and Light Weapon; Consensus attempts to Restrain and Control availability of arms*, vol. 24, No 5 and 6 (Nigeria: Nigeria Institute of International Affairs)
- Art, R. (2001). "Security" in the Oxford Comparism to Politics of the World. Oxford University, press.
- Edomwonyi, D. (2007). *Small and Light Weapon Proliferation in the Niger Delta. Implications for National Security*. Benin City, Benson Idahosa University, Press.
- Ekwe, Eme (2009). *An Introduction to Political Economy*. Nigeria, Chuzzy Publishers.
- Jeffrey, Sach (2005). *The End of Poverty Britain*, Alten Lane Publishers
- Metz, S. (2000). *A strategic approach to Africa Security. Challenges and Prospects' in Africa security review*. Vol 9 No. 3 (South Africa: Institute of Security Studies).
- Obi, A. (2005). "Reconstructing the Meaning and Tenets of Development". In *State and Economy*. Onitsha and Economy. Onitsha: Book Points ltd.
- Obi, Emeka (2006). *Development Administration*. Onitsha, Book Point Ltd.
- Odor, G.O. (1996). *Introduction to Social Studies for Student in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria*. Agbor, Royal Pace Publications.
- Okowa, G. (1996). *How the Tropic Undevelopment the Negroes*. Port-Harcourt, Paragraphics Publishers.
- Safiu, H and Charles Dokubo, (2005). "Proliferation of Arms and National Security" in *Nigeria under democratic rule 1999-2003*, vol 2, Nigeria University Press, Ibadan.
- Vanguard, Newspaper; Tuesday 2014.

Journal of Social Sciences  
cases, the internal and  
in the northern part of the  
to national security and  
ibility of arms encourages  
g colossal loss of revenue  
legislative and executive  
g the legitimacy of the  
s, enthrone the culture of  
community bonds, produces  
roborating this position  
ritarian and post-conflict  
results in negative trends  
s and property, which  
his unhealthy state of the  
ny patriotic people aimed  
as nation building and  
y the government of the  
situation in this country  
es in an environment of  
blems ranging from the  
the resource Niger Delta  
ment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
omic and political forces  
Leaders must lead well  
now that leadership is all  
e in the state and learn to  
The leader must not be  
ising from security lapse  
d with the inability of the  
od government in place,  
loyment. This should be  
r stakeholders.